

Towards Peace

Spiritual Support
for Survivors of Abuse
by Catholic Church Personnel
in Ireland



Policy and Procedures

April 2021

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Purpose of this Document

This document sets out the policies of Towards Peace, the procedures to be followed in implementing the policies and templates for documents to be used in the implementation of policy and delivery of the service. The templates can be changed and adapted as determined by the Coordinator of Towards Peace, provided that such changes and adaptations do not represent a departure from these policies. Changes to policy require the approval of the Oversight Committee of Towards Peace.

Introduction to Towards Peace

Healing after Abuse by Catholic Church Personnel in Ireland

Towards Peace offers spiritual accompaniment free of charge to people who have suffered abuse from representatives of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It is part of the pastoral response of the Irish Catholic Church to survivors of sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse arising from the awareness that: “Abuse by clergy and religious often has a profoundly negative impact on the faith of those abused, and on that of their families,” (Towards Healing and Renewal, p.10). Following consultation with a number of parties, beginning with survivors of abuse, a structure of spiritual support for survivors was announced in the Irish Catholic Bishops’ document, Towards Healing and Renewal, in March 2011. It was described as “a new initiative for survivors whose faith has been damaged and who want to work through this particular consequence of their abuse” (p. 11).

In the extensive interview given in August 2013 to the Editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Pope Francis spoke movingly about the priority the Church needs to give to ‘the healing of wounds and the warming of hearts’. “I see the Church as a field hospital after battle,” he said. “It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he or she has high cholesterol and about the level of their blood sugars! You have to heal their wounds. Then you can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds ... And you have to start from the ground up.”

The wounds inflicted in the recent past by representatives of the Catholic Church in Ireland are many and they go deep. We have learned to acknowledge the existence of harsh regimes, excessive punishments, humiliating practices and condemnatory attitudes, and we have seen how these have left lasting scars on people who endured them. We have come to accept the fact that children and other vulnerable people were abused - sexually,

physically, emotionally and spiritually - by people acting in the name of the Church, secure in the immunity their position offered them. We have learned too how people in leadership roles protected the institution at the expense of the innocent, allowing the guilty to go free and further placing people at risk.

That this has taken place in the name of Jesus Christ, who came to assert the dignity of everyone, especially the most vulnerable in our world, has added greatly to the confusion and alienation felt by many people. Religious words ring hollow in the light of such contradictions. Where was the compassion of Jesus when all this was taking place? Where was the loving Father when his little ones were humiliated or abandoned? And where can God be found now, after his image has been tarnished or even obliterated by people claiming to act in God's name?

When the counselling service *Faoiseamh* - later renamed *Towards Healing* - was set up in 1996, it was in the hope that the wounds inflicted by this abuse could at least begin to be healed, and the evidence suggests that such has been the case for many people. Since the service was initiated over 5,000 clients have availed of counselling and other support services offered. Feedback from those who have taken part has been mainly positive. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who have contributed to the building up of the range of services under the Towards Healing banner.

Additional questions, perhaps beyond the reach of counselling, remain for many people who have experienced the trauma of abuse: *What has been the spiritual impact of my own abuse experience as I reflect on my life? How can I stay connected or re-connect with a God that I can trust and relate to? How might prayer become a helpful part of my life? How might I journey not in isolation but in the company of other seekers? How might I experience the consolation of the sacraments?*

These questions, and many others like them, can lurk in the depths of the heart, frequently not articulated or even fully acknowledged. The service of Towards Peace is offered as another form of support to survivors of abuse who wish to begin, resume or continue their search for meaning; their journey into wholeness, their spiritual quest. Each person's journey is unique and unpredictable, and ultimately mysterious. Towards Peace hopes to join people on the road, to be with people in their search, to help people articulate their questions, and to support people as they explore their spiritual needs now.

There is no predetermined road map for this journey; each person starts at a different point and walks at a different pace. Towards Peace invites those who wish to set out on the road, to explore the vistas that open up on the way, and to discover their own path that leads towards deeper peace.

Section 1: Vision of Towards Peace

Vision

The vision of Towards Peace is to provide a safe supportive space, where people who have been impacted by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.

Towards Peace realises that abuse by Church personnel in particular, may have an especially traumatic impact on spirituality; shattering a person's sense of wholeness, rupturing their inherent trust in their own goodness and sacredness, and fracturing their relationship with the presence of God within themselves and their lives. We are very much aware that this kind of abuse, which harms a person's core in the name of 'God', can create deep lifelong spiritual wounds.

In seeking to offer a pathway 'towards peace', we respect that the journey of healing from spiritual injuries is a painful, complex and unique journey for each person. With the difficulty of this work in mind, Towards Peace is committed to the ongoing development of responsible practice, which necessarily includes competency, accountability, transparency and collaboration.

Implementing the Vision

The initial focus of Towards Peace was offering spiritual support through one-to-one spiritual companioning. Towards Peace is committed to continuing to provide this service and to offer other services including retreats, workshops and discussion groups.

The people who offer one to one spiritual direction are trained and qualified Spiritual Companions. They are committed to ongoing specialised training to further develop their competency to work with people who have been abused by Catholic Church personnel in Ireland. Other developing services will be provided by suitably qualified and experienced professionals.

Section 2: Policies related to Clients

2.a Eligibility for the Service

The service is for:

- Adult survivors of abuse by individual Church personnel or in Church-run institutions on the island of Ireland;
- Family members of survivors.

