



Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Department for Social Justice

Annual Report 2020



Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales
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Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Life Issues and the dignity of the person	6
Healthcare and Mental Health	10
Criminal Justice	14
Faith in Politics Internship and Network	17
Covid and post-Covid-19 work	20
CSAN	23
Marriage and Family Life	28
Environment	31

Foreword

The Department addresses a wide range of issues in the course of its work and this Report provides a fine overview of its work during this last year.

In particular, the promotion of the value of Human Life continues to be at the forefront of the Department's work and the response to particular cases and the changes to legislation have been particularly timely. The focus on end-of-life care has not been lost, mindful of the continuing need to be ready to respond to attempts to legalise assisted suicide.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has given a particular focus to the work, especially with regard to the Vaccine programme, providing reassurance about its use and the service of the Common Good.

The promulgation of the Holy Father's Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, with its call for universal friendship and the "sincere gift of self to others" will continue to prompt the work of the Department at the service of the Church and the deeply significant place of Catholic Social Teaching for the life of the World.

I take this opportunity to thank the Department Bishops and all who are engaged in life of the Department for all that has been achieved.

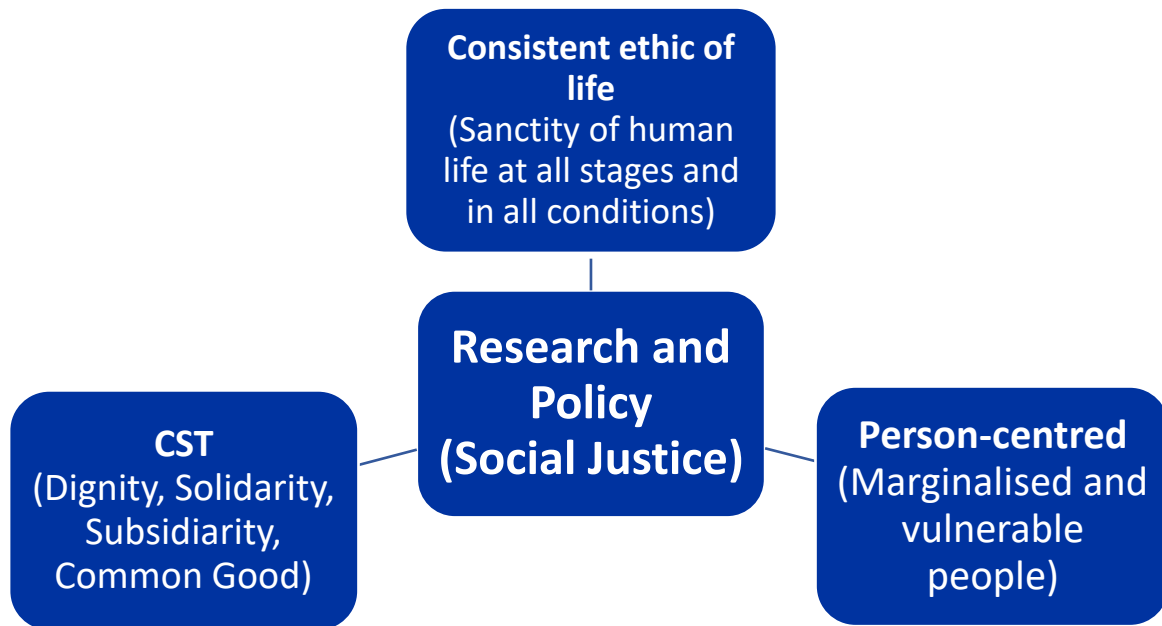


The Rt Rev Richard Moth
Chair of the Department for Social Justice



Introduction

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales Department for Social Justice (DSJ) strives to assist the Bishops in proclaiming the Good News of God's kingdom and work towards the advancement of the common good and human flourishing. The Department for Social Justice covers areas of social and pastoral policy in England and Wales. Its Chairman is Bishop Richard Moth, who is supported by Bishop John Sherrington (*Life Issues*), Bishop Paul Mason (*Healthcare and Mental Health*), Bishop David Oakley (*Marriage & Family Life*), Bishop Terry Drainey (*Episcopal Chair of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN)*) and Bishop Tom Williams.



