

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN THE DIOCESE OF MEATH

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

- **AUDIT OF BEST PRACTICE IN PARISHES**
- **TRAINING REPORT FOR 2011**
- **TRAINING PLAN FOR 2012**
- **AUDIT OF DIOCESAN POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

PART 1

REPORT ON THE AUDIT REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING MEASURES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2011 IN PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF MEATH

Section 1: Creating a culture of safety in parishes

- 69 parishes together with the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes bringing total of 70 were asked to complete the parish self-audit. 67 completed audits were returned to the Independent Assessor.
- All parishes except 2 reported that there are at least two parish safeguarding representatives in place with 17 parishes having three or four lay representatives.
- The safeguarding policy has been adopted and advertised by all areas.
- All parishes have the safeguarding poster displayed.
- The Code of Behaviour is adopted, with 11 parishes awaiting forms to be returned.
- Adequate supervision numbers are in place in all except 2 parishes where there is concern that there are not enough adults to supervise altar servers. Others have been specific and have over and above required volunteers.
- Health and safety standards seem to be up to standard. Two parishes are reviewing their facilities or awaiting advice.
- Records are up to date in most parishes; 6 parishes are either awaiting the return of forms or are reviewing their current procedures.
- The audits indicate that all participants and parents are aware of parish policies relating to safeguarding children, good behaviour and the complaints procedure.
- Altar servers training where applicable was given and guidance on supervision followed; however 4 parishes are either putting changes in place or do not have adequate supervision during holiday times.
- Insurance for non-parish groups is in place where applicable; 1 parish is in the process of reviewing its requirements. 1 parish omitted to answer.
- Asked if parishes were assured that visiting clergy were in good standing, most responded in the affirmative. 1 parish required clarification, 1 did not respond

Section 2: Responding to concerns:

- Most parishes (60) stated that staff and volunteers have familiarised themselves with the safeguarding policy and procedures, that they have been made aware of the procedure for reporting allegations or disclosures and signed the agreement forms; 7 parishes are awaiting forms to be returned .1 parish required clarification on form/document.

- No allegations or disclosures of abuse were reported to staff or volunteers.
- Disciplinary procedures did not need to be invoked in any parish.

Section 3: Implementing Diocesan Safeguarding Policy

- 'Keeping Safe' training has been undertaken by priests and parish safeguarding representatives in all parishes; however 33 parishes did not include year of training.
- Information sessions on policy and procedures have been completed in most parishes; 2 parishes reported that not all staff had attended meetings. 1 parish did not respond
- Asked if information is available for children on sources of support, 34 responded 'yes'; 21 parishes are awaiting information or that none was available.
- All audits except 10 were signed by parish priest as well as parish reps.

Matters Arising

- Implementation of safeguarding policy: year of training needs to be highlighted to ensure level of training is current.
- Information available for children on sources of support – as 20 parishes are awaiting information to be available, this area needs to be addressed as soon as possible.
- Agreement to observe procedures: is there a specific form for staff and volunteers to sign?
- It may be prudent to check that keeping safe training is current and completed by priests of a parish prior to diocesan changes.
- The last question in Section 3 (information for children) may have been unclear.
- A 'follow up' list is compiled in Appendix 1 of this report, outlining which parishes did not return the audit and where other parishes have practices to be completed (e.g. Health and safety reviews underway, Codes of Behaviour forms to be returned or training to be completed).

PART 2

TRAINING REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2011

Priority 1: *Keeping Safe Training*

- September 2011: A Keeping Safe Training Programme (9 hour session) delivered to 19 attendees (12 parishioners; 7 Diocesan Advisers for Religious Education/School Chaplains). The training was delivered by Joan Walshe and Sandra Neville. The course was run in the Edmund Rice Centre, Kells.

Priority 2: Information Sessions

- Information Sessions on Safeguarding Children for staff and volunteers were held in 14 centres for 43 parishes.
- Information sessions on safeguarding children were also run for: Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes personnel; Volunteers involved with Eucharistic Congress "Come and See" weekend.

Priority 3: Meetings with Parish Safeguarding Representatives

- Three meetings were held at deanery level for five deaneries; two meetings each for two deaneries and one meeting held for one deanery.

Priority 4: Meetings with clergy and personnel

- Clergy and church personnel took part in each of the sessions identified above in priority areas two and three.
- A deanery meeting for priests took place in five separate deaneries.
- An invitation to contribute to a deanery meeting on the topic of safeguarding was issued to three deaneries and a presentation on safeguarding made to priests took place at another deanery meeting.