The general principle is that the service should accept all who come with a spiritual need within the parameters above.

The service is accessed through initial telephone contact by a potential client. When a person phones, the caller and the Towards Peace Coordinator will discuss and agree on the most appropriate support for that person at that time.

2.b Referral Policy

If suitable for their needs, clients will be encouraged to avail of the services of Towards Healing by completing the Client Self-Referral Assessment Form (Appendix 1).

Section 3: Policies related to Spiritual Companions

3.a One-to-One Spiritual Companionship

Clients may opt to be referred for a programme of Spiritual Companionship, in which case a letter of referral will be issued to the Client (Appendix 2) and to the Spiritual Companion (Appendix 8), which sets out the terms of the particular individual engagement. If after the first introductory meeting the Client and the Spiritual Companion are happy to pursue with accompaniment they both sign the Towards Peace Working Agreement (Appendix 9).

Spiritual Companionship sessions will be funded by Towards Peace and provided free of charge to the Client.

Sessions will be held in premises which are as convenient as practicable for the Client. Alternatively, phone or video calls are also possible.

Initially the programme will offer 12 monthly sessions of one hour each. Progress will be reviewed by the Coordinator with the Client and Spiritual Companion every 4 sessions. If after 8 sessions, the Client and Spiritual Companion anticipate that 12 sessions will not provide enough time for the Towards Peace work to continue, a maximum of an additional 6 sessions will be offered.

A final Service Evaluation (Appendix 3 and Appendix 10) will be made after the last session, so that the outcome of the service may be monitored.

3.b Engagement of Spiritual Companions

Spiritual companions will be identified in various regions throughout the Island of Ireland so that the service will be available to potential clients within a reasonable travelling distance.

Criteria for Engagement of Spiritual Companions

The following criteria are mandatory as each one is rooted in an aspect of ethical practice (Commitment, Community, Awareness, Wellbeing, Accountability).

Mandatory:

Towards Peace Spiritual Companions must:

- Hold a Spiritual Direction Qualification from a recognised training body or equivalent. (*Commitment*)

Towards Peace recognises the following Training Bodies:

- ✓ *Manresa Centre of Spirituality* (including outreach programmes)
 - ✓ *Anamcharadas*
 - ✓ *An Croí*
 - ✓ *Ennismore Heart Network*
 - ✓ *Vincentian Spiritual Direction Training*
 - ✓ *Courses approved by AISGA*
- Have a minimum level of Associate Membership with AISGA* (including abidance by the AISGA Code of Ethics). *(Community)*
 - Have experience in Spiritual Accompaniment. *(Awareness)*
 - Have a commitment to participate in ongoing specialised training. *(Awareness)*
 - Be in ongoing personal spiritual direction. *(Wellbeing)*
 - Commit to supervision for Towards Peace work*. *(Wellbeing)*
 - Be willing to work within the Towards Peace best practice framework. *(Accountability)*
 - Treat Towards Peace work as self-employment - be prepared to submit invoices; manage one's own taxes; have access to appropriate venues for meetings; be compliant with all relevant legislation including reporting procedures, health and safety, and data protection. *(Accountability)*

Desirable:

It is hoped that Towards Peace Spiritual Companions will:

- Have previous experience working in the area of trauma/abuse by Catholic Church personnel in Ireland. *(Awareness)*

** Towards Peace will cover annual practice insurance and supervision fees for Towards Peace work and, in the first year of recruitment, membership fees for the All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association (AISGA).*

Procedures for identifying new Spiritual Companions

1. Criteria for Spiritual Companion are sent to the applicant.
2. The applicant is asked to forward:
 - a. A letter indicating why they are interested in being a Spiritual Companion;
 - b. A completed Application Form (Appendix 4);
 - c. Names of two Referees. *If the applicant is a religious, one of the referees should be the provincial superior. If the applicant is a diocesan priest, the bishop should be a referee.*

These are then submitted to the Oversight Committee.

3. Applicants are interviewed by two people agreed by the Oversight Committee.
4. The names of suitable applicants are recommended to the Oversight Committee for appointment.

Appointment/Engagement of Spiritual Companions

The successful applicant will be appointed (Appendix 6) on his/her acceptance of the service agreement (Appendix 5) which sets out their role and terms of appointment. S/he is then registered and placed on a panel from which Spiritual Companions may be selected for the referral of Clients.

Insurance

Professional Indemnity Insurance will be paid for by Towards Peace for all approved personnel involved in the service, including the Spiritual Companions.

Remuneration

Spiritual Companions will be remunerated at a rate of up to €40 per session, payable on submission of invoices (Appendix 7). When a client cancels within 24 hours of a scheduled appointment, or does not attend a scheduled appointment, €20 per session is payable on submission of invoice. Where the Spiritual Companion is giving services voluntarily, a communication to the Coordinator regarding the sessions conducted with Clients will still be required in order to monitor the service delivered and Client progress.

Travel Expenses

Where a significant amount of travel is to be incurred by a Spiritual Companion, the Coordinator should be advised of this in advance. In this case, travel expenses may be paid to Spiritual Companions. When agreed, these expenses will be paid in line with rates approved by the Oversight Committee.

Termination

If a Spiritual Companion wishes to withdraw service, s/he will be removed from the Panel at their request. Towards Peace reserves the right to remove a Spiritual Companion from the panel at any time.