The Department's approach to Research and Policy

Over the past year, the department undertook a review of its work priorities. These have included but are not limited to: life issues; healthcare and mental health; criminal justice, Faith in Politics Internship and Network; Covid and post-Covid-19 work; marriage and family life; and the environment. This annual report highlights the department's work in 2020, including the work of Caritas Social Action Network, the agency of the Conference which works most closely with the department, as well as statements and articles from the Bishops of the department, along with projects, resources and materials which will continue to be of relevance over the coming months as society adjusts to a 'new normal'.

The Department's Research and Policy work is premised on a consistent ethic of life, from conception to natural death, working to uphold the sanctity of life at all stages and in all conditions, as well as Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and a person-centred approach that works to put the needs of the most marginalised and vulnerable at the centre. The past year has exposed the deep inequalities in our society and the need for a more sustainable way of living. We will continue to provide challenge and to advocate on behalf of those most in need, whilst providing an authentic Catholic contribution to society through our work.





Life Issues
and the
Dignity of
the Person

The Church works to uphold the rights and dignity of all, from conception until natural death. In instances where these rights are infringed upon, the Department issues public statements, writes to Ministers and government, and urges Catholics to engage on issues to ensure protection and care, particularly for the most marginalised and vulnerable in our society.

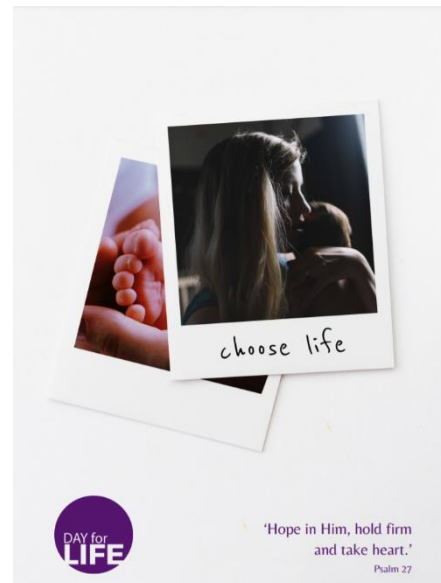
This year the Department issued responses to several high-profile life issues cases, including a document on the Catholic position on Vaccination; a statement on the temporary change to the law regarding access to abortion during the coronavirus pandemic; and support to those suffering from domestic abuse during the coronavirus pandemic.

Day for Life

The Day for Life is celebrated yearly by the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. It is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition. The proceeds of the *Day for Life* collection held in parishes are used for the promotion of the dignity of the human person through the distribution of grants.

The 2019 *Day for Life*, the theme for which was ‘The Scourge of Domestic Abuse’, raised £450,000, enabling eighteen projects from across England and Wales to be funded this year. This included charities and organisations across England and Wales that provide practical responses for women and men, and their children, facing situations of domestic abuse, including the West Wales Domestic Abuse Service, AFC Fylde Community Foundation and Catholic Care.

With the 25th anniversary of St John Paul II’s letter *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), we renewed the call for respect and celebration of all life. The theme for 2020 has been ‘Choose Life’, focusing on the sanctity of



the unborn child, pastoral care for pregnant women and hope and healing after abortion. Catholic parishes are called to be communities of welcome and acceptance, a ‘family of families’ as Pope Francis calls them (*Amoris Laetitia*, 87), celebrated as being ‘a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems’ (*Amoris Laetitia*, 57). We are pleased to announce that the 2020 *Day for Life* received an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis. The resources, which include information about support available for pregnant women and their children, bidding prayers, and hopeful testimonies from moving experiences at Rachel’s Vineyard, a retreat for women who have had abortions and people who have been hurt or affected by abortion, can be found here: <http://www.dayforlife.org/article/2020-day-for-life-choose-life/>. A donation of £15,000 was made from the *Day for Life* collection to Hospice UK’s Covid-19 appeal, to contribute towards protective medical equipment for hospice carers and patients throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Domestic Abuse

CBCEW is a member of the Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) and a representative from the department attends EIDA’s quarterly network meetings, as well as conferences such as the Faith and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Coalition, that launched in March 2020. The department brings together its own expert groups to work on specific projects, such as: work on victim support; prevention of domestic abuse; establishment and promotion of models for how parishes can effectively, and sensitively, respond to people who are affected by domestic abuse, that can all be found on the domestic abuse pages of the CBCEW website.

