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Baroness Cumberlege  
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Dear Baroness Cumberlege

Enclosed are some comments and observations as a contribution towards the Review.

*Question 1*

Very significant progress has been made with every diocese establishing appropriate structures, and policies now in place to further a unified approach across the dioceses. There have been and still are concerns arising from the legitimate requirements of Canon Law. On-going work needs to be done.

*Question 2*

1. In general working well.
2. It could be useful to look at other models and ways of working used by other Churches.
3. While fully subscribing to the paramountcy principle, it must not be exercised in such a way as to effectively deny other people's rights. There is a widespread view that in child protection matters the time-honoured principle that one is innocent until proved guilty has been put aside.

*Question 3*

COPCA has done its best to carry out the tasks outlined by Nolan, though I would wish to draw further attention to the observations submitted by my Diocesan Child Protection Commission (Shrewsbury).

It is important that COPCA fully understand and respect the sort of entity that the Catholic Church is. Is there some reluctance to accept that we are not a national organization under centralized management but rather a group of autonomous dioceses each under the authority of its own bishop? It seems to me that what the bishops agreed to, post Nolan, was to operate in their dioceses common policies and procedures to ensure some uniformity of approach. It is to each other that we are answerable – not to COPCA. We established COPCA to assist us in the implementation of Nolan.

Likewise we established Diocesan Commissions and appointed Co-ordinators / Officers. The latter are the paid employees of the diocese and are answerable to the bishop or his delegate – not to COPCA. Now that the policies are in place it would seem appropriate for COPCA's role to be scaled down, with the emphasis being placed on its advisory service to the diocese. As well as fully respecting the autonomy of the dioceses, this would also enable limited financial resources to be distributed back to the dioceses for furthering their own local child protection work.

*Question 4*

I'm happy with the contribution of both our Commission and our Co-ordinator.

*Question 5*

No comment.

Every good wish,

+ *Brian*

Bishop of Shrewsbury