Priority 5: Training and support for Resource Team

- January 2011: Keeping Safe Training update with HSE.
- February 2011: BSC training day.
- March 2011: "Working with Children" training delivered by NBSCCC.
- May 2011: "Vetting Training Day" delivered by NBSCCC
- Sandra Neville has been involved with NBSCCC regarding the training materials for the proposed Training Programme for NBSCCC which will be launched in early 2012.
- Joan Walshe completed the two day Disability Awareness Module of Keeping Safe.
- September 2011: Keeping Safe combined pack training and introduction to revised Children First.
- Resource Team meetings were held in February March, July, September and October.
- Meetings with HSE Children First Information Officers were held in March and September.

PART 3

TRAINING REPORT FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING 1 JANUARY 2012

The following priority areas have been identified for training:

Priority 1: *Training for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church*

Target: All Parish Safeguarding Representatives and clergy will have undertaken training for safeguarding children

Action: Rollout *Safeguarding Children* training programme to any PSR or parish clergy who have not yet availed of the programme.

In 2012 it is proposed to offer one training session, in May. Venue for the course: Navan.

A training needs assessment will be carried out to establish whether there is demand for a further course later in the year.

Priority 2: Information sessions

Target: Church personnel in clusters of parishes will be offered information sessions, as needed, dealing with awareness of safeguarding issues; relevant documentation; policy and procedures. Approx 8 - 16 sessions. Other target groups for information sessions:

-Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes

-Parish associations

Action: Prepare and deliver the required information to clusters of Church personnel on a cross parish basis as needed.

Priority 3: Meetings with PSR

Target: All Parish Safeguarding Representatives

Action: Deanery level meetings will be organized with PSR twice per year to provide updates on developments and support in role and introduce the NBSCCC's safeguarding training. These will take place in May & September 2012.

Priority 4: Meetings with clergy

Target: Parish clergy

Action: Input at deanery meetings once per year to provide updates on safeguarding issues and introduce the NBSCCC's safeguarding training.

Priority 5: Training and support for Resource Team

Target: Members of Safeguarding Resource Team

Action: This involves briefing updates with Information & Advice Person, Children's First, HSE and attending relevant NBSCCC training sessions. There will be Quarterly Resource Team meetings with Fr Crosbie to facilitate planning, delivery and evaluation of training

Priority 6: Other training needs

Target: Identify and respond to additional training needs (particular skills training) in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee.

Action: Training for disciplinary panel.

Note:

A record of attendance at each course or information session will be maintained. Each course will be evaluated by participants.

This training plan has been ratified by the Safeguarding Committee and submitted to, and approved by, the NBSCCC and will be updated in line with best practice on an annual basis.

PART 4

**REPORT ON THE AUDIT REVIEW
OF DIOCESAN POLICY AND
PROCEDURES FOR THE YEAR
ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2011**

No.	Standard 1: Written policy on keeping children safe	In place	Evidence
1.	The Diocese has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way	Yes	<i>Revised Diocesan policy document, incorporating additional procedural elements from the NBSC Guidelines, has been developed by a sub-committee of the Safeguarding Committee and published in hard copy and electronic format.</i>
2.	The policy is approved by the Safeguarding Committee and signed by the Bishop.	Yes	<i>Signed off by the Bishop and sent to NBSC March 2010</i>
3.	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Yes	<i>See p. 4 of policy document</i>
4.	The policy is reviewed every two years and adapted whenever there are significant changes in legislation or the Church.	Proposed	<i>The diocesan Action Plan (sent to NBSC July 2010) provides for review in accordance with 1.4. Date for first review May/June 2012 .Any additional elements, developed by the NBSC or consequent on legislation, will be incorporated and disseminated to the relevant people, by the resource Team, as they become available</i>
5.	The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work	Yes	<i>In each section of document under the headings: Developing a Culture of Safety; Responding to Concerns; Implementing the Diocesan Policy</i>
6.	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Yes	<i>By reference to NBSC Guidelines –see p. 9</i>
7.	The policy clearly described the Church`s understanding and definitions of abuse.	Yes	<i>Revised Children First definitions have been adopted See p14 and Resource L. See p14+15 and Resource M</i>
8.	The policy should be created at diocesan level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the relevant diocesan policy and approved by the relevant authority before distribution.	Yes	<i>Document available in printed format in all parishes and on diocesan website. It incorporates an abbreviated version which parishes adopt as the parish policy –see p8 and Resource A</i>

No.	Standard 2: Procedures-how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions	In place	Evidence
1.	There are clear written child protection procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse about a child	Yes	<i>See p.14 and Resource M</i>
2.	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare and civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Yes	<i>They are based on the NBSC Guidelines and Children First (revised) and have been discussed with relevant HSE personnel.</i>
3.	There is a safeguarding /designated person with clearly defined role and responsibilities for child protection.	Yes	<i>See p. 8+9 (1.3 and 1.4)</i>
4.	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations, suspicions and referrals and storing these securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.	Yes	<i>NBSC guidance on recording and data protection have been adopted. See 3.5 – ps 25, 26, 27.</i>
5.	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.	Yes	<i>See 1.6 p11, Codes of Behaviour, also Resource G Code of Behaviour for all Church personnel; Resource H Disciplinary and grievance procedure; Resource M, N, O</i>
6	There is guidance on confidentiality and information sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.	Yes	<i>See p 25 (3.5) and Resource M and N</i>
7	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services	Yes	<i>Contact details are included at ps 28, 29 for: Duty SW; Garda HQ; Designated Person; Resource Team; NBSC; and a range of agencies offering advice and support. See also p 21 – 3.2</i>

