



Towards Healing

Towards Healing is an independent organisation providing free professional support for people who have experienced institutional, clerical, or religious abuse in Ireland. It provides face to face counselling, structured phone counselling, family counselling and a counselling helpline.

Tuesday to Friday: 9.00am - 5.00pm.

Freephone: 1800 303416

Hearing Impaired Text Line: 085 8022859

Email: info@towardshealing.ie

Website: www.towardshealing.ie



Towards Peace

Towards Peace provides spiritual support in a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.

Monday and Tuesday: 9.00am – 4.00pm

Wednesday: 9.00am -12.00 noon

Phone: 01 5053028 / 086 7710533

Out of Office Hours: 086 7710533

Email: towardspeace@iecon.ie

Website: www.towardspeace.ie

Feedback

Feedback on our present safeguarding arrangements is always welcome and you are encouraged to do so. The parish safeguarding representative will receive any feedback/suggestions and forward them to the diocesan safeguarding office.

You can also give your feedback directly to the diocesan safeguarding office by contacting Mary Nicholson at mary@elphindiocese.ie or on 086-3750277.

Safeguarding Contact Details

Details of Personnel to Contact if you are Concerned about the Welfare and Safety of Children: If you have a safeguarding concern or wish to report an allegation of child abuse, please contact one of our Diocesan Designated Liaison Persons who are responsible for receiving/managing concerns and complaints relating to safeguarding children that involve Church personnel.

Designated Liaison Persons for Diocese of Elphin:

Mary Nicholson 086-3750277

Helen Diskin 087-0516888

C/o St. Mary's, Temple Street, Sligo

Website: www.elphindiocese.ie

TUSLA-Child and Family Agency Contact Numbers

Sligo/Leitrim 071-9155133

Roscommon/Galway 091-546235

Mayo 094-9049137

An Garda Síochána:

Garda National Protective

Services Bureau, Harcourt Square,

Dublin 2. DO2 DH42

Email: GNPSB_SCMU@garda.ie

Tel: 01-6663430

Diocese of Elphin

Safeguarding

Newsletter Spring 2023



www.elphindiocese.ie

Message from Bishop Kevin

Dear Parishioners and fellow Clergy,
The last few years have been very strange. The routine of parish life, like so many things, was put on hold. The restrictions impacted on all of us but, in particular, on the elderly and on children. The pace of return to normality has been slow and I think many of us have struggled to find the energy to do all the things we did before.

Ministry with young people, like the care of the vulnerable elderly, is an essential part of the mission of the Church. Where young people are concerned, the enforced break in routine may have given us space to think differently about how we might work more fruitfully and more effectively with them. It is good to see that many of the parishes, once again, have altar servers, children's choirs, and family Masses. Active involvement helps young people to develop a sense of belonging and "ownership" in their parish. I appreciate the huge amount of effort on the part of volunteers and clergy that goes into doing these things and doing them well.

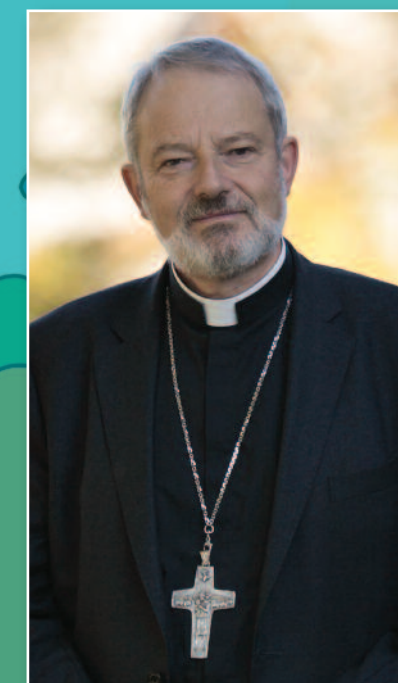
Part of any ministry which involves children, or indeed vulnerable adults, is to have in place the appropriate safeguarding policies and practices. Now that these activities are once again possible, this would be a good time in every parish for an internal review of your own safeguarding practices. Part of the role of the parish safeguarding representative in Elphin is to periodically brief the Parish Pastoral Council, so that the entire leadership of the parish remains alert to potential risks. I would ask Chairpersons of PPCs to ensure that this happens, as an agenda item, at least once each year.

I am happy to be able to confirm that there is no priest or deacon currently ministering in the Diocese against whom an allegation of child abuse has been sustained, or who is currently under investigation because of any safeguarding concern.

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland carried out a review of safeguarding practice in the Diocese of Elphin, just over ten years ago. A further review was scheduled to take place in 2020 but – you guessed it – it had to be deferred because of Covid-19. I am happy to say that the review will now take place in March 2023. This review will confirm the good work that is being done on the ground and may point to some areas in which we can improve.

Speaking of the good work, I want to take this opportunity to say how delighted I am that Mary Nicholson is back in the Safeguarding role, after a period of eighteen months on sick leave. I also want to thank Frank McGuinness and Helen Diskin, both experienced members of the safeguarding team, who provided the safeguarding service for the Diocese during Mary's absence. Thank you again to all of you for all that you do to make the Church a community in which children can be invited to participate in safety.

