

Social Action Projects in Mission and Public Affairs

In recent years, the Mission and Public Affairs Team has extended its ability to serve the parishes and dioceses of the Church of England through a number of externally-funded projects developed in partnership with other bodies. MPA usually hosts the work within the Church House office and adds value through close links to the core MPA team and offering wider access within the Church. Project staff may be managed by a core MPA staff member, or through the project's own structures with support and liaison from the MPA team.

As most projects are funded for a limited time, staff support from MPA includes ensuring that time-critical objectives are met, that succession-planning measures are in place and that (where appropriate) continuation funding is sought. MPA staff are always encouraged to discern other areas where there may be potential to serve the local church through similar programmes and to work with potential partners to develop ideas and bring them to fruition.

The two projects noted below will be of direct interest to the MPA Home Affairs Adviser, and the person appointed to that role may (with negotiation) be the key MPA staff link, or provide management oversight of the relevant staff and work programmes.

The Clewer Initiative on modern-day slavery

The Clewer Initiative (TCI) was initially a three-year project, helping the Church of England respond to modern slavery. Almost three years on, TCI has established itself as a leading organisation in the anti-slavery sector, working in partnership with law enforcement, government, charities, and other faiths on a day to day basis and on discreet projects such as the Safe Car Wash app. The core of TCI's work has been to enable dioceses to raise awareness of modern slavery, identify victims, and provide support and care to the survivors, with the guiding vision that the solutions to ending modern slavery are already present in the local community.

In exploring how to unlock those community resources, TCI has developed a range of training materials, including a community development package called Hidden Voices which is being rolled out across several dioceses. They have also established a network of 'Clewer leads' who act as a catalyst for action on modern slavery in their area. Their grassroots experience of issues such as support for victims and modern slavery partnerships will be a key port of call for any policy officer working on this agenda.

TCI recently received confirmation of a further ten years of funding from the Clewer Sisters, an order of Anglican nuns who are based at Ripon College in Cuddesdon. Over the next ten years TCI will continue with its initial mission as one pillar of work, whilst also exploring how it can make an impact elsewhere. Other pillars are likely to include working internationally, building on the foundations of work done by the Anglican Alliance over the past three years, and supply chains, initially those of the Church of England and its associated bodies and hoping to influence the wider ecology.

More information can be found at www.theclewerinitiative.org

From the outset, TCI has been based in MPA with strong links to core MPA staff and their portfolios. MPA's International Affairs Officer has had a major role in developing and managing the programme.

In the next phase of TCI's life, the work will continue to be hosted within the MPA team at Church House and it is expected that, as the Clewer team expands, it will become more internally self-sufficient. An MPA staff member will still be required to act as the link person between TCI and the wider work of MPA. It is hoped that this will be a role for the new Home Affairs Adviser.

Church of England Refugee Welcome Project

This project came into being as a result of the APPG enquiry "Refugees Welcome?" in 2017. The main purpose of the project was to develop the Church of England's engagement with the Home Office Community Sponsorship Scheme; the Church of England being one of five "Principal Sponsoring Agencies". This requires engagement with the Home Office team, including membership of the Steering Committee for Community Sponsorship which meets four times a year. The scheme also involves provision of training and awareness events at Diocesan level, together with support with training and advice for individual schemes, many of which involve ecumenical and multi faith groups.

In addition to leading the Church of England's response to Community Sponsorship, the project coordinator has a wider role in identifying issues around all aspects of forced migration. Current work includes liaising with the Home Office and Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government on lifting the ban on asylum seekers obtaining work, bringing an end to indefinite detention, securing family reunion, and the safe passage and reception of unaccompanied child refugees. The coordinator is a member of the Home Office Refugee Employment Network, represents the Church of England on CTBI Refugee Network Steering Committee, and is a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's round table on "Responses to issues of global migration". The coordinator provides information, training, and support for Diocesan officers on all aspects of refugee support. The key objective in 2019 is deliver a refugee care model for all Dioceses. The coordinator also provides support for the Church in Wales and the Diocese of Europe through the partnership with USPG and the Diocese of Canterbury.

The work of the Refugee Welcome Co-ordinator was initially funded for one year by a group of dioceses. The work has been extended thanks to a generous grant from a charitable trust which will take the programme into early 2020. Neither of these sources of funding are repeatable. The task in the last part of 2019 will be to ensure that the project goals are achieved, structures and relationships are in place to maintain support to parishes and dioceses, and the project is brought to a good conclusion.

It is expected that responsibility for overseeing this process will lie with the Home Affairs Advisor.

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