

Training:

Training for Priests and Safeguarding Representatives:

Training is a very important opportunity for Clergy and Safeguarding Representatives to up-date themselves on Safeguarding and to re-familiarise yourself with Safeguarding Standards and guidance. See below details of Training nights and please attend the venue that suits you best!

Training Date for your Diary:

We will be having our annual In-Service Training for Clergy and Safeguarding Reps in:

Roscommon: Monday 25th November 2019
in Abbey Hotel, Roscommon at 7.30 pm.
Sligo: Tuesday, 26th of November 2019
in Clayton Hotel Sligo at 7.30 pm.

Training for Volunteers:

Training for volunteers will be held in Sligo and Roscommon in March/April 2020. Please note that the national requirement for training is every three years. If you have attended training in the past 3 years you do not need to attend. If you are a new volunteer or if it is three years since you last attended training, please let me know. All Parishes will receive notification of this training nearer the time.

If you are interested in a Parish Training evening, please contact the Safeguarding Office for information.

NBSCCCI Audit 2020

The Diocese of Elphin will be audited by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) in 2020. The first review of safeguarding in the Diocese of Elphin was carried out in February 2013 and focused mainly on the management of cases and files. This time around the main emphasis will be on current safeguarding practice in Parishes and the Diocese. I ask for your co-operation over the next few months to ensure compliance.

Safeguarding Contact Details:

If you are concerned about the welfare and safety of children or wish to raise a matter from the past you may contact any of the following:

Designated Liaison Persons

• Mary Nicholson 086-3750277
• Helen Diskin 087-0516888

Garda Sióchána (Confidential Line) 1800-555222
Tusla • Sligo 071-9155133
• Roscommon/Galway 091-546235
Towards Healing 1800 303416
Towards Peace 01-5053028

For all Safeguarding information see Diocesan website: www.elphindiocese.ie



Sacristy Registers/General Registers:

The 2020 Sacristy registers are available now for distribution. Please collect your registers at the In-Service training night for Priests and Safeguarding Representatives at the end of November. General Registers are available from the Safeguarding Office as required.

The 2019 registers should be returned to the Safeguarding Office in January 2020 in line with the record keeping policy of the Diocese.

Feedback

We sincerely welcome any feedback you may have on Safeguarding in our Parishes and in our Diocese.

Please can you contact either your local Safeguarding Representative (who will pass on all feedback to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office) or contact Mary Nicholson directly at Diocesan Safeguarding Office:
Email: mary@elphindiocese.ie
or Tel: 086-3750277

Diocese of Elphin

Safeguarding Newsletter 2019



Message from Bishop Kevin

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

At this time of year, I am reminded that it is, once again, time for me to offer you a report on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons in the Diocese of Elphin. If you are familiar with the letters of St. Paul, you will know that he usually begins by giving thanks to God. One of the things for which he frequently expresses gratitude is the faith, the generous service and the partnership of all those who work closely with him. I want to follow his example.

As I go from parish to parish, I am very conscious of the care and attention that is obviously being given to the safeguarding of children by priests and deacons, sacristans and co-ordinators of altar servers, parish safeguarding representatives, choir directors and others. Many of you will be familiar with the African proverb: "it takes a village to raise a child". The same could be said of the safeguarding of children. It is the responsibility of each of us and of all of us, but I am most grateful to those who take particular responsibility for this task in our parishes.

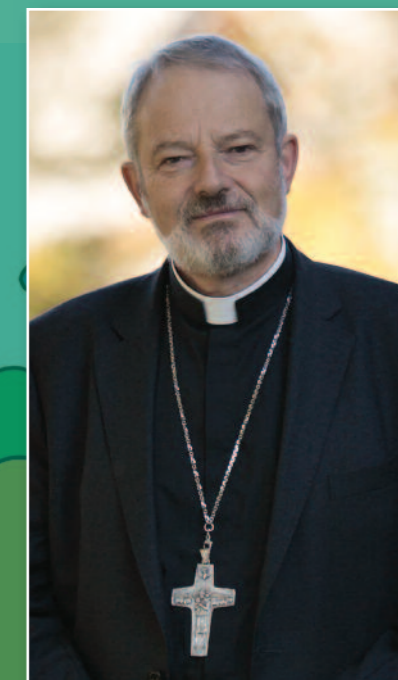
People occasionally ask me if it is really necessary for us to continue investing time and energy in safeguarding. Can we not take it for granted at this stage that people have got the message? It would be wonderful if that were the case. The reality however is that, when we begin to take things for granted, we begin to forget and standards tend to drop.