+Kevin Doran
Bishop of Elphin



Elphin



Review by NBSCCCI on Safeguarding in the Diocese of Elphin

The Diocese of Elphin has invited the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) to conduct a review of Safeguarding practice. This review, which was due to be undertaken in early April 2020, was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The review will now take place in March 2023.

If you have views about Safeguarding in the Diocese of Elphin, you are invited to send these to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland at New House St Patrick's College Maynooth Co Kildare. Tel: 01-5053124.

For full information on Safeguarding in the Diocese of Elphin, see the Safeguarding Section on our website at www.elphindiocese.ie or contact, Mary Nicholson (Director of Safeguarding) on 086-3750277.

Safeguarding Training

Unfortunately, safeguarding training was put on hold during 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. We resumed training in April 2022 and 250 people received training at 10 different training venues throughout the Diocese of Elphin. We will be offering training later this year and will contact parishes when dates are agreed. We will have our annual in-service training night for Priests and safeguarding representatives in November in Sligo and Roscommon.

Sacristy Registers/ General Registers

Sacristy registers are available from the safeguarding office. Please contact us if you need a new register. General registers which are used for children's liturgy groups and choirs are available on request.

Parish Support Visits

In 2018/2019 parish safeguarding support visits commenced as part of the NBSCCCI requirements. They were interrupted due to Covid-19 in 2020/2021. This year, the parish support visits have re-started and to date 10 support visits have been completed. The remaining 27 support visits will be done over the next few months, meeting with both the Parish Priest and the Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR). Please contact the Director of Safeguarding to arrange your Parish Safeguarding Support Visit. The visit gives practical support and advice to ensure parishes reach the required standards in safeguarding.

Guidance on the Use of Photography

The Church only has responsibility for safeguarding in relation to the use of photography if it plans to use the photographs for Church purposes. Photographs taken at events organised by family and schools such as First Holy Communion, Weddings, or Confirmations (including when the photographer is employed by the school or family for these occasions) do not fall under the responsibility of the Church, unless they are being taken for Church purposes. If parents/guardians and parishioners are intending to photograph or video at an organised event, guidance is available on the diocesan website www.elphindiocese.ie

Parish Reviews 2022

In 2021, the National Board for Safeguarding Children advised dioceses that parish audits had resumed. We understand that there has been very little engagement with children/young people due to Covid-19, but we would encourage you to use the parish audit as a reminder of what needs to be in place as normal activity resumes.

The return date for this year's audit was 9th of December 2022 and Bishop Kevin will inform the NBSCCCI that all parish reviews have been returned. A sincere thank you to all our clergy, staff, safeguarding representatives and volunteers for their commitment to keeping children safe in our diocese.

Risk Assessment

The National Board for Safeguarding Children has indicated that Tusla is currently reviewing Child Safeguarding Statements with reference to how local risk assessments are conducted. This is in the context of the child safeguarding policy which requires that a written risk assessment is carried out on all ministries with children. Each ministry must be reviewed at parish level by those involved and safeguards put in place to minimise risk. In relation to children's ministries at local level the focus should be on risk assessment in relation to safeguarding issues.

A risk assessment is an exercise where an organisation examines all aspects of its service from a safeguarding perspective, to establish whether there are any practices of the service that have the potential to put children at risk. The Church is one such organisation. Risk assessments should be reviewed periodically as the operating environment changes or when new information on risks becomes available.

Risk assessments should be carried out at parish level for every activity involving children. The Diocese of Elphin have a Hazard Risk Assessment template form (SG-O6) which can be downloaded from the diocesan website www.elphindiocese.ie



Parish Safeguarding Representatives

In each parish in our Diocese safeguarding representatives work to support the parish priest, to raise awareness of safeguarding, offering help and practical support where necessary. All safeguarding representatives have participated in training developed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and delivered by diocesan trainers. Safeguarding representatives agree to hold the role for three years. Every Parish in the diocese has recently appointed a new Safeguarding representative or re-appointed the safeguarding representative who had held the position previously. We are so grateful to all the safeguarding representatives in parishes who volunteer to carry out this role and whose dedication and commitment ensure that safeguarding is happening in parishes.

Their role is not to hear concerns, allegations, or disclosures of abuse but rather to ensure that people have access to the contact details for Tusla, the Gardaí and the designated liaison persons. These contact details are displayed at the main entrance of every church in the diocese.



Role of the Parish Safeguarding Representatives is:

1. Raising awareness of what safeguarding is in their parish with support from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.
2. Disseminating information re. standards and guidance and circulating information in their parish as provided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.
3. Ensuring church activities are provided in a way that ensures the safety and well-being of the children involved.
4. Ensuring contact details of Designated Liaison Person, Garda and TUSLA are widely publicised, through notices, newsletter, etc. as provided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

Training is provided for all newly appointed Local Safeguarding Representatives and on-going training for re-appointed Local Safeguarding Representatives