3.c Engagement of Supervisors for Spiritual Companions

Towards Peace has a Duty of Care to its Spiritual Companions. We recognise that this work has the capacity to impact a Companion physically, psychologically, spiritually and

relationally. Consequently we have a Panel of Supervisors who are available to support the Spiritual Companion in this role. Towards Peace requires confirmation from the Supervisor that the on-going work of the Spiritual Companion is satisfactory.

Criteria for membership of Supervisor Panel:

Mandatory:

- ✓ Qualification in Spiritual Direction or equivalent.
- ✓ Qualification in Supervision / Accreditation from Supervisors Association of Ireland (SAI) or equivalent.

Desirable:

- ✓ Experience working or supervising in the area of trauma/abuse by Church personnel in Ireland.

Spiritual Companions and their Supervisors are required to operate at highest professional standard and to adhere to the AISGA Code of Ethics.

See Appendices:

- Appendix 11: Supervisor Application form
- Appendix 12: Supervisor Service Agreement
- Appendix 13: Supervisor Appointment Letter
- Appendix 14: Supervisor Invoice and Expense Claim

Section 4: Policies related to Structure, Organisation and Governance

4.a Funding

Funding for the service will be made available through the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC) and the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI).

The Oversight Committee will approve an annual budget.

Financial control and administration will be under the direction of the Finance and General Purposes Office, Columba Centre, who will provide reports of expenditure as required.

4.b Media Policy

Towards Peace will be actively promoted with the assistance of the Communications Office of the Irish Episcopal Conference. The approval of the Oversight Committee is required for any promotional materials to be used.

In the event of a request being received from journalistic media, the query will be referred to the Coordinator who will consult with the Chair of the Oversight Committee and seek the advice of the Communications Office before responding to the query.

4.c Towards Peace Office

Coordinator

The primary role of the Coordinator will be to provide a welcoming interface between the service, the service providers and the clients and to make every effort to see that their needs are met within the provisions of the service.

With reference to clients, the Coordinator will:

- ✓ Establish a good relationship with those who approach the service by phone and face to face
- ✓ Assign clients to a spiritual companion, or refer them to other appropriate services
- ✓ In consultation with the spiritual companions monitor client progress and the

effectiveness of the service

- ✓ Ensure that a data base of clients availing of the service is maintained

With reference to the Oversight Committee of Towards Peace, the Coordinator will:

- ✓ Manage the administration of the business of the Oversight Committee including preparation of the agenda in consultation with the chairperson and attend meetings
- ✓ Monitor the finances of the service, including assisting in the drafting of an annual budget and financial statements for the Oversight Committee
- ✓ Propose Policies and Procedures to support delivery of the service
- ✓ Maintain collaborative relationships with other relevant services
- ✓ In collaboration with the Chairperson, ensure that the initiative is evaluated by the Oversight Committee, and that steps are taken to ensure that it develops appropriately

With reference to the Spiritual Companions, the Coordinator will:

- ✓ Coordinate the induction, training and review sessions of the Spiritual Companions
- ✓ Issue contracts to the Spiritual Companions
- ✓ Monitor the effectiveness of the Spiritual Companions in their delivery of the service
- ✓ Manage administration and payments

4.d Towards Peace Oversight Committee

Oversight Committee

1. The direction and governance of the service is vested in an Oversight Committee.

2. The Oversight Committee is accountable to the IEC and AMRI and reports to them.
3. The day to day and operational management is vested in the Coordinator.
4. The IEC will indemnify the service under its own insurance arrangements.

Composition

The sponsoring bodies nominate a number of people to the Oversight Committee and the Oversight Committee nominates any additional members so that the maximum membership does not exceed 7. The members of the Oversight Committee include Spiritual Companions, a member or members of the Survivor population and others with relevant skills, experience and expertise. The Oversight Committee aims for a balanced membership of lay and religious and male and female members. The Coordinator is not a member of the Oversight Committee but attends Oversight Committee meetings, as required. Members are required to observe confidentiality with regard to the business of the Oversight Committee. A quorum will consist of half the members of the Oversight Committee plus one.

Term of Office

The term of office for Oversight Committee members is three years with the possibility of re-appointment for one further term.

The Role of the Oversight Committee is to:

1. Ensure that the service operates in a manner consistent with the ethos of the Catholic Church and within the framework approved by the sponsoring bodies
2. Set the appropriate direction for the service, in accordance with the approved policies
3. Review, approve and monitor the service on an ongoing basis
4. Approve the annual budget
5. Amend and develop policies with the approval of the sponsoring bodies
6. Ensure that the Coordinator of Towards Peace is supported in the administration of the service;
7. Allocate responsibility for specific tasks to Oversight Committee members
8. Approve the arrangements for the appointment and remuneration of spiritual companions, staff and any contracted professional services
9. Hold Oversight Committee Meetings on a regular basis

10. Share collective responsibility for Oversight Committee decisions
11. Ensure compliance with best practice Child Protection Policies, in keeping with *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2016)
12. Report regularly to the IEC and AMRI at such other times as may be requested
13. Publish an Annual Report

Role and responsibility of Chairperson

The Chairperson's primary role is to ensure that the Oversight Committee is effective in its task of setting and implementing the direction and strategy of Towards Peace.