I am happy to report that I am not aware of any unresolved safeguarding concern, allegation or on-going investigation in relation to any personnel of the Diocese of Elphin. It is my expectation that, sometime in 2020, the Diocese will be subject to its next safeguarding audit by the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, the report of which will be published in due course. While it is encouraging that our efforts seem to be bearing fruit, it is important for us to be aware that, in all of our communities, there are people who have been affected by abuse, whether directly or indirectly. Their pain and their sense of betrayal can remain with them into old age and they should never be forgotten in our prayers.

During the past few years, there has been a growing awareness that there are certain parallels between children and "vulnerable persons". While there are various legal and ecclesial definitions, a "vulnerable person" is, essentially, any person other than a child who is unable, for emotional or physical reasons, or because of their particular circumstances, to protect himself or herself from abuse or exploitation by others. The six dioceses of the Tuam Province, including the Diocese of Elphin, have agreed a joint policy for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons. I am very grateful to our own Director of Safeguarding, Mary Nicholson, who devoted significant time and energy to the finalisation of the policy and to preparing the training of key personnel which will take place in the coming months.

With renewed thanks and every blessing


+Kevin Doran,
Bishop of Elphin



Elphin

Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter on Safeguarding-May 2019



Pope Francis' Motu proprio, "Vos estis lux mundi" establishes new procedural rules to combat sexual abuse and to ensure that Bishops and Religious superiors are held accountable for their actions. It establishes universal norms, which apply to the whole Catholic Church. Whilst the letter issued by the Pope is primarily about universal Church law, it affirms many of the practices which we are already observing in Ireland, particularly the need to report promptly all allegations to the statutory authorities and to fully respect and co-operate with State laws and investigations.

Key Points:

- Every Diocese is obliged to set up an "office" for reporting.
- Obligation on all Clerics and Religious to report promptly all allegations of abuse.
- The document covers not only violence and abuse against children and vulnerable persons but also sexual abuse and violence resulting from an abuse of authority.
- Dealing with cover-ups and those who hold positions of particular responsibility in the Church, and who, instead of pursuing abuses committed by others, have hidden them, and have protected alleged offenders instead of protecting the victims.
- The importance of protecting minors (anyone under 18) and vulnerable persons. The definition of a "vulnerable person" is broadened to include "any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want to otherwise resist the offense".
- Protecting those who come forward to report abuse is very important. Someone reporting abuse cannot be subjected to "prejudice, retaliation or discrimination" because of what they report.
- The Motu proprio regulates the investigation of Bishops, Cardinals, Religious Superiors and all those who lead a Diocese, or another particular Church, in various capacities (even temporarily). The rules apply not only in the case of these persons being investigated for having committed sexual abuse themselves, but also if they are accused of having "covered up", or of failing to pursue abuses of which they were aware, and which it was their duty to address.

Pope Francis writes at the beginning of the document:

"In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church".

Bishop Michael Duignan

Bishop Michael Duignan was ordained Bishop of Clonfert on 13th of October 2019. Bishop Michael was a priest of the Diocese of Elphin for 25 years and during his time in the diocese played a significant role in the establishment of good safeguarding practice. We wish to thank Bishop Michael most sincerely for his dedication and commitment to safeguarding in the Diocese of Elphin. We will miss his wisdom and his support and wish him every blessing in his new mission as Bishop of Clonfert.



