IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Towards Peace

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

TOWARDS PEACE
SPIRITUAL SUPPORT SERVICE

Policy and Procedures

2026

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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.

Section 1: Vision of Towards Peace

Vision

If we do not transform our pain, we will almost inevitably transmit it.

(Richard Rohr)

The vision of Towards Peace is to provide a safe supportive space, where people who have been abused, physically, emotionally, sexually, spiritually, in a religious/ church environment can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.

Towards Peace offers a pathway, a safe space where people who have been hurt can connect with their own spirituality, their sense of God and the Sacred, their own journey towards peace. The service is free and is also available to the families of those who have been affected.

Abuse by Church personnel can 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. This kind of abuse, which harms a person's core in the name of 'God', can create deep lifelong spiritual wounds.

In Towards Peace, support is provided to survivors through conversations with a spiritual director/companion, an 'anam cara' or soul friend, who endeavours to help each person listen to their own conversations with God – whomever or however they perceive that to be – ever respectful that each person's individual spiritual journey is his or her own. This is a shared experience. There is no sense of the spiritual companion bestowing knowledge or answers, or attempting to bring the survivor back to Church; rather it is a journeying together, unpacking the hurts and the wounds that may have lain dormant for years. There is no pre- determined road map on this journey. Each person travels at their own unique individual pace.

Implementing the Vision

Towards Peace respects 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, we are committed to the ongoing development of responsible practice, which necessarily includes competency, accountability, transparency and collaboration.

While the initial focus is that of offering spiritual support through one-to-one spiritual companioning, Towards Peace is committed to developing other avenues towards peace including retreats, workshops and discussion groups.

Our Spiritual Companions are trained and qualified and are members of AISGA (All Ireland Spiritual Guides Association). 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 are provided by suitably qualified and experienced professionals.

Section 2: Policies related to Service Users

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 service user. When a person phones, the caller and the Towards Peace Coordinator discuss and agree on the most appropriate support for that person at that time.

2.b Referral Policy

If suitable for their needs, service users will be encouraged to avail of the services of Towards Peace by completing the Referral Assessment Form (Appendix 1.)

Section 3: Policies related to Spiritual Companions

3.a One-to-One Spiritual Companioning

Service Users may opt to be referred for a programme of Spiritual Companioning, in which case a letter of referral will be issued to the Service User (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 Service User and the Spiritual Companion are happy to proceed with accompaniment, they both sign the Towards Peace Working Agreement (Appendix 9).

Spiritual Companioning sessions are funded by Towards Peace and provided free of charge to the Service User.

Sessions are held in premises which are as convenient as practicable for the Service User. Alternatively, phone or video calls via zoom etc are also possible.

Initially the programme offers 12 monthly sessions of one hour each. Progress is reviewed by the Coordinator with the Service User and Spiritual Companion every 4 sessions. If after 8 sessions, the Service User and Spiritual Companion anticipate that 12 sessions are not sufficient for the work to reach a satisfactory point of completion an additional 6 sessions are offered.

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

3.b Engagement of Spiritual Companions

Spiritual companions are based in various regions throughout the Island of Ireland so that the service is available to potential clients within a reasonable travelling distance. Meeting virtually is also feasible, subject to agreement by the Service User and the Spiritual Companion

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)

- ✓ *Anamchardas*
- ✓ *An Croí*
- ✓ *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.*
3. Applicants are interviewed by two people agreed by the Oversight Committee.

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 Service Users.

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 €55 per session payable on submission of invoices (Appendix 7). When a Service User cancels within 24 hours of a scheduled appointment, or does not attend a scheduled appointment, €30 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 Service Users will still be required in order to monitor the service delivered and Service User 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. Spiritual Companions may retain their own supervisor for this work or if they prefer, Towards Peace provides supervision through our own resident supervisor. Supervision costs are covered by Towards Peace. Towards Peace requires periodic 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

Towards Peace is funded by the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC) and the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI).

The Oversight Committee approves an annual budget.

