

# Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons



diocese  
of limerick  
our catholic community

Safeguarding Service, Diocesan Centre, St Munchin's College, Corbally.

SUMMER 2018

## We cannot relent on Safeguarding

Failure to recognise and respond appropriately to the complex issues of abuse compounds the profound harm done to the lives of young and vulnerable persons, Bishop of Limerick, Brendan Leahy told a safeguarding conference in the city in January.

Speaking at the conference, 'Building Collaboration in Safeguarding', involving 100 representatives of organisations across Limerick in Mary Immaculate College, Bishop Leahy said that 'safeguarding' is not just about children but people of all ages and abilities who are vulnerable to predators. The conference was organised by the Diocese of Limerick in association with An Garda Síochána, Tusla, Mary Immaculate and the HSE. Attendees included those from statutory, voluntary and educational sectors, as well as various faith organisations.

See more inside.

**+Brendan Leahy**  
Bishop of Limerick



## Safeguarding Service - Contact Details

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Diocesan Centre, St Munchin's, Corbally, Limerick
- **Safeguarding Committee**  
(training & information)  
**Chair: Teresa Bulfin** Tel: 061-350000

If you have a safeguarding concern or wish to raise a matter from the past, you may contact any of the following:

### An Garda Síochána

Divisional Headquarters,  
Henry Street, Limerick  
061-212400

### Tusla, Child and Family Agency

Limerick Duty & Intake Social Work Service,  
Roxtown Health Centre,  
Old Clare Street, Limerick  
061-483097/98

### Vulnerable Persons Team

Clare, Limerick, East Limerick & North Tipperary,  
Principal Social Workers,  
Tyone Health Centre, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary  
067-46470

### Mr Ger Crowley

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*Safeguarding  
Policy &  
Procedures*

<http://www.limerickdiocese.org>

### • Case Advisory Committee

**Chair: Gerry Mahon** Tel: 061-350000

### • Vetting Committee

**Chair: John Murphy** Tel: 061-350000  
Diocesan Centre,  
St Munchin's, Corbally, Limerick



*Diocese of Limerick*

**Building Collaboration Conference**

*Mary Immaculate College, 11 January 2018*

**Bishop Leahy tells conference, ‘We cannot relent on safeguarding’**



(From p.1) Said Bishop Leahy: “In recent weeks, millions have joined the social media conversation using the hashtag #MeToo, or its equivalent, on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram - women and men denouncing harmful sexual experiences.

Many are revealing for the first time, via social media, their own stories. While the majority of those sharing #MeToo stories are adult women, a large number of the shared stories reveal sexual abuse that began when they were still minors.



People of my generation began our adult lives with almost no awareness of the pervasiveness and impact of abuse in our society and in all societies.

As a consequence, failure to recognise and respond appropriately to the complex issues which abuse presents, has at times compounded the profound and harmful impact on the lives of many young and vulnerable persons.



At one point in trying to tackle the issues, we began speaking about child protection. Today we speak instead of Safeguarding because Safeguarding is a concept that reaches beyond protection, responding not only to problems which have occurred but incorporates the prevention of harm and the promotion of welfare.

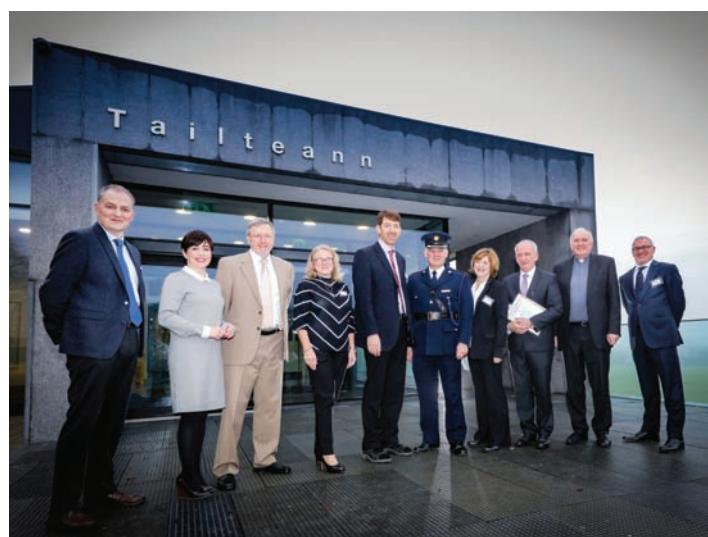
Safeguarding also extends beyond children to include people of all ages and abilities who may have vulnerabilities which exposes them to a risk of abuse.”



