

Terms of Reference of the Learning Sub-Group

The COPCA Management Board Learning Sub-Group is accountable to the COPCA Management Board and its purpose is as follows:

1. To contribute to the implementation of the National Child Protection Policy:

"The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of children towards whom it has a special responsibility and duty of care. The Church, and individual members of it, undertake to do all in their power to create a safe environment for children and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The Church authorities will liaise closely with statutory authorities to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly and properly dealt with, victims supported and perpetrators held to account."
Recommendation from "A Programme for Action" (Lord Nolan, 2001)

2. It will achieve this purpose by ensuring that material relating to experience from the Child Protection system in Dioceses and Religious Congregations is carefully considered so that the Church's overall strategy and systems relating to Child Protection continue to develop in line with best practice.

3. We will ensure that existing best practice is recognised and promoted.

4. And, we will learn from our mistakes (Recommendation 80 from *A Programme for Action*)

"Mistakes and lapses should be acknowledged (publicly if necessary), recorded, reported (as appropriate) and rectified wherever possible. If the mistake indicates that systems need to be changed, then that should be done."

5. The Learning Sub-Group is not a substitute for the responsibility of Child Protection Commissions to oversee individual cases, nor for a procedure for dealing with complaints relating to the handling of individual cases, but exists rather to reflect on and disseminate learning in this field.

6. The material that is considered will include information from any source regarding the functioning of the Child Protection system including quantitative and qualitative information, individual case material, (anonymised in respect of both content and source) any other issues and concerns.

7. Material for consideration by the Sub-Group will be referred to it through the Director of COPCA.

8. A summary of the discussion of the Sub-Group and any good practice recommendations will be communicated to the COPCA Management Board for their consideration, and to the following groups through an occasional internal bulletin for wider dissemination as appropriate:

Diocesan Child Protection Coordinators and Officers
Religious Child Protection Coordinators and Officers
Chairpersons of Child Protection Commissions.

9. Notes of the meetings and copies of the bulletins will be sent to the COPCA Management Board.

Membership of the sub-group:

Its agreed that the sub-group will meet 3 times a year and that membership would, in the first instance, be for a period of 3 years.

Membership:

- 1) Director of COPCA
- 2) 1-2 Members of COPCA Management Board
- 3) 2 representatives from Diocesan CPC/ CPO
- 4) 2 members (1 male, 1 female) from Religious CPC groups