Financial control and administration is under the direction of the Finance and General Purposes Office, Columba Centre, which provides reports of expenditure as required.

4.b Media Policy

Towards Peace is 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 is referred to the Coordinator who consults with the Chair of the Oversight Committee and seeks the advice of the IEC Communications Office before responding to the query.

4.c Towards Peace Office

Coordinator

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

With reference to Service Users, the Coordinator endeavours to:

- ✓ Establish a good relationship with those who approach the service by phone and face to face
- ✓ Assign Service Users to a suitable Spiritual Companion, or refer them to other appropriate services
- ✓ In consultation with the Spiritual Companions, monitor Service User progress and the effectiveness of the service
- ✓ Ensure that a data base of Service Users availing of the service is maintained

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

- ✓ Manages the administration of the business of the Oversight Committee including preparation of the agenda in consultation with the chairperson and attends meetings
- ✓ Monitors the finances of the service, including assisting in the drafting of an annual budget and financial statements for the Oversight Committee
- ✓ Proposes Policies and Procedures to support delivery of the service

- ✓ Maintains collaborative relationships with other relevant services
- ✓ In collaboration with the Chairperson, ensures 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:

- ✓ Coordinates the induction, training and review sessions of the Spiritual Companions
- ✓ Issues contracts to the Spiritual Companions
- ✓ Monitors the effectiveness of the Spiritual Companions in their delivery of the service
- ✓ Manages 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 indemnifies 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 eight. The members of the Oversight Committee include Spiritual Companions, at least two 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 5 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 *A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2024)
12. Report regularly to the IEC and AMRI at such other times as may be requested
13. Publish a report every three years

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 the Oversight Committee for a five -year term which may be renewed once.
2. The Chairperson acts as the leading representative of the Oversight Committee.
3. The duties of the Chairperson include:
    a. Chairing Oversight Committee Meetings
    b. Drawing up the Agenda in consultation with the Coordinator
    c. Ensuring that the Oversight Committee receives accurate, timely and clear information and encouraging the full contribution of each member to discussions and tasks
    d. Ensuring effective communication with the IEC and AMRI
    e. Fostering a good working relationship with, and providing 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 Service User 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 *A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2024). 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, in accordance with these laws, policies and guidelines.

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on 'mandated persons' to report child protection concerns to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (unless the perpetrator is known to be deceased) 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 worker (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 designated liaison person (DLP) for Towards Peace.

Towards Peace Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The DLP for Towards Peace is Suzanne Phelan, an independent child welfare consultant with experience of dealing with Church related child protection matters. Suzanne 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. In doing so, Suzanne will name the Coordinator of Towards Peace or the Spiritual Companion who has reported the matter to her as a joint reporter, thus discharging their legal responsibilities as mandated persons. Suzanne can be contacted on 085 1146391 or by email on phelansuzanne@gmail.com.

Reporting Abuse

Towards Peace reports child protection concerns to Tusla and, in certain circumstances, the Gardai as described in the previous section. Allegations of abuse by clerics or religious are also reported to the alleged perpetrator's religious superior (bishop or provincial) and all such allegations are

reported the Gardai and to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Those seeking a service from Towards Peace are advised, at the time of registration, of the reporting requirements.

- They are asked 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 asked 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 and church authorities in accordance with national and church child protection guidelines.

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

It is the responsibility of Towards Peace to pass on the information to the civil authorities through the DLP. 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 does not investigate alleged abuse or assess current 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 Service User 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. 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 Service User 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 Service User discloses that they suffered abuse as a child, as described above. A report should also be made when the Coordinator of Towards Peace if a Spiritual Companion picks up on a concern from a Service User 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

- **Service Users who wish to report themselves**
  If the Service User 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 Service Users 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 Service User wishes Towards Peace to report the child protection concern the DLP reports to the appropriate civil authority or authorities in writing. Copies of the correspondence are shared with the Service User, if he or she so wishes. The Service User's name and contact details are passed on to the appropriate authorities and the implications of this, in terms of possible contact with the Service User from the civil authorities, are explained to them.

