



Diocese of  
Derry  
Safeguarding  
Committee

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

# Diocese of Derry Child Safeguarding Committee

## Annual Report 2016

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## SECTION 1: CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

### *Chairperson's Foreword*

On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee I am pleased to present the Annual Report, which provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Committee, the Priests of the Diocese and Local Safeguarding Representatives in the year 2016.

2016 was a busy but rewarding year for all involved in the work of safeguarding, as new policies and procedures were introduced. The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church issued new standards and guidelines for Safeguarding children and the work of the Committee during the year focussed on the planning and overseeing of the implementation of these new guidelines. Awareness raising sessions were held for Parish Clergy and local Parish Safeguarding Representatives, by the Diocesan Co-ordinator Mrs Paula Cunningham, however training was limited due to a shortage of staff. Recruitment to the position of Diocesan Trainer remains a challenge for the Diocese and the Committee would encourage those already involved in the work of Safeguarding to consider taking on this important role.

In Autumn 2016 the Diocesan website was revised with new and updated information and policy guidelines on Safeguarding being made available for Clergy, staff and volunteers. These documents can be viewed and downloaded at [www.derrydiocese.org/index.php/safeguarding/child-safeguarding](http://www.derrydiocese.org/index.php/safeguarding/child-safeguarding). Thanks to Fr. Sean O'Donnell, Paula Cunningham and Noel O'Donnell who carried out this task. New guidance will continue to be posted when it becomes available.

2016 was the last year of the Parish Audit in its current format. The new formatted template will be issued at the Spring Deanery meetings 2017.

During 2016 the vetting process for those involved in Church activities was changed to an on-line process both in the North and the Republic of Ireland. This has resulted in the reduction of turn around time for applications.

A review of the existing Policy and Guidance for Adult Safeguarding (2014) took place across the Northern dioceses in 2016. The new document which aims to ensure coherence and consistency of approach to Adult Safeguarding in the Northern Dioceses should be ready for circulation in 2017.

Ms Caroline Catterson, a long standing Committee member, retired from the Committee in December 2016. Mrs Mary Mc Cafferty retired from her position as Designated Liaison Person and agreed to take on the role of Diocesan Support Person. We thank them both for their significant contribution to the work of the Committee and to safeguarding in our Diocese over the years. Mrs Celine Mc Kenna took up the post of Designated Liaison Person in September.

The Committee also acknowledges the service of Marea Loughrey and Tom Harkin as support persons. These individuals stepped down from their roles in 2016.

Thanks is also extended to Mr Tom Harkin, who retains the role of authorised signatory for the Dioceses and leads on the vetting issues with the Garda Siochana.

Diocese of Derry – Safeguarding

May 1, 2016

A Mass of Thanksgiving for all those involved in the work of Safeguarding in the Derry Diocese, was celebrated by Bishop Mc Keown in May 2016. The Committee has agreed that this should become an annual event to thank all those past and present; Priests, Local Safeguarding Representatives, and Church volunteers who work tirelessly to create safe environments for children and adults in their parishes, and Committee members who give generously of their time and expertise throughout the year.

We wish to thank everyone involved in Safeguarding in this Diocese, in particular Bishop Mc Keown for his support and encouragement.

A special word of thanks to our Diocesan Co-ordinator, Mrs Paula Cunningham, to whom the Committee is sincerely grateful. Paula has taken on a variety of additional roles throughout the year so that the work of Safeguarding can continue to progress and improve in all of our parishes.

We look forward to new challenges in 2017 and to building on the good work already done. God bless you and guide you as you continue the work of creating and maintaining safe environments for everyone in your parishes.

*Mrs Kathleen Bradley*  
*Chair of Diocesan Safeguarding Committee*

## SECTION 2 – DIOCESAN CHILD SAFEGUARDING PERSONNEL

### Derry Diocesan Safeguarding Personnel

#### Safeguarding Committee

**Chair:** Mrs Kathleen Bradley

**Vice-chair:** Mr Charlie O'Donnell

**Secretary :-** Paula Cunningham

Rev John McDevitt

Ms Caroline Catterson (retired Dec 2016)