The department have been following the Domestic Abuse Bill as it makes its way through Parliament. Bishop John Sherrington issued a statement, encouraging people to write to their MPs opposing amendments which would have repealed sections 58 and 59 of the 1981 Offences Against the Persons Act and “result[ed] in the introduction of abortion on demand, for any reason, up until when a child is capable of being born alive, with a ceiling of 28 weeks.” The department has written a statement to share with Peers outlining the church’s position: that combatting the scourge of domestic abuse is part of our consistent ethic of life. We highlight

that the Bill should: ensure the protection of the dignity of the person from conception to natural death; and work to build a society based on solidarity for the good of individuals and the Common Good. Policy asks cover specific attention, and support, for children, women in criminal justice system and migrants.

Bishop John Sherrington also issued a statement (8 April 2020) in support of those suffering from domestic abuse during the pandemic and the department promoted a new practical booklet on domestic abuse from the National Board of Catholic Women. The Department continues to lobby members of the House of Lords on the current Domestic Abuse Bill, all the more pressing given its rise in the pandemic. We note the strong connection between domestic violence and women's place in the criminal justice system. Stephanie MacGillivray, Senior Policy and Research Analyst, spoke at the inaugural CSAN Annual Domestic Abuse Forum to provide an update on the department's work and advocacy on domestic abuse.

Assisted Dying

The Department works with organisations, such as *Right to Life*, *Living and Dying Well*, and *Care* on advocacy and campaigns to oppose assisted dying being legalised in the UK. The Church has a consistent ethic of life and believes in the sanctity of human life at all stages and in all conditions. A letter, "*Samaritanus bonus*" (The Good Samaritan), published in 2020 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and approved by the Pope, reiterates the condemnation of any form of euthanasia and assisted suicide, and advocates support for families and healthcare workers. The department promoted the new document via a Press Release.





Healthcare & Mental Health

The Department's healthcare and mental health work includes affirming and engaging with professionals in health and mental health care, supporting chaplaincy and providing an authentic Catholic voice in the promotion of health, mental health and wellbeing.

The Department leads Healthcare Executive and Reference groups, who provide expert guidance to the Catholic Church and have been instrumental to its coronavirus response. Early in the year, much attention was already on the subject of vaccination and the department produced a position paper that is downloadable from the Healthcare Downloads section of the CBCEW website. As a coronavirus vaccine came into trial, Bishop John Sherrington wrote to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health asking for clarification on the potential sources of the vaccine. This was to seek reassurance that the government will promote research into a vaccine derived from a source which would not be ethically problematic for Catholics and which does not involve moral complicity in abortion. The Department for Health and Social Care responded, assuring recognition that the source of the vaccine raises moral concerns and that no new human foetal issue will be used in making the vaccine, although cell-lines developed from the remains of aborted foetuses in the past are being researched by some institutions. The Department for Health and Social Care also gave assurances that any vaccine which is developed will be safe and effective, all of which can be read in an additional statement issued to Catholics by Bishop Richard Moth, Bishop John Sherrington and Bishop Paul Mason. With the approval of the COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, the department issued a further statement reiterating the teachings from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy of Life, that Catholics can, in good conscience take vaccines that have sufficient moral distance between the present administration of the vaccine and the original wrongful action.

Care Homes

In an article published in *The Tablet* online on 19 August 2020, Bishop Paul Mason highlighted the importance of looking at those living with dementia in care homes through the lens of love, as the coronavirus pandemic caused significant challenges for care homes, staff, residents and their loved ones. Care in an ageing society was a key priority for the work of CSAN during 2020 following the publication of *Care in Time* and the *Reaching Out* toolkit.

The Bishops' November 2019 resolution "noted the need for increased national co-ordination to counter negative portrayals of ageing, frailty and care". In addition, the Bishops' Conference recognised the need to develop Catholic care provision that attends to longevity, changing patterns in household formation, parish attendance and pastoral ministry. The bishops supported the creation of a plan to maintain, and where possible enhance, provision for care of older people, and encouraged the joint discernment of the Conference of Religious, Diocesan Financial Secretaries, the Catholic Trust for England and Wales, and Caritas Social Action Network in this work. This work is even more important given the effects of Covid-19 on people living in care homes.

Organ Donation

The Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill that received Royal Assent on 15 March 2019 came into law in May 2020. The Department produced *Guidelines for Catholics* to provide information regarding the change in law on organ donation, Catholic teaching, as well as signposting to where donors can either 'opt-out' or detail which organs they wish to donate, and record whether they want the NHS to speak to their family and anybody else appropriate to ensure organ donation goes ahead in line with their faith/beliefs.

