

Parish Audit

Every year the Diocese reviews the work of safeguarding through a parish audit. This is done through the circulation of a questionnaire and follow up visits to the parishes. Sixty questionnaires were issued and returned by parishes between November and December 2016.

Returns demonstrate a broad awareness of safeguarding throughout the Diocese with a strong body of over one hundred volunteers supporting the implementation of safeguarding practices within the parishes. These volunteers are known as Parish Safeguarding Representatives.

Registering, vetting and training of volunteers who work directly with children is a priority.

Attendance records at all these activities are completed and stored.

Ensuring safe ratios of adults to children/young people in church activities is required and monitored.

Ensuring the continuing development of safeguarding across the parishes will be supported through visits from the Bishop, the Director of Safeguarding and the Parish Safeguarding Support Worker.

What needs to be in place in every parish?

- Safeguarding posters and information leaflets are in place in every church.
- A sign in book is retained in every sacristy.
- All young people involved in church activities complete membership forms requiring parental consent.
- All young people have access to safeguarding information and their parents are informed about safeguarding policy.
- All parishes are required to keep attendance records at youth events.
- All volunteers are Garda vetted and complete an application form agreeing to abide by the diocesan code of behaviour for adults.
- Safeguarding information and training is provided to all volunteers.



*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

SPRING 2017

Message from Bishop Leahy

Since becoming Bishop four years ago, I have made safeguarding a priority. I have met with survivors of abuse and I have found it always very moving to meet with them. On 3 March this year, following Pope Francis' call, I arranged for the Diocese to mark the National Day of Prayer for Victims of Abuse and prayers were held at all masses throughout the Diocese of Limerick on that date. As you know I have also asked that one Sunday be set aside each year as Safeguarding Sunday as a way of keeping the issue of safeguarding to the forefront of all our minds.

The abuse of children and vulnerable persons is a great evil, and despite what can appear to be a saturation of media coverage, it is difficult for us to really appreciate the pervasiveness and profound distress which abuse causes.

Irish society owes an enormous debt to the men and women who have overcome the historical shame barrier and given public testimony to their experience. We must acknowledge also the very significant role the media has played in engaging with people who have experienced abuse and giving them a voice.

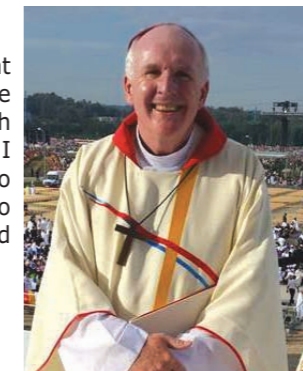
Despite the Church's failures in this area, I sometimes think that the very experience of failure to prevent and respond vigorously to abuse by some Church personnel can now, paradoxically, become a contribution which the Church can make to society. What I mean is that yes, we have failed but we must not let ourselves be blocked in our failure but rather realise that our response to this failure can become a valuable contribution of insight and practice that we can now offer to society. Our challenge is reflect on what we can learn from our failures and ensure that society as a whole can be helped in overcoming the scourge of abuse of minors.

The Diocese of Limerick is currently reviewing how it ensures that children's welfare is being promoted in all church activities and how it can work collaboratively with families and communities to promote the welfare of children. In particular, it wishes to support people who may have experienced abuse in their lives and to work with and support agencies involved with those who have experienced abuse.

I welcome all feedback on our present arrangements and encourage anyone with a concern or a suggestion to contact our Safeguarding Service at the Diocesan Office.

I want to acknowledge the work of Priests and Parish Safeguarding Representatives, Sacristans and our Safeguarding Office and all those involved with young people in ensuring that safe arrangements are in place in every Parish.

The Diocese is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable persons are welcome and safe in all their contact with Church services, activities and people. I invite everyone in the faith community to share in our collective responsibility to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable people.



+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>

Contact details

- **Director of Safeguarding (Designated Person)**
Ger Crowley 087-3233564 ger@ldo.ie
- **Assistant Designated Liaison Person**
Fr Noel Kirwan 061-414624 paul@ldo.ie
- **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**
Chair: Teresa Bulfin 061-315856
- **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.



VETTING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This document outlines who should be vetted and the procedures that apply in the Diocese of Limerick.

Legislative Basis

Vetting is carried out through the National Vetting Bureau under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016.

From the date of commencement of the legislation on 27 April 2016, it is a criminal offence to allow anyone to engage in ministry with children or vulnerable persons, without being vetted.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016 sets out the circumstances in which vetting is required:

Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children (and/or vulnerable persons).

Any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs, to children (and vulnerable persons) unless such work or activity is merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children (or vulnerable persons).

In other words, anyone who is 18 or over and involved in ministry, employed/contracted or volunteering who has any contact with children (and vulnerable persons) which is more than incidental must be vetted. Those who are aged 16 years and under 18 years may be vetted, but this can only be carried out with the written consent of their parent/guardian and the young person themselves.

For other Church personnel whose contact with children (or vulnerable persons) is incidental, vetting is not required.



For the Purposes of the Vetting Legislation

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years

“vulnerable person” means a person, other than a child, who

- a. is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
- b. has an intellectual disability
- c. is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or
- d. has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree
 - i. as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or
 - ii. that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.



Deciding Who Needs to be Vetted

The person appointing, contracting or permitting a person to be involved in Diocesan/Parish activity is responsible for making the decision on whether vetting is necessary. The key issue is to focus on what the person will be doing, for example:

Eucharistic Ministers who only distribute the Eucharist within the main body of the church during public Mass or other liturgical celebrations do not need to be vetted.

However, Eucharistic Ministers who bring the Eucharist to homes, hospitals, care homes and other institutions where there are children and vulnerable persons present do need to be vetted.

Examples of roles that typically will require vetting:

- Clergy (Bishops, Priests, Deacons), Chaplains
- Sacristans, Parish Secretaries and Diocesan Staff
- Youth Group leaders such as those responsible for youth choirs, parish run youth clubs, Pope John Paul II Award leaders, youth liturgy groups, etc.
- Supervisors of Altar Servers
- Communion Programme: “Do This in Memory of Me” leaders
- Confirmation Programme: “You shall be my witnesses” leaders
- Those whose ministry, work, activity, includes the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable persons
- All other roles that bring a person into contact, which is more than incidental, with children or vulnerable persons through his/her ministry, work or activity.

Vetting is not required for church personnel whose contact with Children/Vulnerable Persons is ‘merely incidental

Examples of roles that typically may not require vetting:

- Collectors, Car park attendants, gardeners, cleaners etc.
- Those present in the Sacristy who don’t have an official role with children or vulnerable persons. (Note: However, these adults should never be left alone with children or vulnerable persons)
- Readers of the Word.