Mr Pat Armstrong

Ms Nicki Fallon

Mrs Angela McIntyre

Mrs Oonagh Robinson

Mrs Francis Hawkins

Mr Leo McCloskey

#### Safeguarding Office

Safeguarding coordinator: Mrs Paula Cunningham

Diocesan Trainers: - Posts remained vacant throughout 2016

Office administrator: Post Vacant

#### **Designated Liaison Person(s)**

Mr Noel O'Donnell

Tel Northern Ireland 07596500793 Tel: R.O.I (0044) 75965500793

Mrs Mary McCafferty retired from this role during 2016

Mrs Celine McKenna – took up post in September 2016

Diocesan Support Person is -

Mrs Mary McCafferty

The Diocese has realigned its support for victims of abuse; Mrs Mary McCafferty has agreed to undertake this role. Mary brings her extensive safeguarding experience to the role.

The Diocese has a Priest Advisor, whose role is to support any priest against whom an allegation has been made.

### SECTION 3 - SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

#### **Meetings in 2016 took place as follows: -**

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October

The planned December 2016 meeting was cancelled -

#### **Electronic Vetting Northern Ireland.**

During 2016 Access NI moved to an on-line process for the application process for standard and enhanced criminal checks. The Safeguarding office developed a guide for local safeguarding reps. and volunteers on how to apply online . Whilst the key identification process and self declaration forms are still completed by the LSRs the online application is now completed by the staff member or volunteer themselves.

This transition to an online process has greatly reduced the turn around time for applications.

#### **Republic of Ireland**

From Nov 2016 the Garda Siochana are utilising an online process for applications. Whilst this is still embryonic, it is envisaged that the turnaround time will also reduce.

#### **Audit Report 2016**

As a result of the introduction of the new standards and guidelines for Child safeguarding from The National Board For Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, the final audit, in its old form is scheduled to take place in Spring 2017.

Following full training and application of the new standards a new audit form and process will be required to be completed in early 2018. This new form will be introduced to parishes as part of the bi-annual Deanery meetings.

A separate report of the final audit will be issued April 2017.

#### **Child Safeguarding**

The work of the committee during the year focussed on the planning and overseeing of the implementation of the new policy and guidance. This was limited in implementation due to the vacancies in local trainer positions.

This remained an issue throughout the year, with limited awareness updates delivered to local parish safeguarding representatives by the co-ordinator.

The committee recognised the challenges ahead but recruitment to these posts remains a challenge.

Discussion will be required with both the Church Authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church. (NBSCCI) to address this gap in Safeguarding Personnel.

### **Vetting Database Validation**

The committee requested that the Vetting Database for the Diocese be validated, recognising the changeover of volunteers that can occur at Parish level.

A Validation exercise was carried out with Local Parish Representatives and the Central Database amended accordingly.

This will facilitate training of volunteers.

Grateful thanks is offered to the Local Reps for their input into this process.

### **E-Vetting Northern Ireland**

This E-Vetting process is now well established in the parishes within Northern Ireland and has improved the turnaround timeframe submission to certification. Safeguarding Office support remains available for anyone experiencing challenges in the process or technology.

### **Republic of Ireland**

Garda Vetting as part of the Safeguarding requirements is overseen by Mr. Tom Harkin as Diocesan Signatory. November 2016 saw the introduction of E-Vetting availability for the Republic of Ireland. This process is gradually settling into the Parish and again advice and guidance is available from the signatory.

### **Audit 2016**

This Audit, the last under the current format, is scheduled for Spring 2017. This is always performed for the previous year.

2017 will see the introduction of the new audit tool, which will be introduced to the Parish Reps at the Spring 2017 Deanery meetings.

## **SECTION 4 CHILD SAFEGUARDING**

Summer 2016 saw the launch of the revised standards from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Printed copies have been shared with the Parishes and a copy is available on the Diocesan Website to read and download as required.

The associated guidance became available in early autumn for the National Board and along with other Northern Dioceses the Co-ordinator took time to review our documentation and develop a new Parish resource file to support safeguarding at local level.

This guidance reflects the overall changes in the policy document and supercedes any previous guidance. Again this will be available both in printed format and on the Website by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017.

For further training details please see Section 7.

## SECTION 5 ADULT SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese has collaborated with the Diocese of Armagh, Dromore, Clogher and Kilmore to review and refine the existing policy and guidance (2014). This has to be revisited in line with the new DHSSPS Adult Safeguarding Policy [2015/2016].

The collaboration across the dioceses provides a consistency of approach, communication message and acceptance of this next vital phase of safeguarding work.