- **Anonymous Callers**

An allegation of abuse carries more weight if the caller/Service User 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 is made by the DLP to the appropriate authority or authorities.

Reporting Procedures

If a service user 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 should ensure that this information is reported to the appropriate authority or authorities without delay.

Stages in Reporting

1) Every Service User is informed of the reporting policy
2) A child protection concern is shared with the Towards Peace Coordinator or a Spiritual Companion
3) The Service User 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 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
7) The DLP may need to clarify the information to be reported with the Service User, the Coordinator or the Spiritual Companion before making a decision on reporting
8) 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
9) 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 the report
10) The DLP keeps an accurate and up to date record of all correspondence and communication regarding the concern
11) The DLP keeps the Service User 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 Service Users, 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 can 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, information that a crime has been committed or 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

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 Service Users

SECTION 7: Complaints Procedure

From time to time, a Service User may wish to express negative feedback or make a complaint. If the complaint is made to the Companion, the complainant is referred to the Coordinator who:

- Advises the Service User that Towards Peace is keen to hear all feedback about the service, both positive and negative.
- Listens carefully to the client to determine the nature of the complaint.
- Attempts to resolve the matter and offers an apology as appropriate.
- Notes the conversation and outcome.

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the Service User, the Coordinator:

- Advises the Service User 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.
- Advises that the letter be addressed to the Chairperson and that it should set out clearly the nature and circumstances of the complaint.

The Service User 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:

- It is referred to the Oversight Committee, who then establish a procedure to be followed.
- The Organisation's insurers are informed, if appropriate.
- When the formal complaint process has been completed the Coordinator records the complaint, the procedure followed to deal with it and the outcome.

[ENDS]

Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-Referral/Assessment Form

Date	
Staff Member Name	
Permission to keep form on file and share only with Spiritual Companion	PLEASE CIRCLE YES NO
APPLICANT DETAILS Gender	
NAME	
Date of Birth	
PIN NUMBER	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
POSTAL ADDRESS	
ABILITY TO TRAVEL	
SPIRITUAL COMPANION PREFERENCES: Male/ female; lay/ religious	

LOCATION OF SESSIONS	
APPLICANT'S ABUSE EXPERIENCE ROLE OF PERSON WHO PERPETRATED ABUSE AGE AT WHICH ABUSE OCCURRED	
IF ABUSED AS A MINOR - WAS IT REPORTED?	
IF ABUSE OCCURRED AS AN ADULT -WAS IT REPORTED	
SUITABILTIY OF TOWARDS PEACE	
HOW DID YOU HEAR OF TOWARDS PEACE?	
REASON FOR CONTACTING TOWARDS PEACE NOW?	
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THEREAPEUTIC SUPPORT	

Appendix 2: Letter of Referral to Service User 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 Tusla any allegations of abuse perpetrated by a person who is still living. In certain circumstances, the Gardai will also need to be informed. (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 Service User

Review by Service User
Date:

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 benefit 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)

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: _____

Phone 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 €55 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.

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

Signed by Spiritual Companion:

_____

Dated the _____ day of_____ 202_____

Signed on behalf of Towards Peace:

_____

Dated the _____ day of_____ 202_____

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)	**Session 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 new Service User

Private and Confidential

Dear (John),

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

Her telephone number is: xxxxxxx. (*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 €55 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*):

Service User Name: _____

Service User 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
Date

Spiritual Companion Name	
Service User PIN	
How many sessions has the service user attended to date?	
In your view, how well has the service user engaged?	
How do you feel the service user has benefitted from the process?	
Do you expect that the service user will meet his/her needs in the 12 sessions? Yes/No	
If not, what further help would you recommend?	

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)

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: _____

Address: _____

_____

Email:
Phone 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 €65 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 Towards Peace.

Signed by Supervisor: _____

Dated the _____ day of_____ 202_____

Signed on behalf of Towards Peace:

_____

Dated the _____ day of_____ 202_____

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	**Session 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_____