

# Section 5:

## Pastoral care

**In this section you will find information about**

- 5.1 Supporting people who have suffered abuse in the past
- 5.2 Supporting those affected by suspected abuse and disclosures
- 5.3 Good practice when dealing with people who are known offenders or abusers
- 5.4 Treatment for offenders and sources of support

## Introduction

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Any organisation that is involved with children, young people or adults should be aware that those who come through their doors may have been affected by abuse at some point in their lives. It may be in the present, recent or distant past but the effects can be devastating not only for the person who has been abused but also family members, friends and social groups.

The church has a unique opportunity to offer sensitive pastoral ministry to all who are affected but we must also be responsible and understand our limitations. It is probable that most people will require specialist advice but the church community can provide a supportive and caring environment and assistance to access the right support and help.

There is a difference between counselling and listening/pastoral care. All are of value and often work alongside each other but it is important that counselling is left to those who are appropriately qualified. Problems can arise when boundaries are not respected and well-meaning but inexperienced individuals assume a counselling role. Counselling for sexual abuse in particular is complex, requiring a great deal of skill and training.

### 5.1 Supporting people who have suffered abuse in the past

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It is possible that within your church are adults who suffered abuse during their childhood are now members of the church community. These survivors may never have disclosed or come to terms with what happened in the past. The abuse may or may not have taken place in a church setting.

*“There is clear evidence that the proportion of people within the church who have experienced abuse is no lower than in the rest of society”<sup>15</sup>*

Training in relation to abuse can also trigger memories of incidents which the worker may have experienced him/herself which may cause considerable trauma or distress.

Those who have survived abuse need someone to listen to them, and to believe what they say. Their recovery is likely to be a lengthy process which requires specialist help or guidance. It is important to be mindful of the vulnerability of individuals; some referrals and actions, even within the Church, can evoke painful memories.

The guidelines in these circumstances are the same as those for individuals who disclose current cases of abuse<sup>16</sup>; listen to them, believe what they say, and assure them that they are not to blame. Start with the individual's circumstances, not your own fears or doubts. Usually, the appropriate way to help a survivor is to refer him/her to a professional who is experienced in dealing with such matters.

Both adults and children who have previously been abused – can be vulnerable to further abuse. A

number of organisations specialise in offering support to survivors or abuse

**The Survivors Trust** is an umbrella agency for over 135 specialist voluntary sector agencies providing a range of counselling, therapeutic and support services working with women, men and children who are victims/ survivors of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse.

<http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/find-support/>

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<sup>15</sup> CTBI (2002) Rev K Galloway and Rev D Gamble, Time for Action: A Report of Sexual Abuse Issues.

<sup>16</sup> See Section 4.2E

**MACSAS (Ministry and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)** is a support group for women and men from Christian backgrounds who have been sexually abused by Ministers or Clergy, as children or as adults. They support both survivors who have remained within their Christian communities and those who have left. <http://www.macsas.org.uk/>

**NAPAC – National Association for People Abused in Childhood** campaigns and offers support. It has a Freephone information line on 0800 085 3330 and a resources website. [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)

**S: VOX** An organisation for survivors of any sort of abuse as a child or an adult. Offers support, education and advocacy. [www.svox.org.uk](http://www.svox.org.uk)

## **5.2 Supporting those affected by suspected child abuse and disclosures**

The church has a unique opportunity to offer sensitive pastoral ministry to all who are involved. When, in a case of suspected abuse, the safety of the individual has been assured, it is vital that the church creates structures whereby workers can be counselled and supported.

Similar help can be offered to others surrounding the child or vulnerable adult who may be adversely affected by what has happened. This may include the abuser and those who are close to him/her but the safety and wellbeing of the child or vulnerable person must always be a priority.

The church community has a significant role to play in providing a supportive and caring environment but it is likely that most people will require specialist advice and support by experienced professionals or counsellors.

## **5.3 Good practice when dealing with people who are known offenders or abusers**

When a known offender joins a church, it is important that he/she is welcomed in a friendly manner; however, it is equally important that a frank discussion takes place with the individual. The church has a responsibility to consider and respond to the risk, but also has an opportunity to provide support and care to the individual.

