



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

ENGLAND AND WALES

Resolution: Safeguarding

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, PLENARY MEETING, NOVEMBER 2011

Working with Survivors and Towards Healing

Survivors of abuse who come to the Church for pastoral help rightly expect to be welcomed and listened to, and to be understood and supported. As Bishops, we acknowledge this has not been adequately developed as an integral part of our safeguarding work.

At our meeting we received a verbal report from the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC), an independent body which we established to monitor and audit the compliance of the Church with safeguarding procedures. We are very grateful to the NCSC and our agency, the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service, for the continuing discussions which have been taking place with a number of survivor organisations.

Listening to that experience, and learning from each other's work with survivors, we seek to fulfil the injunction of Pope Benedict on his visit to the United Kingdom last year. He said "Our first interest is for the victims: how can we repair the damage done?What can we do to help them overcome this trauma, to regain their life and rediscover confidence in the message of Christ? Care, commitment to victims is the first priority, with material, psychological, spiritual aid".

We strongly encourage the NCSC to continue developing a 'Care Pathway' for victims and survivors, which will help to ensure that the Church responds appropriately and sensitively to their needs at every stage. We have also asked the NCSC to continue their work on developing guidance to dioceses and religious orders on how best to ensure the Church can act pastorally to care for victims without compromising the legal rights and freedoms of all involved. The care of survivors remains a priority for all of us.