1. The Chairperson is appointed by a two thirds majority of the Oversight Committee for a three year term.
2. The Chairperson will act as the leading representative of the Oversight Committee.
3. The duties of the Chairperson will be:
 - a. Chair Oversight Committee Meetings
 - b. Draw up the Agenda in consultation with the Coordinator
 - c. Ensure that the Oversight Committee receives accurate, timely and clear information and encourage the full contribution of each member to discussions and tasks
 - d. When a vote is necessary, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote
 - e. The Chairperson shall ensure effective communication with the IEC and AMRI
 - f. Foster a good working relationship with, and provide support to the Coordinator

Sub-committees of the Oversight Committee

1. The Oversight Committee may establish sub-committees as the need arises
2. The members of the sub-committees will be Oversight Committee members and, where appropriate and agreed by the Oversight Committee, people from outside the Oversight Committee with expertise or experience relevant to the work of the sub-committee
3. The number and composition of the sub-committee and their length of service will be determined by the Oversight Committee

4. The sub-committees will be assigned specific tasks and will report through the Coordinator to the Oversight Committee, unless the Chairperson of the sub-committee is also an Oversight Committee member, in which case the Chairperson shall report
5. The Oversight Committee will appoint a member of the sub-committee to be the chairperson
6. The Coordinator of Towards Peace will provide administrative and secretarial support to the sub-committee
7. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Coordinator shall prepare the agenda
8. The Oversight Committee may decide to suspend or discontinue a sub-committee

Section 5: Safeguarding Policy

Child Protection Statement

Towards Peace provides a spiritual support service. Our client group are adult men and women, and their families, who have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse either in childhood or as an adult, perpetrated by a priest, brother, religious sister, volunteer or employee of the Catholic Church on the island of Ireland. Towards Peace is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children by protecting them from harm. Accordingly, Towards Peace operates in compliance with the *Children First Act 2015*, *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017) and *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016). All child protection concerns, that is, allegations that a child has been abused or suspicions that child abuse may have occurred, are reported to the civil authorities.

The designated liaison person (DLP) for Towards Peace is Kevin Duffy. Kevin is the person nominated by Towards Peace to receive child protection concerns on behalf of the organisation, to decide whether the information received reaches the threshold for reporting to the civil authorities and to make the reports in accordance with this policy. Kevin can be contacted on +353 (0)91 575053/ 565066 or by email on duffykf57@gmail.com

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on ‘mandated persons’ to report child protection concerns to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and to assist Tusla, if requested, in the assessment of the reported concern. Included in the definition of a mandated person is a “member of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care

(howsoever described) of a church or other religious community”. Given that Towards Peace provides a form of pastoral care and is funded by the Catholic Church, we must assume that the Coordinator of Towards Peace and the spiritual companions are mandated persons and, as such, are required to report to Tusla any child protection concerns that they come across in the course of their work on behalf of Towards Peace.

The Coordinator and spiritual companions can discharge their legal obligation to notify Tusla of a child protection concern by forwarding the information to the DLP, Kevin Duffy. Kevin Duffy will then notify Tusla on the appropriate form, naming the person who has reported the matter to him as a joint reporter.

There are circumstances that require notification to be made to the Gardai as well as to Tusla and it will be for Kevin Duffy, as DLP, to determine whether this is required in any given situation and to make such reports.

Reporting Abuse

The majority of the clients of Towards Peace are adult survivors of child abuse. If this is the case, at the time of registration for spiritual support the client is informed that either:

- They are required to confirm that their abuse has already been reported to the civil authorities and give Towards Peace permission to verify this, for example, by contacting the organisation to which they reported their abuse (Appendix 15), or
- They are required to name their abuser(s) or provide identifying information about the context of the abuse they suffered so that this information can be passed to the civil authorities in accordance with national and church child protection guidelines.

The reporting requirements can be difficult for a client who has not previously disclosed this information to the civil authorities. Towards Peace will approach this matter with the client with sensitivity and allow time and opportunity for clarification and consideration of the implications for the client of sharing the information of their abuse with the civil authorities.

The threshold for reporting child protection concerns is defined in *Children First*. It states that once reasonable grounds for concern are established, the matter must be reported. A statement from a client that he or she was abused by a named person constitutes reasonable grounds for concern. It is important that such information is notified to the civil authorities promptly, that is, within three working days, especially when there is information to suggest that the person alleged to have perpetrated abuse is still alive and in contact with children.

Where the information received suggests that the person alleged to have perpetrated abuse ('the respondent') is still alive and working or in contact with children in a church context, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the relevant diocese or religious order should also be informed.

It is the responsibility of Towards Peace to pass on the information to the civil authorities through the DLP (or directly, if for some reason the DLP is not available), and it is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána to investigate whether a crime has been committed and for Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to determine whether there is a current risk to children. Towards Peace has no role in investigating alleged abuse or in assessing risk to children. Where there is any doubt about whether or not the matter ought to be formally notified to the civil authorities, the DLP will consult with them and follow their direction. A note will be kept of the discussion and decisions made.

Towards Peace cannot provide a service to a client who does not accept the reporting requirements.

The Coordinator of Towards Peace will explain the reporting requirements to those people who make contact seeking a service and the reporting to the civil authorities will be completed before the person begins their engagement with a spiritual companion. However, if a new child protection concern comes to light in the course of the spiritual companionship that concern must also be reported to the civil authorities. This could be about a matter unrelated to abuse suffered by the client in a church context, for example, abuse by a friend or family member.