The Catholic Healthcare Chaplaincy Guidelines (2018) *Supplementary Materials* were also published in 2020.

Catholic Mental Health Project (CMHP): <http://www.catholicmentalhealthproject.org.uk/>

Ensuring Catholics have access to quality mental health and wellbeing advice, guidance and support has also been a key focus of the department this year. Bishop Paul Mason issued a statement regarding healthcare and mental wellbeing during the coronavirus pandemic. Stephanie McGillivray from the department wrote a blog post for the CMHP website, with links to additional resources to highlight Suicide Prevention Awareness Day - 10 September 2020, and an article for the Centre for Catholic Social Thought and Practice on 'Mental health, spiritual wellbeing, and COVID-19'.

Disability

The department operates on the basis of streamlining disability inclusion, so that it informs all of its work. This year, the department has carried out an ongoing audit of diocesan disability advisors and advocates to better understand what is happening at the local and parish level. It has also enabled the department to identify best practise and resources for creative catechesis and where the church can improve in its practice of welcome and inclusion to all. In collaboration with the *God Who Speaks* campaign, the department contributed an article for the March focus on disability. The Catholic Disability Fellowship is a member of Caritas Social Action Network, seeking to integrate their work and concerns with dioceses, parishes and the wider Caritas network in England & Wales.





Criminal Justice

This work includes supporting prison chaplaincy and undertaking advocacy work to ensure the dignity of prisoners is upheld.

The National Catholic Chaplain for Prisons represents the Bishops of England & Wales in matters concerning Prisons and Prisoners. The work of the NCCP is all-encompassing and has included the recruitment, appointment, pastoral care, and ongoing training of some 250 Roman Catholic Chaplains and Volunteers in 122 establishments. In March and September of 2020 the NCCP provided input at the ‘World Faiths Course’ on the Roman Catholic Faith. Ecumenical dialogue between the Christian Faith Advisors, in partnership with the Bible Society, led to the joint Lenten Bible Study being employed in all prisons in 2020. Each week during the pandemic, prayer and study materials were provided by the NCCP to every Prison Chaplain to furnish Roman Catholic prisoners with in-cell resources. Two catechism courses were also sent out with weekly study material and worksheets.

The NCCP organises an annual Prison Chaplains Training Conference each September at St Mary’s University Twickenham as well as an annual retreat. This year’s Conference and retreat (in the form of a Pilgrimage to Krakow) had to be postponed. In collaboration with the other Christian Churches and Prison Charities, the Department brings awareness to Prisoners Week/ Sunday.

Since its publication in 2018, the Department has worked alongside the Conferences’ Public Affairs Department to engage with Parliamentarians around issues of criminal justice and to challenge current sentencing policy, as set out in *A Journey of Hope: A Catholic Approach to Sentencing*. This year, Liam Allmark, Head of Public Affairs, produced an academic article for *Law and Justice* on the matter.

As the coronavirus pandemic arrived in the UK, Bishop Richard Moth joined calls on the government to tackle the spread of Covid-19 in prisons. Bishop Moth also made a statement to support the release of pregnant women and new mothers in custody and wrote a letter to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice requesting that these measures also be extended to prisoners who do not pose a risk to the public, especially older or vulnerable people. This then followed with a letter from Bishop Richard Moth to the Rt Hon Robert

Buckland QC MP, supporting the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)'s call for wider availability of phones in cells so that people can stay in touch with their families while prison visits are suspended.

The NCCP also worked with the CBCEW Public Affairs Department on a submission to the Justice Select Committee inquiry into the aging prison population. The committee's final report reflected many of the points our Roman Catholic chaplains have raised, including the need for physical adaptations and suitable accommodation across the prison estate, tailored regimes, as well as training for prison staff on conditions such as dementia. The report recommends that the MoJ should produce a national strategy for older prisoners, which was strongly supported by our chaplains and is something we hope to help shape.



In November 2020, Bishop Richard Moth chaired the annual Criminal Justice Forum, hosted by Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), that was attended by Caritas members, Pact and other groups involved in this area of work. With Liam Allmark and Pact's involvement, Bishop Richard undertook to write to the MOJ in support of the Early Conditional Temporary Release Scheme at the Criminal Justice Forum.



