



## VARIOUS SAFEGUARDING ROLES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ARMAGH

The roles of personnel within the Archdiocese that form the essential elements of the safeguarding framework are outlined below. Those fulfilling any of the roles listed below must abide by the highest possible standards of professional conduct in all aspects of their work, including the maintenance of confidentiality.

### **1. The Church Authority**

The Church Authority is responsible for appointing a safeguarding committee, and, along with that committee, ensuring that parish safeguarding representatives are in place across the Church body. The Church Authority will ensure, with parish priests or local superiors, that all those who are recruited as Church personnel are suitable and appropriate for their role. The Church Authority will ensure compliance with civil law and policy in creating and maintaining safe environments, regarding areas such as vetting, safe recruitment, adult-to-child ratios, codes of conduct and risk assessment.

### **2. Parish Safeguarding Representative**

All parishes and diocesan groups will have at least two Safeguarding Representatives assigned by the Parish Priest/Administrator or the group's Committee. It is recommended that larger parishes or diocesan organisations have a Safeguarding Committee. The clergy and safeguarding personnel in some Pastoral Areas may also wish to work together to address the issue of safeguarding. This partnership approach is supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

The position of Safeguarding Representative is voluntary. All those accepting the role must undergo the Recruitment and Selection Procedure through the Diocesan Safeguarding Office and attend training organised by the Diocesan Training Team. Regular updates and network meetings will be planned by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. Parish Safeguarding Representatives are expected to attend these meetings. Updates and advisory leaflets will also be available on the diocesan website.

### **The responsibilities of the Parish Safeguarding Representative are:**

- to promote awareness of the Diocesan Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding;
- to ensure that all parishioners have ready access to contact details of the Diocesan Designated Officers and other relevant agencies;
- to support or facilitate anyone in their parish/diocesan groups working with children and/or vulnerable adults;
- to attend Safeguarding Representative meetings arranged within Pastoral Areas or at diocesan level.

Each parish and diocesan group working with children, young people or vulnerable adults must have at least two Parish Safeguarding Representatives. The additional responsibilities of these roles are outlined below:

#### ***Recruitment and Selection***

- To ensure the parish carries out the Diocesan Requirements for Recruitment and Selection for all staff, whether paid or unpaid, in their parish/diocesan group. This will include two-way communication with the diocesan personnel implementing the Recruitment Procedures.

#### ***Training***

- To ensure that all parish staff/volunteers working with children and/or vulnerable adults attend a safeguarding information session;
- To liaise with the Diocesan Training Coordinator in the implementation of the Diocesan Strategy for Training.

The overall responsibility for safeguarding in any Church Organisation remains with the relevant church authority.

Any safeguarding concerns raised with a Parish Safeguarding Representative should immediately be passed to the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person.

### **3. Diocesan Designated Liaison Person**

The Archbishop has appointed two Diocesan Designated Liaison Persons who can act in the event that one Designated Liaison Person is not able to deal with a concern/allegation, where there may be a conflict of interest, or where they are unavailable due to absence or incapacity. The Designated Liaison Persons should be widely identified so that everyone knows who to go to if they have a safeguarding concern. One way of doing this is to ensure that their details are highlighted on parish websites and at the back of all churches.

#### **The role of the Designated Liaison Person is:**

- to hear any concerns relating to safeguarding, including any disclosures or allegations of abuse, and take responsibility for managing the response to that concern or disclosure, from start to finish. This would include the preliminary internal inquiry and referral to the Health and Social Care Trust/TUSLA/An Garda Síochána/PSNI, and any subsequent internal

investigations. Specific procedures have been drawn up for the Designated Liaison Persons to follow and these can be made available on request;

- to ensure that the person raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation and anyone who is implicated are regularly informed about the progress of the inquiry process;
- to liaise with the National Board and have an overview of all matters dealt with under these procedures within the Archdiocese;
- to carefully record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.

#### **4. Diocesan Safeguarding Committee**

The Archbishop of Armagh established a Diocesan Safeguarding Committee on 20 October 2004. Its role is primarily focused on creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for all aspects of church life and activity and for advising on the human resources required for implementing best Safeguarding Practice across services. Its role is supportive and developmental. It is not related in any way to the management of individual cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

#### **The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee has responsibility for:**

- the provision of training;
- the safe recruitment of volunteers and staff within the Archdiocese;
- regular review of the Diocesan Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding as and when required;
- communication and promotion of all aspects and developments in relation to Safeguarding in the Archdiocese;
- Producing a three-year plan for how to implement and maintain the National Board Standards across the Church body;
- Liaising with the parish safeguarding representatives to identify areas where guidance and support on policy or practice is needed;
- Ensuring that records for activities related to child safeguarding are produced and stored appropriately.