The spiritual companions are required to confirm that they understand the child protection reporting requirements and agree to operate in compliance with them.

A report should be made to the DLP when a client discloses that they suffered abuse as a child, as described above. A report should also be made when the Coordinator of Towards Peace or a spiritual companion picks up on a concern from a client about their own children or other children. If the DLP decides that the information does not reach the threshold for reporting to the civil authorities, a record of the information and the action taken in relation to it should be made and retained. The decision not to report may have to be reconsidered if further information comes to light.

Information to be shared with the civil authorities would normally include:

- Information about the abuse experience, including:
 1. The victim's age at the time of the abuse
 2. What is known of the nature of the abuse
 3. When the abuse happened

4. The duration of the abuse, whether it consisted of one incident or a number of incidents
 5. Where the abuse occurred
- Information about the alleged perpetrator of abuse:
 1. The name of the alleged offender or
 2. Identifying information, such as, “the parish priest in X parish in 1987”, “the maths teacher in Y School in 1977”
 3. The order / diocese to which alleged offender belonged (if a priest or religious)
 4. The current location of the alleged offender, if known

Definitions of Abuse

Taken from *Children First, 2017*

- **Neglect** - “occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally”
- **Emotional Abuse** - “is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of an overall relationship between a caregiver and a child”.
- **Sexual Abuse** - “When a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others”
- **Physical Abuse**- “is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt”.

Types of Reporting

- **Clients who wish to report themselves**
If the client wishes to report a child protection concern, then Towards Peace will support the person to do so. Towards Peace will follow up all self-reports by clients with a letter to support and reinforce the information and to ensure the information has been received.

- **Callers who wish Towards Peace to make a Report**

If the client wishes Towards Peace to report the child protection concern the DLP will report to the appropriate civil authority or authorities in writing. Copies of the correspondence will be shared with the client, if he or she so wishes. The client's name and contact details will be passed on to the appropriate authorities and the implications of this, in terms of possible contact with the client from the civil authorities, will be explained to them.

- **Anonymous Callers**

An allegation of abuse will carry more weight if the caller/client is prepared to give his/her name and contact details to Towards Peace than if the caller is anonymous. However, in the case of anonymous callers who give information, a report will be made by the DLP to the appropriate authority or authorities.

Reporting Procedures

As outlined above, the designated liaison person (DLP) has overall responsibility for ensuring that child protection concerns are reported to the civil authorities. All information of a child protection nature that comes to the attention of the Coordinator of Towards Peace or to the spiritual companions must be shared with the DLP in accordance with this policy.

If a client discloses information that is of a child protection nature the Coordinator or spiritual companion should record in writing all the information shared. This information should be factual, accurate, legible, signed and dated and forwarded to the Towards Peace DLP. The DLP will ensure that this information is reported to the appropriate authority or authorities without delay.

Stages in Reporting

- 1) Every client is informed of the reporting policy
- 2) A child protection concern is shared with the Towards Peace Coordinator or a spiritual companion
- 3) The client is reminded of the reporting policy
- 4) The Coordinator or spiritual companion makes a written record of the information shared. This record is written/ typed and provides a factually accurate account of what was disclosed. It is dated and signed
- 5) The information is passed to the DLP.
- 6) The DLP opens a file on the case

- 7) The DLP decides whether or not there is a child protection concern that meets the threshold for reporting to the civil authorities and informs the various parties of his or her decision
- 8) The DLP may need to clarify the information to be reported with the client, the Coordinator or the spiritual companion before making a decision on reporting
- 9) The DLP informs the various parties of their right to take the concern directly to the civil authorities in any situation where s/he decides not to make a report
- 10) The DLP reports the information to the civil authorities, naming the Coordinator or spiritual companion, as appropriate, as joint reporter in the notification to Tusla and retains a copy of his report
- 11) The DLP keeps an accurate and up to date record of all correspondence and communication regarding the concern
- 12) The DLP keeps the client and Coordinator of Towards Peace informed, as appropriate, of any developments in relation to the matter

Confidentiality, Data Protection and Record Keeping

Towards Peace recognises the importance of ensuring every person's right to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about complainants and respondents in so far as this is possible and lawful. When a child protection concern arises the information is shared on a "need to know" basis, that is, it is shared with those who need to know it in order to ensure that children are protected from harm. The information is shared in accordance with the requirements of church and national child protection guidelines, this policy and as required by law. Sharing information about child protection concerns, following the procedure outlined in this policy, with the appropriate authorities is not a breach of confidentiality. Those who work for or on behalf of Towards Peace cannot give an undertaking to a client not to disclose information about child protection concerns on the grounds of confidentiality.

The **Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012** creates an offence of failing to disclose to the Gardaí, without reasonable excuse, information relating to certain specified serious offences against a child or a vulnerable person, where it is known or believed that the information will be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person known or believed by the first person to have committed an offence. The

specified offences include most sexual offences and others such as assault causing harm, abduction, manslaughter and murder.

The **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998** provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse to the relevant authorities “reasonably and in good faith”. Even if the reported concern proves unfounded, the person taking action against a reporter would have to prove that he or she had not acted “reasonably and in good faith”. As well as providing protection from civil liability, the Act protects reporters from being penalised by their employers for reporting child abuse. However, it is an offense to report child abuse in the knowledge that the information reported is false.