Faith in Politics:

Catholic Parliamentary
and Public Affairs
Internships

The Faith in Politics internship scheme provides Catholic graduates with an educational year of political and public affairs experience shaped by faith and spirituality. Interns are given the opportunity to work in Parliament with a Christian MP, Peer, or in the public affairs departments of agencies of the Bishops' Conference. The Vatican's Dicastery for Laity and Family Life has listed the Faith in Politics Internship one of the best examples of projects for lay adult formation and leadership: <https://laityinvolved.org/project/faith-in-politics/>.

The 2019-20 group of six interns completed the internship in July of this year, also gaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Catholic Social Teaching at St Mary's University, Twickenham.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 2019-20 cohort faced particular challenges, having to work from home from March 2020 until the end of their internship in July. Unfortunately, this also meant that they missed out on some of the usual highlights of the scheme. However, the group pulled together and show great strength and initiative through to the end of their time on the scheme.

As a result of both the pandemic and the interns' accommodation permanently closing, a decision was taken to pause the scheme for a year, offering an opportunity to review the



scheme and make changes to ensure it can continue in future years. Applications for 2021-2022 intake will open in January 2021 with the internship commencing in October 2021. Interns will live in a shared house, and will take part in a bespoke CST formation programme organised through the Bishops' Conference.

A monthly newsletter is issued from the department, providing news, updates, and job opportunities from and for members of the Faith in Politics network - a group which consists of alumni of the Faith in Politics internship scheme and others who have an interest in faith, politics, and social action.



**PRAY SAFE
STAY SAFE**

Thank you for
social distancing

**CORONAVIRUS
STAY SAFE!**



Covid-19 Response

Covid-19 demanded a refocus to prioritisation of much of the Department's work in its commitment to promoting the Common Good and to provide an authentic Catholic voice on social justice issues in a post-Covid-19 society. This work involved promoting the Common Good, by providing an authentic Catholic voice on social justice issues throughout the pandemic, and raising awareness and promoting pastoral support on these issues.

The department led the coronavirus response, issuing guidance, information and appeals to Catholic charities and raising awareness of how the pandemic is affecting the most vulnerable.

Covid-19 Guidance: *Statements and articles*

16 March - Coronavirus - What Catholics need to know about COVID-19

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/coronavirus-what-catholics-need-to-know-about-covid-19/>

17 March - Covid-19: Avoiding fear and panic

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/covid-19-avoiding-fear-and-panic/>

18 March - Acts of public worship suspended in Catholic Churches in England and Wales

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/43836-2/>

24 March <https://www.csan.org.uk/guidance/covid-19/>

7 April - COVID-19 and the Ministry to the Sick - Interim Guidance

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/covid-19-and-the-ministry-to-the-sick/>

20 April - Coronavirus and Access to Treatment (*Bishop Richard Moth, Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop John Sherrington*) <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/coronavirus-and-access-to-treatment/>

The DSJ, alongside the Department for International Affairs and the Public Affairs team, promoted appeals by Catholic charities serving vulnerable groups throughout the pandemic including homeless people, people with mental health difficulties and families facing food insecurity. See 'Charities' COVID-19 Appeals': <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/health-social-care/coronavirus-guidelines/catholic-charities-and-covid-19/catholic-charities-covid-19-appeals/>.

Post-Covid-19 work

Social Justice and COVID Roundtable

In October 2020, Bishop Richard Moth chaired a Roundtable to discuss ‘Social Justice and COVID’, with experts working across the fields of healthcare; mental health; prisons; care homes, dementia and the elderly; families and relationships; unemployment and the world of work. It addressed the question, ‘Has Covid-19 disproportionately affected particular members of society?’ (For example, people who are: living with health or mental health conditions, disabled, elderly, unemployed/unable to work due to furloughing or other issues.)’ An internal report was produced, and the department uses the findings to inform its workstreams going forward.

Fratelli Tutti

Bishop Richard led the CBCEW response reflecting on Pope Francis’ latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, published 3 October 2020. Bishop Richard’s video, ‘Called to a new world view – a bishop explains Fratelli Tutti’, appeared in *The Tablet*.

Build Back Better

Bishop John Arnold joined UK faith leaders in calling on the government to focus its economic recovery strategy, post-COVID-19 lockdown, on the urgent need to reduce the impact of climate change, at the start of the second annual London Climate Action Week.



