

Improving Engagement: Partnership and Collaboration between Faith Communities and Statutory Safeguarding Partners

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A Disconnect between institutions?

‘Christian churches and [statutory] social service providers are committed to the care of children and families; however, there has been a historic disconnect between the two institutions concerning child abuse prevention efforts. All too often, criticisms and mistrust tend to characterize the way in which the two interact.’

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect through Church and Social Service Collaboration

Social Work & Christianity, Vol 37. Number 4. pp381-416 (2010)

Erin Olson O’Neill, Jodi Gabel, Stephanie Huckins, and Jeanette Harder

What do we know: evidence and context?

- **Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse**
 - Investigation into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings (**2021**)
 - Investigation into the Anglican Church (**2020**)
 - Investigation into the Roman Catholic Church (**2020**)
- **Previous Research**
 - Safeguarding Children who are Exposed to Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (L. Oakley, J. Humphreys & K. Kinmond, **2019**)
 - Understanding Spiritual Abuse in Christian Communities (L. Oakley & J. Humphreys, **2018**)
 - Practitioner and communities' awareness of Child abuse linked to faith or belief (L. Oakley, J. Humphreys & K. Kinmond, **2017**)
 - Exploring the complexities of understanding vulnerability and adult safeguarding within Christian faith organisations (J. Humphreys, L. Oakley, L. Fenge & S. Bass, **2016**)

Is there room for Optimism?

‘Although churches and [statutory] service providers often utilize different means, their goals significantly overlap and the rift between the religious and the secular is perhaps less insurmountable than originally believed. Further, participants stated that collaborative relationships would be mutually beneficial.’

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Further research opportunities

Religion, abuse, public policy and professional practice (University of Kent, led by thirtyone:eight) - Work Program 4

An empirical study of perceptions and experiences of both safeguarding professionals in statutory bodies and those with safeguarding responsibilities in religious organisations in relation to their work with each other. Interviewees' perceptions of the wider policy trend towards stronger independent oversight of safeguarding in religious organisations will also be examined.