Data protection legislation attempts to ensure that an individual’s right to privacy and dignity are respected, particularly regarding the use and sharing of personal data (information), whether the personal data is held electronically or in manual form.

Towards Peace operates in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) whose principles include;

- a) Lawful, Fair and Transparent processing
- b) Specified and Lawful Purpose
- c) Data Minimisation
- d) Accuracy
- e) Storage Limitation
- f) Security, Integrity and Confidentiality
- g) Liability and Accountability

The records of Towards Peace that contain personal information about clients, spiritual companions and others and are stored in secure, locked cabinets and can only be accessed by members of staff. Computer records are password protected and encrypted. Those staff members accessing computer records are required to log on to computers using their own personalised password. Records relating to child protection concerns are retained for 100 years. Other records are removed once they are no longer required for the purpose for which they were created.

Those on whom the Towards Peace holds personal data are entitled to it subject to limited exceptions. Applications to obtain such personal data should be made to the Coordinator of Towards Peace in writing accompanied by proof of identity. There is no charge for this.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Civil Authorities

The **Child and Family Agency (Tusla)** is the dedicated state agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. The role of Tusla in relation to child protection is to assess current risk to children and implement appropriate protective measures.

Reports to Tusla are made through the Tusla portal: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/>

Responsibility for investigation of alleged crimes rests with **An Garda Síochána**.

When reporting a child protection concern that is not church related, for example, a concern about the children of a client, it is sufficient to report to Tusla. However, if the matter is urgent and contact with Tusla cannot be established, the concern should be reported to the Gardaí. It should be reported to the Duty Sergeant in the area in which the complainant or the child about whom the concern has been expressed lives.

Contact details of the local Garda station are available on:

<http://www.garda.ie/Stations/Default.aspx>

Reports of abuse by a cleric or religious should be reported to both Tusla and the Gardaí.

These reports should be sent to:

Sexual Crime Management Unit,
Garda National Protective Services Bureau,
Harcourt Square,
Dublin 2
Phone: +353 1 6663430

Email: NBCI_SCMU@garda.ie (note: the space between ‘NBCI’ and ‘SCMU’ is underscored)

An Garda Síochána will accept copies of completed Tusla notifications so there is no need to complete a separate form for notification to the Gardaí.

SECTION 6: Health and Safety

The Office and personnel of Towards Peace based at the Columba Centre will comply with the Columba Centre Safety Statement of October 2019.

Spiritual Companions as Self-employed Service Providers will be responsible for statutory compliance in terms of their own health and safety and that of Towards Peace clients.

SECTION 7: Complaints Procedure

From time to time, a client may wish to express negative feedback or make a complaint. If the complaint is made to the companion, the complainant should be referred to the Coordinator who will:

- Advise the client that Towards Peace is keen to hear all feedback about the service, both positive and negative.
- S/he will listen to the client and determine the nature of the complaint.
- The Coordinator will attempt to resolve the matter and will explain or offer an apology as appropriate and note the conversation and outcome.
- If the matter is not resolved in this way to the satisfaction of the client, the Coordinator will advise the client that s/he may put the matter in writing to the Oversight Committee if s/he wishes it to be investigated further as a formal complaint.
- The Coordinator will advise that the letter may be addressed to the Chairperson and that it should set out clearly the nature and circumstances of the complaint.
- The client may request a meeting with the Chairperson of the Oversight Committee, and both may be accompanied if they wish.

When a written complaint is received:

- The letter will be referred to the Oversight Committee, who will then continue as set out in the above Policy, with all correspondence retained on file. The Oversight Committee will then establish a procedure to be followed.
- The Oversight Committee may at this point inform the Organisation's insurers if appropriate.
- When the formal complaint process has been completed the Coordinator will note that the Oversight Committee has dealt with the matter.

[ENDS]

Appendices

Appendix 1: Client Self-Referral/Assessment Form

Date	
Staff Member Name	
Permission to keep form on file and share only with Spiritual Companion	PLEASE CIRCLE YES NO
CLIENT DETAILS	
NAME	
PIN NUMBER	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)	
POSTAL ADDRESS	
GENDER	
DATE OF BIRTH	
ADDITIONAL NEEDS	
ABILITY TO TRAVEL	
SPIRITUAL COMPANION PREFERENCES: Male/ female; lay/ religious	
LOCATION OF SESSIONS	

CLIENT'S ABUSE EXPERIENCE	
TYPE OF ABUSE	
ROLE OF PERSON WHO PERPETRATED ABUSE	
AGE AT WHICH ABUSE OCCURRED	
IF SEXUAL ABUSE AS A MINOR - WAS IT REPORTED?	
IF ABUSE OCCURRED AS AN ADULT -WAS IT REPORTED?	
SUITABILITY OF TOWARDS PEACE	
HOW DID YOU HEAR OF TOWARDS PEACE?	
REASON FOR CONTACTING TOWARDS PEACE NOW?	
CURRENT CONCERNS RELATED TO IMPACT OF THE ABUSE?	
ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION WORK	
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT	

COMPOUNDING FACTORS I.E. CURRENT CHALLENGES RELATED TO PHYSICAL/ MENTAL HEALTH, LIVING ENVIRONMENT, RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE	
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Appendix 2: Letter of Referral to Client for One to One Accompaniment

Private and Confidential

Dear (Mary),

Further to our telephone conversation this morning, I now enclose (John Murphy's) details in order that you can make contact with him in your own time, and at your own pace.