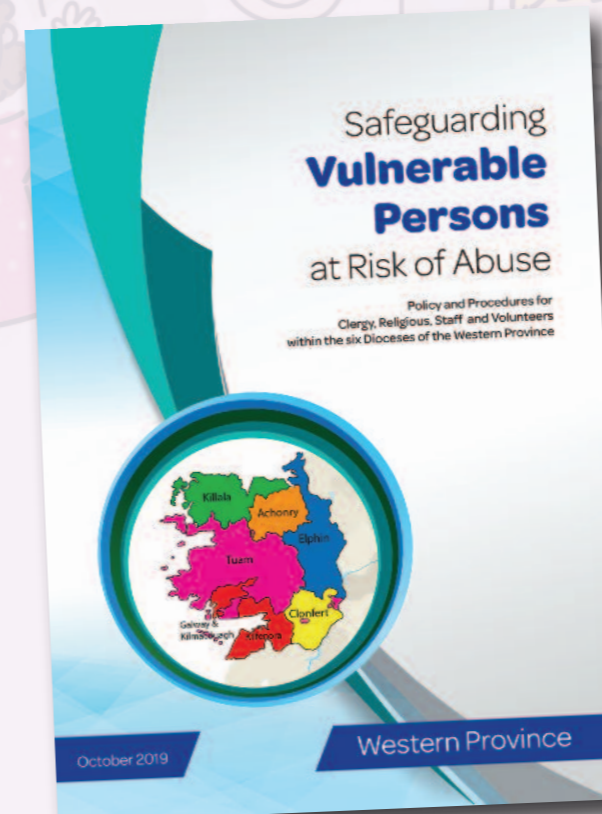
Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy 2019:

The Diocese of Elphin, in partnership with the six Dioceses of the Western Province have recently published a Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at risk of abuse policy and procedures for Clergy, Religious, staff and volunteers. These guidelines adhere to current best practice and guidance in the Republic of Ireland and should be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, both of which are available on the Diocesan website www.elphindiocese.ie

The policy has two related objectives. It is intended:

- 1 To set out the basic principles and best practice to be followed by all clergy, staff and volunteers who participate in the mission of the Diocese or the services we provide. The code of practice reflected in the document is designed not only to safeguard vulnerable persons, but also to safeguard those who minister to them in our parish communities.
- 2 To raise the level of awareness among all who are involved in the ministry of the Church, so that any abuse of vulnerable persons is more likely to be noticed and reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Trainers will provide training to all Clergy, Religious, staff and volunteers who minister or work with Vulnerable Persons in early 2020. For further enquiries please contact the Safeguarding office on 071-9151086 or 086-3750277.



Notes from the Director of Safeguarding



Parish Support Visits 2018/2019

I began the Parish Support visits in September 2018 and have found these visits a great opportunity to meet with Priest(s), Parish Safeguarding Representatives and in some parishes, Parish Secretaries. It has been an opportunity to talk to individual parishes about the safeguarding structures in their Parish and to answer any questions they may have. My job is to ensure that each Parish is compliant with the NBSCCCI policy and standards and I will provide practical support to the Parish Safeguarding team to reach this standard. As a follow-up to my support visits, I have completed a number of very successful Parish Training nights which have been attended by a large number of Parishioners. The feedback from everyone so far is that the parish support visits have been a positive experience. The support visit allow me the opportunity to meet Parishes and thank them for their continued hard work and commitment to safeguarding in their own Parish.

For Parishes who have not yet had their support visit, please contact me at your earliest convenience on 086-3750277 to arrange this visit.

Parish Safeguarding Reviews 2019

All Parishes should have received their 2019 Parish Safeguarding review form which needs to be completed, signed and then returned no later than the **13th of December 2019**.

This Review document is an annual requirement of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Bishop Kevin is obliged to send a letter to the NBSCCCI in January 2020 stating that each Parish has completed their review of Safeguarding. Use the opportunity to review Safeguarding practice in your Parish and to identify any gaps in practice.

Safeguarding Materials: If you require copies of the Safeguarding Children Parish Handbook, Safeguarding Checklist for Parishes Brochure or the Safeguarding Information leaflet for Children and Parents please contact Mary Nicholson at the Safeguarding Office on 086-3750277.