



Diocese of Dunkeld

Statement to the Diocese on Safeguarding October 2020

In May 2018, the Bishops of Scotland published the document 'In God's Image' as an "Instruction on Safeguarding for implementation in all Catholic canonical jurisdictions in Scotland and by all other groups and organisations in Scotland subject to a legitimate canonical authority of the Catholic Church".

For the public, and for Catholic faith communities in particular, it was written to explain how the Catholic Church in Scotland makes every effort to protect from all forms of harm and abuse those children and adults who are vulnerable or at risk.

For the past two years, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group, have been responsible for the compliance and implementation of these new national Safeguarding standards in the Diocese and each parish. These standards, and the vigilance of those involved in the life of the parish, help us to ensure that everyone will be safe when they come to Mass and when they take part in any parish groups or activities.

As a diocese, we seek to uphold the highest safeguarding standards in our relationships with people of all ages who are involved in whatever capacity within the Church and its organisations.

Normally, this annual statement would be delivered in parishes during the period of Lent. As we are all aware, our time at church over the past few months has been greatly affected by the Covid19 Pandemic. Despite this, many of our volunteers throughout the Diocese have continued to provide support where possible within our parish communities.

At present, we have over 800 volunteers who are registered to perform roles working directly with children or adults who are vulnerable or at risk. The roles that they perform include Children's Liturgy Leaders, Catechists, Eucharistic Ministers who administer Communion to housebound or sick, The Society of St Vincent de Paul, The Legion of Mary or those who volunteer at the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

All volunteers within the Diocese must complete what is known as the 'safe recruitment process' which includes being accepted for membership of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (known as PVG) - a legal requirement for all those who work with young people and vulnerable adults - and attendance at mandatory Safeguarding Induction Training sessions.

Each parish also has a designated Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, who along with the parish priest manages the safeguarding requirements of the parish. The role of the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator is seen as a vital role in ensuring that best practice in safeguarding is implemented and followed in our parish communities in line with those standards set out in 'In God's Image'.

Throughout our Parish Communities, we welcome and fully appreciate the contributions made by all those who volunteer and offer their time, expertise, and skills. Within our Diocese, we must accept that it is the responsibility of all of us to work together to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or harm.

In addition to the Safeguarding Advisory Group, the Safeguarding Advisor and Safeguarding Officer look to provide guidance on all areas of best practice in safeguarding as well as the co-ordination of resources and training available to parishes and volunteers.

Every year, the Catholic Church in Scotland collects important information about Parishes, dioceses, religious congregations, and Catholic organisations through completion of a detailed audit. This audit is designed to measure compliance with the safeguarding standards set out in 'In God's Image'.

The audit is intended to provide a transparent view of how effectively the Church is embracing a culture of safeguarding that respects, protects and nurtures the dignity of all people, keeps them safe and is compliant with legislation. Effective auditing and planning should be a continuous commitment which underpins the development of good safeguarding practice.

The Bishops Conference of Scotland established the Independent Review Group (IRG) in response to the McLellan Commission (2015). The IRG was given the remit to focus on the implementation of the recommendations of the McClellan Commission and review the safeguarding work of the 2 Archdiocese and 6 Diocese of Scotland. Each Diocese is now in the process of being randomly audited over a four-year period conducted by Social Care Institute for Excellence. The Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh and the Diocese of Galloway diocese were audited first in 2019 and will be followed by the Diocese of Aberdeen and Motherwell in 2020. The second annual report of the IRG was also published in June 2020 and can be accessed via the Diocese website.

All these elements contribute greatly to promoting a safer culture and building good safeguarding practice in our parishes and community. We hope that anyone considering becoming a parish volunteer will be encouraged by this information.

As part of our commitment to Safeguarding, it is vitally important that we remember those who have been harmed or abused either by a member of the Church, by members of their family or by any other person. We ask that you keep in your prayers all survivors of abuse as we pray for their healing and comfort.

Safeguarding in our parishes, remains a very important part of our community's commitment to caring for each other and for others. I, along with each priest of the Diocese, as well as the Diocesan Safeguarding Team are grateful for all the hard work done by our Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators and our parish volunteers. The dedication and motivation of the people in our parishes, continues to raise awareness of Safeguarding and highlights our shared responsibility in delivering a duty of care to all who engage with our parish community.



+Stephen Robson
Bishop of Dunkeld
On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group