The Interdenominational Panel's Safeguarding Officer should be included at the beginning of any response to the situation and will work with the church and any relevant professionals from statutory agencies to implement a plan. This will set out clear boundaries to protect the children/young people/vulnerable adults and also to limit any possibility that the individual is wrongly accused of abusing someone.

Part of this plan will be an agreement which will be signed by the offender and will be reviewed and enforced. It may include the following statements:

The individual should:

- only attend specific meetings
- sit apart from children
- stay away from parts of a building frequented by children
- attend a 'house group' which does not include children
- decline hospitality where there are children
- never be alone with children
- never work with children

Also:

- Consideration will be given to the appropriateness of informing the church. This should only be done in conjunction with a formal public protection plan.
- Ensure that key leaders are aware of the situation and that people are in place to offer support and monitor the situation locally.
- The offender should be aware of the consequences if he/she breaches the agreement. This may include being banned from the church and other churches, and the agencies who are involved with the public protection plan being informed.

## **5.4 Treatment for Offenders and sources of support**

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*This section is based on a Section from the CCPAS Safe and Secure Manual (Sourced October 2013)*

Research shows that those who complete treatment are less likely to fantasise about children or deny they harmed their victims, and show more self-control. They are, therefore, less likely to re-offend. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, acknowledged experts in the area of sex offending, provides community based assessment and intervention programmes.

They also manage 'Stop It Now! UK & Ireland', which provides a confidential helpline for adults uneasy about their sexual inclinations, as well as those who have concerns about the behaviour of someone else such as a partner, relative or friend. The evidence shows that potential offenders are more likely to contact 'Stop It Now! UK & Ireland' when they need help.

### **For information about Projects including Circles of Support & Accountability and Leisure Watch contact:**

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation  
The Wolvercote Centre, Nightingale House, 46 - 48 East Street, Epsom, KT17 1HB  
Tel: 0870 774 6354  
Fax: 01372 847162  
Email: [wolvercote@lucyfaithfull.org](mailto:wolvercote@lucyfaithfull.org)

### **For information regarding referrals, training or consultancy contact:**

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation  
Bordesley Hall, The Holloway, Alvechurch, Birmingham, B48 7QA  
Tel: 01527 591922  
Fax: 01527 591924  
Email: [bordesley@lucyfaithfull.org](mailto:bordesley@lucyfaithfull.org)

### **Stop it Now! UK & Ireland**

PO Box 9841 Birmingham, B48 7WB  
Telephone/Fax: 01527 598184  
Email: [office@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:office@stopitnow.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0808 1000 900  
Email: [help@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:help@stopitnow.org.uk)  
Web [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

### **Circles of Support and Accountability**

(Circles), enables volunteers to become "buddies" to an offender released into the community. Such schemes are operating successfully in conjunction with local churches. The idea, which originated in Canada and was run by the Mennonite Community, was first developed in 1994. In the UK, the idea has initially run through the Quaker Peace and Social Witness department of the British Quakers in 2002. In April 2008, Circles UK formed as a charity acting as an umbrella for different Circles groups to ensure

consistent quality standards in this work.

Circles UK, 1 St Giles Court, Southampton Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2QL

Telephone: 0118 950 0068

Fax: 0118 950 0064

Email: [info@circles-uk.org.uk](mailto:info@circles-uk.org.uk)

Website: [www.circles-uk.org.uk](http://www.circles-uk.org.uk)

### **Sanctuary**

As of 1st January 2010, 'Sanctuary' became a part of CCPAS. The aims are to provide education, training and support in accordance with Christian principles for places of worship involved in the pastoral care of people who have sexually abused children with the aim of promoting the care, resettlement and rehabilitation of such persons and protecting the health and safety of children.

Sanctuary, PO Box 8953, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9WN

Tel: 0844 3576573

Email: [sanctuary@ccpas.co.uk](mailto:sanctuary@ccpas.co.uk)

