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## PRESS STATEMENT

### Catholic Caring Services

#### CHARITY COMPLIANT WITH EQUALITY LEGISLATION

*Catholic Caring Services*, covering the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster, has announced that it will continue to respond to the plight of the neediest of children who require adoptive homes. The Charity always has been compliant with the law and is confident that compliance with the new equality legislation will not compromise its determination and moral responsibility to retain as paramount the best interests of the child.

The new legislation has posed difficulty for the Church as it would appear to some to challenge the Church's views on marriage. The Trustees of *Catholic Caring Services*, including Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue, would always hope to attract committed, married couples as adopters and foster carers of vulnerable children. The Trustees recognise, however, that there are committed couples who are not married as well as single people who have provided magnificent, long term and permanent homes for children over the last five or six years through the work of this Charity. At no time has any judgement been made that was not confidently based upon the child's best interests.

After more than 2 years of consultation and dialogue with, in particular, Bishop O'Donoghue, the Trustees have resolved that the Charity must continue to serve the many vulnerable individuals and groups, including the most vulnerable of children whose needs their local authorities call upon us to meet. Our witness as a Catholic Charity is to serve those in greatest need. Furthermore, the whole of the Charity's future would be compromised were the Trustees to sacrifice any one of its major services.

Jim Cullen, Chief Executive of the Charity, said "The decision of the Trustees has been taken after extensive consultation, legal advice and a great deal of discernment. We have been an important contributor to the Church's work in the world of social welfare since 1934 and the Trustees and staff have all overwhelmingly agreed that this long-standing contribution to the community as a social care Charity must be maintained.

"So our work continues. We will remain a Catholic Charity, operating the same services, with the same staff, same values and same ethos. We are confident that this course of action is the only transparent and certain way to preserve our services for some of society's most vulnerable children and adults."

Commenting on future funding Jim said "The people who donate money to this Charity do so to help improve the lives of children, families and adults in need; their help makes such a direct difference that I am confident of their continuing support."