No.	Standard 3: Preventing harm to children	In place	Evidence
1.	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church and assessing their suitability to work with children.	Yes	<i>See p 10 – 1.5 Resources B, C, D, E, F</i>
2.	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance	Yes	<i>In line with NBSC Guidelines and Our Duty to Care</i>
3.	All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as require by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.	Yes	<i>See Resources E, F</i>
4.	The Diocese provides guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children.	Yes	<i>See p 11 – 1.6 and Resource G</i>
5.	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children.	Yes	<i>See Resources I, K</i>
6.	There are clear ways in which in which Church personnel can raise allegations/suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel, confidentially if necessary.	Yes	<i>See p 11- 1.6 and Resources H, M</i>
7.	There are processes for dealing with children’s unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading treatment.	Yes	<i>See p11 – 1.6 and Resource K</i>
8.	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language is not acceptable.	Yes	<i>See Resources G , I</i>
9	Policies include guidance/intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and in appropriate touch.	Yes	<i>See p17 and Resource J (plus reference to ODTC)</i>
10	There is guidance on assessing risks when working with children- especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Yes	<i>See Resource J</i>
11	There is guidance to ensure adequate supervision and protection of children when running projects/activities.	Yes	<i>See p 17 and Resource J</i>
12	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of IT to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation	Yes	<i>See p17 and Resource J</i>

No.	Standard 4: Training and Education	In place	Evidence
1.	All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Diocesan policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working with Church organisations.	Yes	<i>See policy document p10 (1.5); p20 (3.1) and Resource Q –Training</i>
2.	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.	Yes	<i>See policy p20 (3.1) and Resource Q</i>
3.	Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities	Yes	<i>See policy p20 and Resource Q</i>
4.	N/A		
5.	Training programmes are monitored by the NBSC and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Yes	<i>Training programme 2011 submitted to NBSC April 2011</i>

No.	Standard 5: Communicating the Church`s Safeguarding message	In place	Evidence
1.	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone	Yes	<p><i>-Poster with policy statement and contact details displayed in all church porches</i></p> <p><i>-Printed copies available in each parish</i></p> <p><i>-Electronic version available on diocesan safeguarding website (www.meathsafeguarding.ie)</i></p>
2.	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concern.	Yes and child friendly information materials will be developed	<p><i>See policy p21.at present this is a task for group leaders. See also guidelines Resource R</i></p>
3.	Everyone in the Church organisation knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Yes	<p><i>Details of the DP posted in churches; on website; in printed material circulated in parishes</i></p>
4.	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services.	Yes	<p><i>See policy document p28/29</i></p>
5.	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop their working relationships in order to keep children safe.	Yes	<p><i>Consultation re policy and procedures development; PSR advised to make contact with local agencies</i></p>
6.	The diocese has an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.	Yes	<p><i>A communications policy was drafted by a working group and adopted by the Safeguarding Committee Sept 2011. See Resource R(1)</i></p>

No.	Standard 6: Access to advice and support	In place	Evidence
1.	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Yes	<i>See policy p15 (2.3)</i>
2.	Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Yes	<i>Training supported by the HSE; consultation re policy and procedures development with HSE and NBSC; PSR advised to make contact with local agencies</i>
3.	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused, whether the abuse is by someone within the church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Yes	<i>See policy p14 (2.2) and Resources M+N</i>
4.	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Yes	<i>See policy p16 (2.4) and Resources N+P</i>
5.	Appropriate support provided to those who have perpetrated abuse	Yes	<i>See policy p16 (2.4)</i>

No.	Standard 7: Implementing and monitoring the Standards	In place	Evidence
1.	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.	Yes	<i>Action Plan/Implementation Strategy 2010-2012 submitted to NBSC July 2010</i>
2.	The human and/or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Yes	<i>Diocesan Safeguarding and Finance Committees are responsible for policy and financial resources, Resource Team in place to support implementation. Trained volunteers in place in all parishes</i>
3.	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Yes	<i>Through Resource Team; PSR; parish audit; diocesan audit</i>
4.	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/carers) about their views on policies and procedures for keeping children safe.	To be developed in 2012	<i>Referenced in communications policy</i>
5.	All incidents, allegations/suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Yes	<i>See policy p14 (2.2); p25 3.5) and Resource</i>