Social
Action:
CSAN

The Caritas Social Action Network is the core agency of the Conference working with the department. Bishop Terry Draine is the Episcopal Chair of CSAN.

Responding to the pandemic

During this difficult year responding to the challenges of the pandemic, the agency has:

- Collated, highlighted and encouraged positive responses to the pandemic from parishes and in its members' professional services;
- Identified emerging impacts of the pandemic and rapidly introduced policy changes on households, people in poverty and social disadvantaged communities;
- Sought opportunities to support the frontline services provided by its members.



In collaboration with the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), a letter was issued to Catholics encouraging them to consider how to reach out to the most vulnerable in their neighbourhoods and to the isolated in their parish communities. This was followed by a pandemic planning template for parishes and SVP conferences and a toolkit, encouraging those involved to act in ways which are safe and in line with government and public health guidance.

CSAN's CEO, Phil McCarthy, was involved with meetings with the Department of Health & Social Care (Moral & Ethical Advisory Group), the Cabinet Office and the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Civil Society Campaign) and Department of Culture, Media and Sport (Civil Society Covid-19 Forum), throughout the coronavirus pandemic, as well as two Faith Leaders' Forums convened by the Ministry of Communities and Local Government. The focus of these latter meetings was the gradual re-opening of places of worship. Weekly coverage of CSAN's initiatives, as well as its members work, appeared in *The*

Tablet throughout 2020. As the context evolved rapidly, CSAN's policy updates and information were, and remain, accessible here: <https://www.csan.org.uk/policy/coronavirus/>



Developing the Network

In February 2020 the Caritas Diocesan Journey and Directors' Forum meetings took place in London, exploring deeper collaboration in the Network. Following the October 2019 conference on modern slavery, member charities with expertise in the area met with diocesan representatives, religious orders, ARISE and Conference officers to continue collaboration on this work.

CSAN held a series of meetings for Directors related to the impacts of the pandemic, aiming to improve the prospects for network members and the people they serve to come through the pandemic well. The first on 18th June was on homelessness with input from Dame Louise

Casey's task force. This has led to a further meeting between Depaul UK and diocesan representatives to discuss how the Nightstop programme for young homeless adults might be replicated. Other topics included regular updates on Covid-19 and dealing with impacts on staff, volunteers and services, charity resilience, advancing racial justice, making ethical decisions, mental health, the IICSA report, and responding collaboratively to the Government's Kickstart Scheme. The ethical decision-making discussion led to a workshop for directors on discernment skills and an opportunity to explore on a peer basis some of the dilemmas and decisions being made in the pandemic with input from Paul Nicholson SJ and Ruth Holgate: Jesuit Associate.

The CSAN Membership has grown during to year admitting Caritas Arundel and Brighton, Caritas Hexham and Newcastle, the 15th Caritas Diocesan agency, and the Catholic Youth Charity Million Minutes and now stands at 50 members.

CSAN's Community Sponsorship Steering Group met on 3rd September 2020 and looks forward to the scheme recommencing. Despite the Covid-19 flights suspension, the Home Office approved 12 more Catholic parishes to resettle refugees, with 2 welcoming a family via a partial resumption of flights announced in November. Full launch of the new UKRS programme is expected in 2021 following a Ministerial Review. CSAN continues to support existing Catholic groups and to encourage more to come forward when the scheme restarts.

Advancing education and learning

A new formation resource on CST and Catholic ethos, *Caritas in Practice*, has been piloted with a group of CSAN members, along with a community of practice, a learning strategy which explored how CST could become more useful to member charities and how the charities could contribute to expanding Catholic social thought.

Pope Francis asked the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to create a Covid-19 Commission, in collaboration with Caritas Internationalis and other Vatican bodies, to "express the Church's solicitude and care for the whole human family facing the COVID-19 pandemic". The Commission has five working groups on immediate response, longer term

thinking, communications, fundraising and partnerships. The Commission will require new ways of working and deep collaboration within the Church. A webinar was arranged with Fr Augusto Zampini, the Adjunct Secretary of the Vatican's Covid-19 Commission, for CSAN, its members and supporters and was joined by colleagues from the Department for Social Justice. It was inspiring to hear of new forms of collaboration within the Church.