#### ***Note:***

The Diocesan Director of Safeguarding and the Diocesan Training Co-ordinator are in attendance at Committee meetings. The Committee comprises of volunteer members who bring to their role experience from the education, parish ministry and social work fields.

#### **5. Diocesan Advisory Panel**

The consultative Diocesan Advisory Panel has been appointed by the Archbishop in order to advise and assist him at all stages of the investigative process into alleged abuse. The Panel provides a consistent and accessible source of guidance, through a process of risk assessment, for the Archbishop who is charged with specific responsibilities for decision-making in response to alleged or actual abuse involving a priest or religious. The Diocesan Advisory Panel comprises volunteer members who bring to their role independent, professional expertise in the fields of law, medicine, probation, psychiatry, social work, policing, education, pastoral care and canon law.

**The Diocesan Advisory Panel provides advice on:**

- the complaint itself;
- ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child(ren), remains paramount;
- the appropriateness of providing help to a child making an allegation and to the family of the child;
- the appropriateness of the respondent continuing in his or her present pastoral assignment, having regard to the paramount need to protect children;
- how the right of the respondent to a fair trial, on any criminal charge, may be preserved and his or her good name and reputation may be appropriately safeguarded;
- whether a specialist Risk Assessment of the respondent should be sought;
- the needs of a parish or other community in which a respondent has served;
- the needs of the wider community, including the appropriateness and timing of any public statement.

The Panel creates a record of its recommendations and notes the matters upon which it has been asked to advise and the documents which it has considered.

***Note:***

His Grace, Archbishop Eamon Martin may attend meetings. The Diocesan Director of Safeguarding attends Panel meetings.

**6. Support Person(s)**

A Support Person(s) can be made available for those who make an allegation/disclose abuse under these procedures. The person (who can be a child or adult) making the allegation can be offered a choice between a male or female Support Person.

- The role of the Support Person(s) is to assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation/disclosure and the Designated Liaison Person.
- To facilitate the child or adult in gaining access to information and help.
- To represent their concerns during the inquiry process.

The Archdiocese will provide appropriate training for the Support Person. The Support Person is not a counsellor to the child or adult, and must not be, or act as, their therapist. Support Persons must be particularly attentive to the expressed needs and objectives of the child or adult and the fact that some may be reluctant to seek help. Support Persons should, therefore, consider how any therapeutic or spiritual needs, of a child or adult who has made an allegation/disclosed abuse, may be met and will be mindful of his/her on-going vulnerability during this process.

**In addition, the Support Person should:**

- consider any wishes of the child or adult disclosing abuse, in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to his or her family;
- be available to the child or adult throughout the course of the inquiry process, and thereafter as required;
- ensure the child or adult is kept informed of developments in relation to them;

- represent the wishes and any therapeutic needs of the child or adult to the Designated Liaison Person, as required;
- arrange, if considered helpful, a meeting between the child or adult and the Archbishop.

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for the child or adult making the allegation/disclosure of abuse and for the respondent.

## **7. Adviser(s)**

The Archbishop will appoint an Adviser(s) to be available to the respondent. Advisers shall represent the needs of the respondent to the church authority and assist, where appropriate, with the care of the respondent and with communication between the respondent, the Designated Liaison Person and the Church Authority/Church Organisation. The respondent's Adviser shall not be the respondent's therapist or spiritual adviser. Advisers should be particularly alert to the sense of isolation and vulnerability which a respondent may experience following an allegation of this nature. He or she will:

- accompany, if so requested, and be available after the respondent's meeting with the church authority and the Designated Liaison Person;
- inform the respondent of his or her right to obtain advice in Civil and Canon Law;
- identify any therapeutic or other needs of the respondent and suggest how these may be met;
- consider the wishes of the respondent in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to his or her family;
- be available to the respondent throughout the inquiry process and thereafter as required;
- ensure that the respondent is kept informed of developments in regard to the inquiry;
- represent the needs and wishes of the respondent to the Designated Liaison Person, as required. Appropriate training is provided to the Adviser.

Under no circumstances should the same Adviser be provided for the child or adult making the allegation/disclosure of abuse and for the respondent.