John's contact numbers are _____ and he is looking forward to hearing from you to make arrangements for your first meeting, should you decide to go ahead.

As I explained to you when we spoke, following your initial meeting with (John), at which time you will both have an opportunity to decide whether or not you wish to go ahead with the process, **Towards Peace** then offers a further twelve sessions, which will, we hope be of help to you in meeting your spiritual needs.

As you can imagine, it is important that we know how helpful our service is, therefore we would really appreciate your feedback and I would hope to be in contact with you in the coming weeks regarding this. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any suggestions or concerns.

Towards Peace is committed to the dignity and spiritual growth of all who avail of the service. We are also committed to the on-going safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults as discussed during our assessment interview on the telephone. We are obliged by law to report to the Gardaí and Tusla any allegations of abuse. (John) will discuss this with you and answer any worries or queries you may have.

In order to protect privacy and confidentiality, we give everyone a PIN number. Your number is XXX. This number will be used in any communications between me and your companion.

If you have any worry or query, please do not hesitate to contact me. I enclose an updated copy of our leaflet for your information

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Coordinator: Towards Peace

Appendix 3: Review by Client

Review by Client

Spiritual Companion Name	
Client PIN	
How many sessions have you attended to date?	
How do you feel you have benefited from the sessions?	
Do you feel you would have benefited from more than 12 sessions?	
Do you have any other feedback, suggestions or, 'ideas' as to how we might improve our service?	

Appendix 4: Spiritual Companion Application Form

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	First Name	Surname

CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone Landline	Mobile Phone	Other

Address for Correspondence:

Email Address: _____

Address at which you will see clients:

Address (1)

Address (2)

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QUALIFICATIONS

Spiritual Direction Qualification

Qualification	Training Body	Date

Other Relevant Qualifications

Qualification	Training Body	Date

EXPERIENCE

Please indicate your experience of providing Spiritual Direction:

If you have experience of working with adults who have experienced abuse by Church personnel or another kind of trauma, please provide details:

SUPERVISION

Name of Supervisor	
Frequency of Supervision	

Date of Application:

Signed

by

Applicant:

The acceptance of your application will be subject to the normal vetting procedures

Appendix 5: Service Agreement for Spiritual Companion

SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR SPIRITUAL COMPANIONS

Name of Spiritual Companion: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

P h o n e
No(s)-----

The following sets out the Terms and Conditions of your Engagement:

You will be engaged on the understanding that you are self-employed:

- That you will manage your own time and resources in the delivery of the service on behalf of Towards Peace.
- That you will comply with the policies and procedures of Towards Peace and with all relevant legislation, including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Finance Acts.
- That you will monitor the limitations of your own competence, and make appropriate referrals.
- That you will notify the Coordinator if you consider that Towards Peace is not the right Service for a particular client.

QUALIFICATIONS

By entering into this agreement you confirm that you are qualified to practice as a Spiritual Companion and that you have relevant experience and an understanding of the context of the clients you will be accompanying on their spiritual journey.

TRAINING/SUPERVISION

In order to ensure that our Service is of the highest standard, we require that you have regular supervision and be willing to avail of any relevant training provided by Towards Peace.

INSURANCE

Professional Indemnity Insurance will be provided for you by Towards Peace.

REMUNERATION

You will be remunerated at a rate of up to €40 per session, payable on submission of invoices at the beginning of March, June, September and December. Invoices will indicate the number of sessions conducted with each client. If you are giving your services voluntarily, the number of sessions conducted with each client will still be required, in order to be able to monitor the service given.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Should you be required to undertake a significant amount of travel in order to meet a client, please advise the Coordinator in advance to discuss payment of travel expenses.

TERMINATION

This Agreement can be terminated by either party with due notice.

Appendix 6: Appointment Letter to Spiritual Companion

Covering letter to Spiritual Companions

Insert full postal address

Dear

Thank you for applying and attending for Interview to join the Panel of Spiritual Companions for Towards Peace. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been successful.

I invite you to sign the enclosed Service Agreement and return it to me in the Columba Centre.

I look forward to working with you, and in the meantime, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Coordinator: Towards Peace

Appendix 7: Spiritual Companion Invoice and Expense Claim

Invoice

Attention: Towards Peace,
The Columba Centre, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Date:

Spiritual Companion	
Address	
Phone No	
Email	
VAT registration no	
Bank details	Account name: Account no: Sort Code: IBAN:

Client PIN (not name)	S e s s i o n Date	Attended/ Cancellation / No Show	Rate	VAT If appropriate	Total
Total					
Other relevant (non- client-related) information.					

Expense Claims for Spiritual Companions

Mileage Expenses

- Where possible public transportation should be used
- Mileage expenses at a flat rate per km will be paid

Other Expenses

Only receipted out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Appendix 8: Letter to Spiritual Companion referring Client

Private and Confidential

Dear (John),

Thank you for agreeing to see our client (Mary Smith) PIN: XXX, of whom we spoke last/ this week.

Her telephone number is: xxxxxxxx. *(It is/ is not okay to leave a voice mail)*

Following your initial meeting together, at which time you will both assess whether or not you wish to proceed; (Mary) has been assigned a programme of up to twelve sessions with Towards Peace. I have written to her today and she will be in contact with you to arrange sessions at your mutual convenience.