It is hoped that in Spring 2017, the new document will be ready for circulation in the diocese and will take into consideration the legislative variations in the Northern and Southern jurisdictions.

The National Board does not have a mandate for the provision of guidance and training in this area of safeguarding.

The Northern Dioceses have, with the agreement of the Northern Bishops, secured a contract with Volunteer Now to take the Adult Safeguarding training forward.

For further details, see Section 7 : Training.

## SECTION 6 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Autumn 2016 saw the revision of the Diocesan website. The Safeguarding Office has inputted to the revision and work continues to ensure all alterations and revisions are completed.

It is hoped that the Safeguarding section will be the first port of call for Clergy, staff and volunteers seeking safeguarding information and guidance.

This will require time and effort by the office staff at the Pastoral Centre to ensure everything is kept up to date and appropriate.

As indicated in Section 4 [Child Safeguarding], the new policy and associated guidance will be available on the website in Spring 2017. This timeline is consistent with the introduction across the other Irish Dioceses.

2017, will see a greater focus by the committee in ensuring that the Dioceses Safeguarding message is enhanced and extended, This will be done using a variety of methods i.e. revision of posters, newsletters and inserts into Parish Newsletters. This will ensure communication with everyone at local Parish level.

Part of this focus will be to evaluate the communication strategy in terms of its efficiency and effectiveness.

### *Safeguarding Mass*

In May 2016, Bishop Mc Keown officiated at the inaugural Mass. This was offered in recognition of and thanks to all those Diocesan safeguarding representatives, whose continued work and support is key to the on-going success of safeguarding practices at local level.



Due to the success of the event, and the positive feedback from the local reps, Bishop McKeown has agreed that this will become an annual Diocesan event. It is hoped that this will rotate across the Diocese and the County Tyrone Deanery will host it in 2017.

## SECTION 7 TRAINING

### Child Safeguarding Training

The committee have expended all avenues to recruit child-safeguarding trainers for the Diocese. The process has been unsuccessful.

It was agreed in November 2016 that the current safeguarding co-ordinator would go forward for training on the next available session in Maynooth. This will secure training provisions until 2020 – as a single-handed trainer.

The next training opportunity offered by the National Board is March 2017.

Local reps have been made aware of this and are addressing training queries direct to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

The Committee and the Co-Ordinator have maintained the bi-annual deanery meetings in year. These are always well attended and provide the opportunity to hear how safeguarding is managed at local level.

### Adult Safeguarding Training

As indicated in Section 5 of this report, 2016 was a planning year for the Diocesan Committee in terms of how we would provide policy, guidance and training for clergy, staff and volunteers.

Building on the awareness training sessions offered in 2015, the five Northern Dioceses tabled a training proposal to the Northern Bishops Conference. Training by Volunteer Now has been agreed for January 2017.

Three individuals have agreed to undertake this accredited training.

Mrs Eleanor Kelly	- Arch Diocese of Armagh
Mr Seamus Gunn	- Clogher Diocese
Mrs Paula Cunningham	- Derry Diocese

A license agreement is being developed to ensure training can be initiated in 2017 to fulfil the needs identified across the dioceses.

## SECTION 8 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING PLAN ( 2017)

The 3-year Safeguarding Plan has been reviewed and the following elements have been identified for detailed work in year.

### *Communication*

- Focus on safeguarding messages using all media forms
- Clear access to revised Policy and Standards for both Child and Adult Safeguarding.

### *Training*

- To assist and support clergy, staff and volunteers by providing appropriate training at Parish/deanery level.
- A projected training schedule will be developed for 2017 for both Child and Adult safeguarding training
- Ensure that all existing committee members and Safeguarding team attend training as necessary for on-going role development.

### *Succession Planning*

- Committee remain committed to ensuring that succession planning is addressed for the key Diocesan Safeguarding roles.

**PRAYER FOR THE MINISTRY OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES**

**Holy Spirit of God,  
we ask your blessing on everyone in our parish community.**

**We pray a particular blessing  
on those whose ministry it is to ensure  
that the young and adults who are at risk of harm or in need of  
protection are cared for.**

**Help them and all of us  
to lead lives worthy of our Christian calling  
and may honesty and respect, integrity and justice  
be the hallmark of all our relationships.**

**We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our Saviour and brother.**

**Amen.**





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