

Archdiocese of Armagh



Making Contact with the Designated Officer

What to do if you have a concern or suspicion or wish to make an allegation of abuse which has occurred against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Armagh Diocesan Safeguarding Office

**Ara Coeli
Cathedral Road
Armagh
BT61 7QY**

Tel: (NI) 028 3752 5592 / (ROI) 048 3752 5592

Fax: (NI) 028 3752 6182 / (ROI) 048 3752 6182

The Archdiocese of Armagh takes seriously all allegations, suspicions or concerns of abuse – but especially those which relate to the abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult which are made against any member of the clergy, staff or volunteers. The Archdiocese has appointed two Designated Officers whose role it is to process all allegations of abuse brought to the attention of the Archdiocese.

As an adult, if you have been abused as a child or you have a concern about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, there are several options where you can seek advice or where your concerns can be addressed. You can contact any or all of the following, the:

- The Church via the Designated Officer;
- Police – PSNI (Northern Ireland) or An Garda Síochána (Republic of Ireland);
- Health and Social Care Trust (Northern Ireland) or the Health Service Executive (Republic of Ireland).

See back page for contact details.

If you choose to contact the Archdiocese's Designated Officer, he/she will undertake the following steps:

1. Gathering Information:

- Collate the information you wish to share;
- Make a written account of this information (this is not a formal statement) and share this with you to ensure accuracy;
- Explain that all relevant information must be referred to the relevant police force, and, if appropriate, to the Social Care Trust (Northern Ireland) or Health Service Executive (Republic of Ireland) or both.

2. Provision of Support:

- Offer you support which can include any or all of the following:
 - i. Counselling – the Church has contracted an independent counselling service, “*Towards Healing*”, which can be contacted directly by you. This is a totally confidential service;
 - ii. Provide information on how to access other organisations that may be suitable to provide the kind of support you need. For example, NEXUS;
 - iii. An identified person, appointed by the Archbishop, known as a Support person - this is not the Designated Officer. The role of the Support Person is to assist with communication between you and the Diocesan Designated Officer; to facilitate you in gaining access to information and help; and to represent your concerns during the inquiry process. The Support Person must not act as your counsellor or therapist but may consider how your therapeutic or spiritual needs may be met whilst being mindful of your on-going vulnerability during this process. The Support Person will consider your wishes regarding disclosure of abuse, in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to your family. He/she should be available to you throughout the course of the inquiry process and thereafter as required. They should ensure that you are kept informed of developments in relation to you and represent your wishes and any therapeutic needs to the Designated Officer as required. If you consider it helpful, the Support Person can arrange a meeting between you and the Archbishop. Under no

circumstances will the same Support Person be provided for you and for the respondent.

3. What Happens Next?

- Once the information has been referred to the relevant police force, Social Services or Health Service Executive, the Designated Officer will:
 - i. Inform the Archbishop that an allegation has been received and that a file record has been created;
 - ii. Liaise with the relevant police force and/or Social Services/Health Service Executive to ensure the appropriate exchange of relevant information. The Designated Officer is **not** involved in any statutory investigation of the allegation;
 - iii. Make contact with the person (respondent) against whom the allegation has been made. The timing of this meeting will be determined by the police and will outline the following:
 - a) *That an allegation has been made, and if agreed with the relevant police force, who made the allegation; and*
 - b) *What information can be shared with the respondent – again to be determined by the relevant police force.*

Given the complexities of some allegations, this process can be lengthy and may take some time to complete.

What if you are unhappy with how your concern/allegation has been dealt with?

If you are unhappy with the way in which your concern/suspicion/allegation has been dealt with by staff within the Archdiocese, the National Safeguarding Office for Children in the Catholic Church has a procedure to address such complaints. This is outlined at Appendix 15 of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and is detailed in Section 3 Resource 13 of the Standards and Guidance document on the National Safeguarding Office for Children in the Catholic Church website at www.safeguarding.ie.

CONTACT DETAILS

Anyone seeking the pastoral support of the Archdiocese with regard to an issue of safeguarding may do so through their local clergy or make direct contact with the **Diocesan Safeguarding Office** on **028/048 3752 5592**

DETAILS OF PERSONNEL TO CONTACT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN OR ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM

Diocesan Designated Liaison Personnel:

Aidan Gordon

Tel: 078 4110 1687 (NI) 0044 78 4110 1687 (ROI)

E-mail: safeguardingdirector@archdioceseofarmagh.com

Eleanor Kelly

Tel: 075 8432 3138 (NI) 0044 75 8432 3138 (ROI)

E-mail: ekelly@archdioceseofarmagh.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

PSNI:

101

999 (emergency only)

Southern Health & Social Care Trust (HSC):

028 3756 7100 (children) 028 3756 4423 (adults)

Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS):

028 9504 9999

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

An Garda Síochána:

Dundalk: 042 933 5577

Drogheda: 041 987 4200

Ardee: 041 685 3222

Garda 24 Hour Free Phone Reporting Line:

1800 555 222

TUSLA (Child & Family Agency):

042 939 2200