Bishop Leahy, however, said that while much work has been done he also warned that we cannot relent with regard to safeguarding measures in any way.

"We are, in Limerick Diocese, in a stronger place than we were. We have a range of services in place and very active training programmes. The greatest danger for us is that we might relax and believe that the worst is in some way behind us. To take this view would be a profound error which would compound the historical failures.

Sometimes however, it seems as if all of us, all of society, can want to simplify this issue



and move on. To stay with an awareness of the pervasiveness of abuse and those dark parts of our human nature and the tendency to exploit weakness and vulnerability, may be almost too much."

Bishop Leahy said that from his own meetings with victims, he was critically aware of the impact of abuse on them and their families. "This can impact on all dimensions of their lives and there are no quick or simple solutions to what are sometimes their lifelong struggles.

I am also very conscious of the strain on people working in voluntary organisations as



they struggle with what at times seem to be enormous limitations on resources.

"I am personally very aware and appreciative of the professionalism and commitment of people in the statutory sector who are the first to acknowledge the difficulties which they struggle with every day."

Bishop Leahy also expressed the hope that the conference might "trigger ideas and initiatives that feed into the Teaching Education programmes in the College to the benefit of future generations of teachers".



*Diocese of Limerick*

**Building Collaboration Conference**  
*Mary Immaculate College, 11 January 2018*

On 11 January Limerick Diocese along with the Garda Síochána, Tusla, the HSE and Mary Immaculate College hosted a conference entitled, 'Building Collaboration in Safeguarding'. Attendees included representatives from statutory, voluntary and educational sectors, as well as members of Limerick faith organisations. The aim was to provide a forum for the sharing of information; to identify achievements and good practice; to highlight difficulties which need to be addressed and to look at possible solutions.

In the morning the gathering was addressed by senior representatives of organisations with an involvement in safeguarding in Limerick. These included Chief Superintendent David Sheahan; Ger Brophy, Area Manager and Karen Buckley, Principal Social Worker, Tusla; Donal Hurley and Maggie McNally, Principal Social Workers, HSE. The sessions were chaired by Monica McElvaney, Director of Services, ADAPT; Paschal Moynihan, Head of Social Care, HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare and Stephanie Whyte, Regional Manager, Barnardos.

Recent developments in the Protective Services Unit at Henry Street Garda Station and the Vulnerable Persons Service at the HSE were outlined. Tusla also detailed the newly implemented provisions of the 'Children First' legislation and the issue of mandatory reporting.

In the afternoon participants worked in small groups to identify current challenges in safeguarding and formulated possible responses. Questions for the open forum were addressed to speakers from the morning sessions along with Stephanie Whyte and Ger Crowley (Director of Safeguarding, Limerick Diocese)

Bernard Gloster, Chief Officer, HSE chaired an open forum which examined how Limerick agencies might work together in

building greater collaboration in safeguarding. The discussion that followed acknowledged the significant positive developments in safeguarding between all key agencies in Limerick and suggestions were made to improve engagement both between statutory agencies and between them and the general public. These included:

- Promotion of greater public awareness of safeguarding among the general public, with ongoing education and training; also key first points of contact in statutory services should be easily accessed.
- Establishment of structures to nurture interagency collaboration through which difficulties can be addressed and good practice enhanced: these structures need to be robust notwithstanding changes of personnel in key agencies.
- Greater use third level institutions in running family support and safeguarding programmes, building on existing experience and reaching out to a wider groups.

