

## Garda Vetting

Garda vetting is now a legal requirement for anybody involved in promoting religious beliefs and who have access to children or vulnerable persons when doing so. Accordingly, Clergy, Sacristans and other staff including volunteers must be Garda vetted if involved with children or vulnerable adults when engaged in Parish or Diocesan work. Vetting must be completed before the access to children and vulnerable adults can commence.

Vetting applications for the Diocese and each Parish is organised through Stephanie in the Diocesan Office. Each applicant must complete a vetting application form and must supply one form of photographic evidence of identity (passport or driving licence) and one form of proof of current address (utility bill or bank statement) to accompany this application. Copies are kept locally as proof. The vetting outcome is filed in the Diocesan office and confirmation of the outcome is sent to the Parish or Organisation that has made the request. Confidentiality is guarded at every stage of the process and applications are now completed online.

Being vetted for one Parish role means you are vetted for all Parish roles. However, being vetted for an Organisation such as the GAA or other voluntary or work groups does not satisfy the vetting requirement when promoting religious beliefs for a Parish or a Diocese. The new law still requires that a person, who needs vetting, must be vetted separately for each Organisation as those vetting outcomes are not inter-changeable.

**You may contact Stephanie at the Limerick Diocesan Office on:**

**Tel: 061 315856**

**Email: stephanie@ldo.ie**

*Holy Spirit,  
Comforter of hearts,  
Heal your people's wounds  
and transform our brokenness.  
Grant us courage and wisdom,  
humility and grace,  
so that we may find peace in You.*



*Suggestions for future issues of this Safeguarding publication would be most welcome.  
Please contact david@ldo.ie*

## Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons

Safeguarding Service, Limerick Diocesan Office, Henry Street, Limerick

AUTUMN 2016

### Message from Bishop Leahy

As you might be aware, the recent Diocesan Synod clearly mandated the Diocese to engage positively and enthusiastically with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Our ministry and pastoral care must be to the highest standard. The Diocese is clearly committed to such a high standard. I am happy to report therefore, that the Diocese has recently adopted the new Safeguarding Children Policy proposed by the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children established by the Bishops' Conference. The new standards contained in that policy commit us, not only to deal with issues from the past, but to strengthen our determination that children are welcome and safe in all church activities and that their welfare must be paramount.

Because of the progress that has already been made in the Church concerning Child Safeguarding, it could happen that we might think that the crisis has passed and we could become complacent. Unfortunately, child sexual abuse in our society is pervasive. The effects of childhood abuse are enormous and persistent. People can and do live with lifelong pain and the effect can be devastating also on the family members of both abused and abusers. We cannot become complacent because apart from own specific church issues, we need to focus also on the issue of abuse within the wider society.

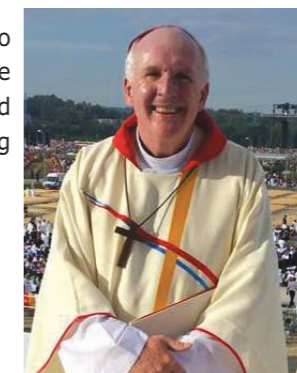
At a societal level, we must grapple with the complexities and the significance of the concerns. There are several points we can learn from the Church's experience: that there can be an instinctive tendency to avoid and not face a difficult reality; that if we don't inform ourselves we may compound the damage and hurt; that if we try to avoid scandal we create a much greater scandal and may facilitate abuse; that if we don't listen and focus on the child, we can be manipulated and confused and, therefore ineffective.

In particular we must promote a safeguarding culture that supports people and resources the agencies and organisations that work with people who have experienced abuse.

The Church knows what it is to fail and to fall. Our failure and our work to rebuild trust may be valuable as we all face the issue of abuse of the most vulnerable in the wider society.

Let us commit ourselves once more to this vital dimension of the church's life today – both within the Church itself and at the service of the wider society facing the topic of child safeguarding.

**+Brendan Leahy**  
Bishop of Limerick



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**  
Mid West, Ballycummin Ave,  
Raheen Business Park,  
Raheen, Limerick  
061-482792

**Mr Ger Crowley**  
Diocesan Director of Safeguarding  
(Designated Liaison Person),  
Diocesan Office,  
Social Services Centre,  
Henry Street, Limerick  
087-3233564  
ger@ldo.ie

*Safeguarding  
Policy &  
Procedures*

<http://www.limerickdiocese.org>

Bishop Leahy has asked that any persons having a concern regarding children involved with any church activity to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Service at:

Tel: 087 323 3564 Email: ger@ldo.ie

The Bishop would also welcome any suggestions on how we can collectively ensure that children's welfare is promoted in all their Church related activities.



All photographs in this issue are from Word Youth Day 2016 in Poland and feature some of the 100 Limerick participants

### Contact details

- **Director of Safeguarding** (*Designated Person*)  
Ger Crowley 087-3233564 ger@ldo.ie
- **Assistant Designated Liaison Person**  
Fr Noel Kirwan 061-414624
- **Parish Safeguarding Support Worker**  
Terry Boyle 086-1304775  
terry@ldo.ie
- **Vetting Administrator**  
Stephanie Cleary 061-315856  
stephanie@ldo.ie  
*Diocesan Office, Social Services Centre,  
Henry St., Limerick.*
- **Safeguarding Trainers**  
Fr Chris O'Donnell 061-400133 codonnell@ldpc.ie  
Aoife Walsh 061-400133 awalsh@ldpc.ie  
*Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Denmark St., Limerick.*
- **Safeguarding Committee** (*training & information*)  
Chair: Catherine Kelly 061-315856  
awalsh@ldpc.ie
- **Case Advisory Committee**  
Chair: Gerry Mahon 061-315856  
stephanie@ldo.ie
- **Vetting Committee**  
Chair: John Murphy 061-315856  
stephanie@ldo.ie  
*Diocesan Office, Social Services Centre,  
Henry St., Limerick.*

## New Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards

The Diocese of Limerick has adopted the new Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards developed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

As well as applying to priests and all persons involved in any form of ministry with children, Bishop Leahy has also written to all religious congregations in the Diocese to ensure that they are in compliance with the new policy and standards.

### The revised Policy has seven standards:

1. Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
2. Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations
3. Care and Support for the Complainant
4. Care and Management of the Respondent
5. Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
6. Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message
7. Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards



### Annual Parish Safeguarding Audit

Each Autumn the Diocesan Safeguarding Service asks each Parish to undertake a Safeguarding Audit. This involves the Parish Priest and the Parish Safeguarding Representative reviewing the safeguarding arrangements in the Parish and jointly certifying that all the necessary arrangements are in place.

The Parish Audit was undertaken during the month of September throughout the Diocese. Any queries regarding this can be addressed to:

**Terry Boyle, Parish Safeguarding Support Worker**  
Tel: 086 130 4775  
Email: terry@ldo.ie