Offering a coherent Catholic voice

The resource *Care in Time*, on care in an ageing society, the *Reaching Out* parish resources were launched at the close of last year. The *Reaching Out* toolkit flyer was sent to all parishes in England & Wales in July.

Clive Chapman, CSAN's Senior Officer for Mission & Advocacy and Professor Peter Kevern (author of part 2 of *Care in Time*) participated in *The richness of many years of life*, the first international conference on the pastoral care of the elderly to be held by the Holy See, in January 2020. CSAN continues to increase national co-ordination to counter negative portrayals of ageing, frailty and care, and recognise the need to develop Catholic care provision that attends to longevity, changing patterns in household formation, parish attendance and pastoral ministry as well as supporting the creation of a plan to maintain, and where possible enhance, provision for care of older people and encourage the joint discernment of the COREW, Diocesan Financial Secretaries, CaTEW and CSAN.

CSAN worked with the Conference of Religious in England & Wales (COREW) Health and Social Care Group and the Little Sisters of the Poor to co-produce resources for the 2020 World Day of the Poor. Eight members joined CSAN in calling on the Government to extend meal vouchers to children of families on low incomes over the 2020 summer holiday and six members gave evidence in CSAN's response to a Government consultation on carer's leave entitlements.

For updates and news from CSAN and its members, sign up to their newsletter:

<https://www.csan.org.uk/sign-up-to-newsletter/>.



Marriage & Family Life

Supporting the Bishops in the implementation of their priorities for marriage and family life ministry, the Marriage and Family Life (MFL) team of the department have been working with dioceses and national organisations to resource parish communities in meeting, welcoming and walking with families on their journey of faith. In March 2020, Bishop David Oakley, Diocese of Nottingham, was welcomed as the new Chair of the Bishops' Committee for Marriage and Family Life (CMFL), following Bishop Peter Doyle's retirement.

The MFL team put together resources and links to support families during the coronavirus pandemic, suggesting creative forms of prayer, especially with children, to provide some moments of peace and calm in a 'lock-down' home.

Vocation to Marriage

A writing group have created a new online resource to celebrate the vocation to Marriage, rooted in the universal call to all people to live a life of holiness and love. The material informs: the theology of marriage, vocational discernment, marriage preparation, marital spirituality, support and enrichment, and features a short piece on parish community support for affordable weddings.

Adoption and Fostering

In February 2020, a new Adoption and Fostering information and signposting webpage was launched to support diocesan engagement with the adoption and fostering charity *Home for Good*, who the MFL have collaborated with in order to raise awareness amongst Catholics of the needs of the thousands of children who enter the care system every year,



and the critical priority of finding loving and stable homes for them.

Let's Be Honest (LBH) Working Group: spiritual and liturgical accompaniment for survivors of Sexual Abuse, their families, communities and the wider Church.

The specific aim of LBH, putting victims at the centre, is to explore and develop provision of spiritual, liturgical and pastoral 'resources' that help lay and clergy listen to the voice of victims. The listener can better acknowledge and respond to the impact of sexual abuse on victims, families and the Church, and be part of the drive to foster healing and long-term prevention. Materials were launched for the National Day of Prayer for Victims 3 April 2020, that can be used at any time of the year in dioceses or individual parishes.

Celebrating Family Donor Fund: a film recording the diocesan and national benefits.

A report, alongside a short film featuring live footage and interviews with Bishop Peter Doyle (former chair of the CMFL), has been completed, covering the work of the MFL Office and many of the diocesan teams who helped to deliver the 17 funded capacity-building diocesan MFL projects over the past five years through the *Celebrating Family Fund*. The report highlights, for the donor of the funded projects, the achievements and national resource development work over the past five years.

The Committee for Marriage and Family Life continue to meet under the leadership of Bishop David Oakley, sharing regional news, updates and to collaborate on a number of ongoing projects.

The department sought guidance from the Canon Law Society for its response to the Law Commission consultation on marriage law reform.



The Environment

The core of this work is engaging with dioceses to promote practical responses to Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment and social crisis, *Laudato Si*. 2020 has been a significant year as it saw the publication of *Querida Amazonia* as well as the fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si*, and the advent of a *Laudato Si* anniversary year of events organised by the Vatican, that the department has promoted and engaged in its own initiatives. These have included the "Season of Creation" (September 1 - October 4), "Reinventing the Global Educational Alliance" (15 October) and the "Economy of Francesco" meeting (21 November). 2021 will see the "World Economic Forum, Davos - Third Vatican Roundtable" (26-29 January), a gathering of religious leaders in early spring and World Water Day will be marked on March 22 as well as the international Conference of Parties (COP)26 event that the UK is hosting.

The Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) for the Bishops' Conference has a number of priorities, these include:

Support for the Journey to 2030 campaign



The Journey to 2030 campaign focuses on mobilising parishes to act on our ecological crisis. This was launched in Arundel and Brighton Diocese in December 2019 by Bishop Richard Moth as the theme of his Advent Pastoral letter. The *Journey to 2030* is run by a group of young adults from Arundel and Brighton diocese (The Ecological Conversion Group or 'ECG') and is supported by the CBCEW Environmental Advisory Group. The

launch made both the Catholic and secular press. The website (www.journeyto2030.org) contains a magazine with the theme for 2020, practical suggestions and a "getting started" guide for parishes. The campaign has over 40 parish representatives signed up. Bishop John Arnold also endorsed the campaign in his diocesan New Year message. The EAG is working to: complete an online 'parish greening' directory to support parishes using expertise in its



network; offer support for diocesan ecological officers; and promote existing resources aimed at ecological conversion, including Global Healing/Caring and LiveSimply as priorities. An A-Level syllabus on 'Ecological Conversion', written for Westminster diocese education team, is nearly complete.

Promotion of 'Global Caring' and 'Global Healing'

'Global Caring' and 'Global Healing' are video, and accompanying, resources for parishes, groups and individuals that inform, challenge and equip people to engage with Pope Francis' vital call to *Care For Our*

Common Home.

Promotion of environmental investment policy

The EAG has been encouraging discussion among diocesan financial secretaries around removing fossil fuels from their investment portfolios. The Bishop of Middlesbrough, Bishop Terry Draine, Bishop of Lancaster, Bishop Paul Swarbrick, and Bishop Richard Moth of Arundel & Brighton have all announced that their investment portfolios are now fossil fuel free, as have the Congregation of Jesus and the Presentation Sisters. The Jesuits in Britain have filed a resolution through Shareaction alongside 10 other investors with Barclays, requesting that they stop the provision of financial services to companies in the energy sector, and also announced that they have divested from fossil fuels.

Green energy for schools

The Interdiocesan Fuel Management Ltd (IFM) have been bringing the diocesan green energy deal to schools and have distributed a booklet with a foreword from Bishop John Arnold explaining the process.

Promoting diocesan environmental policies

Last year the Bishops published the *Guardians of God's Creation*, followed by a practical guidance appendix. The EAG continues to encourage dioceses to adopt environmental

policies, and meets with the Financial Secretaries conference to pursue this, as well as identify diocesan environmental representatives who had their first network meeting in October this year.

Diocesan decarbonisation research project

The Diocese of Salford is leading on a carbon reduction research and implementation project. The purpose is to provide a generalised plan for dioceses to measure their carbon footprint and a strategy to decarbonise. The research will include an understanding of what is measurable in our context, what decarbonisation means under an integral ecology lens, a decarbonisation strategy and a communications piece to promote involvement. The pilot is happening in



Salford and the results will be available to all, so that methodology is consistent between dioceses and we are able to show national progress in the run-up to COP26.

The delivery of the project is overseen by the newly appointed Salford diocesan environmental lead, co-project managed with Edward de Quay (Project Manager of the EAG), and with core research being undertaken by St Mary's University, in partnership with the *Laudato Si'* Research Institute (LSRI) at Campion Hall, Oxford. It also involves an academic advisory group, with experts from St Mary's, Oxford University, Manchester University and related consultancy. The project advisory group includes Bishop John Arnold, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales (CBCEW), Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), St Mary's, Laudato Si' Research Institute (LSRI), Salford Diocese, European Climate Foundation, Jesuits in Britain, Nottingham Justice and Peace Commission, Shareaction and the Scottish Bishops Conference.

The COP26 team have been informed of our progress by Sally Axworthy, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Holy See.

Other work

The September 2020 focus for the '*God Who Speaks*' campaign was care for creation, Edward de Quay of the department wrote an article for their website. This year Bishop John Arnold also gave a 1 September message to Salford diocese and an interview to Vatican News, and has expressed written support of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)'s 'Climate Sunday' initiative.



cbcew.org.uk