



Diocese of Elphin

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Diocesan Safeguarding Children Annual Report 2011





A word from the Bishop

The Diocese of Elphin continues its wholehearted commitment to Safeguarding Children. To date a significant amount of work and resources have been invested in the development of policy, procedures and structures that aim to ensure that best practice is adhered to across all parishes and agencies in the Diocese.

Over the last twelve months our diocese through the Diocesan Safeguarding Office has continued its work in supporting parishes and agencies to ensure that their activities are in line with best practice. This involves among other things the continued rollout of training, in-service days for key personnel, raising-awareness sessions for parishes, reviews and regular correspondence on pertinent safeguarding matters.

This annual newsletter serves to provide updates on key developments that have taken place over the last year along with providing relevant contact details for those who may have any concerns or questions in this area.

I want to renew my heartfelt thanks to all who continue to participate in our Diocesan Safeguarding Structures, in particular to those who act in a voluntary capacity on our committees and as local safeguarding representatives in our parishes. This work would not be possible without their generosity.

I entrust the continuation of this indispensable work to the care and intercession of Our Lady, and pray for renewal of our Church especially among our young people.

+ Christopher Jones.

Christopher Jones DD



Safeguarding Training

During the last year HSE Accredited Keeping Safe Training was offered to key personnel in the deaneries of Sligo, Castlerea & Strokestown. Each deanery has now been offered this training over the last two years and the Diocesan Office of Safeguarding will continue to make this available to all who require it.

Implementation & Monitoring In-Service

During the month of November 2011 the Diocesan Office of Safeguarding Children hosted six separate evenings, one in each deanery area to help support parishes with their implementation and on-going monitoring of best practice in the area of Safeguarding Children. These evenings were specifically for Priests and Local Safeguarding Representatives and served to offer support on all matters related to our Safeguarding Children Diocesan Policy and Procedures. The Diocesan Safeguarding Office greatly appreciates the enormous amount of work done by Priests and Local Safeguarding Representatives as the Diocese continues to do everything it can to ensure that our church activities are safe for all concerned.

Review & Consultation

Now that the New Revised Policy and Procedures are in operation for over 12 months the Diocesan Office of Safeguarding initiated a review of adherence to best practice in each parish of the diocese. Each parish has been issued with a consultation and review form which the Priest and Local Safeguarding Representative must complete and return. The consultation and review form outlines within each of the seven safeguarding standards what criteria must be in place in every parish, thus providing a mechanism whereby each parish is clear on what must be implemented and adhered to in order to be in line with best practice. The review and consultation findings will be included in the annual safeguarding report.

Disability Training Accreditation

Our two diocesan HSE Accredited Keeping Safe Trainers recently received accreditation in disability training and are now in a position to deliver training on this component to any church personnel who wish to avail of it. Training on disability and inclusivity in all church activities is an intrinsic part of safeguarding children and is indispensable when communicating the Church's safeguarding message. This is an important addition to our training programme and greatly welcomed.

Safe Recruitment Developments

Each parish has been asked to identify all lay personnel who through their involvement in church activities have substantial unsupervised contact with children. These people will include supervisors of altar servers, youth choir leaders, etc. Those identified are obliged to submit for Garda Vetting and sign a Self-Declaration form as per our diocesan safeguarding policy on recruitment and selection of volunteers. All clergy and lay employees of the diocese have been Garda Vetted and have signed a Self-Declaration form in line with Statutory and Church guidelines.

Launch of Children First 2011

On the 15th of July 2011, Ms Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs launched Children First 2011. This statutory guidance promotes the protection of children from abuse and neglect. It states what organisations need to do to keep children safe, and what different bodies and the general public should do if they are concerned about a child's safety and welfare. The Guidance sets out specific protocols for HSE social workers, Gardaí and other front line staff in dealing with suspected abuse and neglect. This document supersedes the 1999 edition and reflects new policy, legislation and organisation – the establishment of the HSE, HIQA, and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church Launches New Safeguarding Children Training Modules

Since the publication of “Safeguarding Children, Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland”, the NBSCCCI has engaged in the process of developing a new modularised training programme to support the principles and standards contained therein.

After two years of consultation, planning, development and review the NBSCCCI have now launched their new modularised training programme. The training programme supports the seven standards of safeguarding in the Catholic Church.

To support the rollout and delivery of these new materials the NBSCCCI is creating a register of skilled and experienced trainers. The trainers will be supported by a network of tutors, two in each province, who will also monitor the quality of the delivery of training. Frank McGuinness Director for Safeguarding in the Diocese has been appointed Tutor for the West along with Fr. Tod Nolan.

The Diocese of Elphin has two registered trainers with the NBSCCCI and a registered tutor and will begin to deliver the new modules from April 2012. These new modules will be delivered alongside the HSE Accredited Keeping Safe Training programme which will continue to be delivered across all parishes in the diocese as it has been for the last three years.

Safeguarding training, both Church and Statutory is an intrinsic part of safeguarding practice throughout Elphin diocese and the Diocese is fully committed to continue to make the appropriate training available to all key personnel who through their ministry have contact with children.

Safeguarding Children Newsletter

The annual Safeguarding Children Newsletter was produced and copies were disseminated across all parishes throughout the Diocese. The newsletter contains details of all significant developments in Safeguarding over the previous 12 months.

New Safeguarding Children Section on Diocesan Website

The new diocesan website launched during 2011 with a new section developed for Safeguarding Children. All pertinent information relating to Safeguarding Children is available on the site along with downloadable copies of all documents, forms, newsletters, reports, etc. See www.elphindiocese.ie/safeguarding-children.