The stipend for Towards Peace is €40 per session, following submission of your invoice. For your convenience I have enclosed an Invoice Template on which you may also give details of when the sessions took place. Please submit invoices before 1st March, June, September and December in order to ensure prompt payment. Where a client cancels within 24 hours of the appointment, you may be paid half of the fee; if the client does not attend, without cancelling, you may be paid for the session, but it will count as one of the sessions allocated.

If (Mary) does not contact you within the next number of weeks, please let me know.

In order to progress the service we are continually interested in your feedback on the process. I enclose two Review Forms which, I would be obliged, if you would complete and return to me after the fourth and final/ twelfth session. I will also be asking (Mary) for feedback on her experience.

Again, I wish to thank you for your service. If you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Coordinator: Towards Peace

Appendix 9: Working Agreement

Towards Peace



Working Agreement

The vision of Towards Peace is to provide a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.

We agree that our shared work together will be a safe supportive space to respect the spiritual impact of the abuse.

We agree that spiritual direction work is not the same support as counselling / psychotherapy, or mediation, and that if needs for these supports arise, a referral for support through Towards Healing or another service will be made.

We agree that what is shared in our work together, is shared in confidence. Any written notes about sessional work by the Spiritual Companion will be stored securely and only discussed if necessary in supervision. The Towards Peace Designated Liaison Person must be informed by the Spiritual Companion if there is a threat of harm to any child or vulnerable adult.

We agree to reflect on the helpfulness of our work at the end of every session, and to provide feedback to Towards Peace after every 4 sessions and at the end of the work together.

Starting points to explore (*i.e. reason for contacting Towards Peace*):

Client Name: _____

Client Signature / Date: _____

Spiritual Companion Name: _____

Spiritual Companion Signature / Date: _____

Appendix 10: Review by Spiritual Companion

Review by Spiritual Companion after Session 4 and Session 12

Spiritual Companion Name	
Client PIN	
How many sessions has the client attended to date?	
In your view, how well has the client engaged?	
How do you feel the client has benefitted from the process?	
Do you expect that the client will meet his/her needs in the 12 sessions? Yes/No	
If not, what further help would you recommend?	
Has the client disclosed any information which should be reported under the Child Protection Policy?	
If so, please give details:	

Appendix 11: Supervisor for Spiritual Companion Application Form

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	First Name	Surname

CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone Landline	Mobile	Other

Address for Correspondence:

Email Address: _____

Address at which you will see Spiritual Companion (phone or video calls are also possible):

Address (1)

Address (2)

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QUALIFICATIONS

Spiritual Direction and Supervision Qualifications

Qualification	Training Body	Date

Other Relevant Qualifications

Qualification	Training Body	Date

EXPERIENCE

Please indicate your experience of providing Supervision:

If you have experience of working with adults who have experienced abuse by Church personnel or another kind of trauma, please provide details:

SUPERVISION

Name of Supervisor	
Frequency of Supervision	

Date of Application:

Signed **by** **Applicant:**

The acceptance of your application will be subject to the normal vetting procedures

Appendix 12: Service Agreement for Supervisor

SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR SUPERVISORS

Name of SUPERVISOR: _____

A d d r e s s :

—

Email:

P h o n e

No(s)-----

The following sets out the terms and conditions of your engagement:

You will be engaged on the understanding that you are self-employed:

- That you will manage your own time and resources in the delivery of the service on behalf of Towards Peace.
- That you will comply with the policies and procedures of Towards Peace and with all relevant legislation, including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Finance Acts.
- That you will monitor the limitations of your own competence, and make appropriate referrals.
- That you will notify the Coordinator of any concerns in relation to the process.

QUALIFICATIONS

By entering into this agreement, you confirm that you are qualified to practice as a Supervisor and that you have relevant experience and an understanding of the context of the people you will be supervising.

REMUNERATION

You will be remunerated at a rate of up to €50 per session payable on submission of invoices at the beginning of March, June, September and December. Invoices will indicate the number of sessions conducted with each Spiritual Companion.

TERMINATION

This agreement can be terminated by either party with due notice.

I, _____ confirm that I wish to become a member of the Towards Peace Panel of Supervisors. I have read the above Terms and Conditions and agree to be bound by them, and by the Policies and Procedures of

Appendix 13: Appointment Letter for Supervisor

Covering letter to Supervisors

Dear

Thank you for attending for interview to be part of the Panel of Supervisors for Towards Peace. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been successful.

I now invite you to sign the enclosed Service Agreement and return it to me at the Columba Centre.

I look forward to working with you, and in the meantime if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With every good wish,

Coordinator: Towards Peace

Appendix 14: Supervisor Invoice and Expense Claim

Invoice

**Attention: Towards Peace,
The Columba Centre, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare**

Date:

Supervisor					
Address					
Phone No:					
Email:					
VAT registration no:					
Bank details	Account name: Account no: Sort Code: IBAN:				
Spiritual Companion Name	S e s s i o n Date	Attended/ Cancellation / No Show.	Rate	VAT If appropriate	Total
Total					
Other relevant (non- client-related) information:					

Appendix 15: Consent Form to confirm that child abuse has been reported to the civil authorities

Towards Peace

Consent to confirm that child abuse has been reported to the civil authorities

I _____ (Name)

give my consent to

*(Insert name of the person / agency to whom the abuse
is said to have been reported)*

To confirm to Towards Peace that the abuse I suffered as a child has been reported to the Gardaí / Tusla

Signed _____

Date _____