

# *Safeguarding Children Annual Report 2010*

*Diocese of Meath*



## Diocese of Meath Annual Report | 2010

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## Training Report | 2010

### Priority 1: Keeping Safe Training

#### March 2010

KST Programme (9 hr session) delivered to 24 attendees (9 priests, 15 parishioners). Training delivered by Sandra Neville.

#### October 2010

KST Programme (9 hr session) delivered to 14 attendees (4 priests, 10 parishioners). Training delivered by Joan Walshe and Sandra Neville.

### Priority 2: Information Sessions

#### April 2010

Information sessions were held in each of the eight deaneries to inform clergy and Safeguarding Representatives on the revised Diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures Handbook.

### Priority 3: Meetings with Parish Safeguarding Representatives

Additional meetings were held in clusters throughout the diocese, attended by Parish Safeguarding Representatives and volunteers from 39 parishes.

### Priority 4: Meetings with clergy and personnel

Clergy and Church personnel took part in each of the sessions identified above in priority areas two and three. Other personnel that took part in separate information sessions on safeguarding children were:

- Dowdstown House – Pastoral Resource Centre: staff and volunteers
- Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes: staff and volunteers
- Pioneers within the Diocese: volunteers working with children.

## Priority 5: Training and support for Resource Team

### March 2010

Recording and storage of data, delivered by NBSCCC<sup>1</sup> and attended Joan Walshe and Sandra Neville.

### April 2010

Training for Support Persons, attended by Fr Sean Henry, Sr Rose King and Joan Walshe.

### June 2010

Annual review meeting for Resource Team.

### October 2010

Joan Walshe and Sandra Neville had their annual assessment by the HSE.

## Priority 6: Other training needs

### Feb 2010

Diocesan personnel attended the Bishops' Conference Secretariat meeting which included safeguarding issues.

### March 2010

Recording and storage of data, delivered by NBSCCC and attended Fr Sean Henry and Fr Paul Crosbie.

### May 2010

Communication Officers Meeting includes matters related to conveying the safeguarding message.

### June 2010

Fr Paul Crosbie attended briefing and training session with the HSE.

### Sept 2010

Diocesan personnel attended second Bishops' Conference Secretariat meeting which included safeguarding issues.

### October 2010

Fr Paul Crosbie attended briefing by the HSE on the new Keeping Safe modules.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandra Neville is a member of a committee involved in the development of a training programme for the NBSCCC.

## Parish Audit | 2010

### Section 1: Creating a culture of safety in parishes

- Sixty nine parishes, together with Dowdstown House and the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, were asked to complete the parish self audit. sixty nine completed audits were returned to the Independent Assessor.
- All parishes reported that there are at least two Parish Safeguarding Representatives in place with sixteen parishes having three or four lay representatives.
- The safeguarding policy has been adopted and advertised by all.
- All parishes have the safeguarding poster displayed.
- The Code of Behaviour is adopted, with 5 parishes awaiting forms to be returned.
- All report that adequate supervision numbers are in place; some have been specific and have over and above required volunteers.
- Health and safety standards seem to be up to standard. Two parishes are reviewing their facilities while one parish omitted to answer.
- An incident of inappropriate behaviour was noted in one parish and the matter is under review; unauthorised photographs were taken in another parish but this situation has been rectified.
- Records are up to date in most parishes; 5 parishes are either awaiting the return of forms or are reviewing their current procedures.
- The audits indicate that all participants and parents are aware of parish policies relating to safeguarding children, good behaviour and the complaints procedure.
- Altar servers' training was given and guidance on supervision was followed; however two parishes reported that no training was given.
- Insurance for non parish groups is in place where applicable; two parishes were awaiting diocesan advice at the time of completing the review, two other parishes have yet to meet this requirement; one parish omitted to answer.
- Asked if parishes were assured that visiting clergy were in good standing, most responded in the affirmative.

## Section 2: Responding to concerns:

- Most parishes (sixty one) stated that staff and volunteers have familiarised themselves with the safeguarding policy and procedures, that they have been made aware of the procedure for reporting allegations or disclosures and signed the declaration form; six parishes are either awaiting forms to be returned or note that future training in this area will be take place in 2011.
- No allegations or disclosures of abuse were reported to staff or volunteers.
- Disciplinary procedures did not need to be invoked in any parish.

## Section 3: Implementing Diocesan Safeguarding Policy

- 'Keeping Safe' training has been undertaken by priests and parish safeguarding representatives in all parishes.
- Information sessions on policy and procedures have been completed in most parishes; some staff and volunteers have yet to attend sessions and ten parishes have meeting scheduled for 2011.
- Asked if information is available for children on sources of support, forty seven responded 'yes'; nine parishes responded 'no'; six omitted to answer.

## Matters raised by the Independent Assessor:

- Do the consent forms for parents and guardians of children involved in parish activities include permission to take and use photographs for websites and other publications?
- Are the insurance and safeguarding requirements for non parish groups using parish facilities included on the form to be completed by these groups?
- Should the Parish Safeguarding Representatives be asked to sign the audit as well as the Parish Priest?
- Can greater clarity be given on how visiting clergy may indicate that they are in good standing?
- The last question in Section 3 (information for children) may have been unclear.
- A 'follow up' list is compiled with this report, outlining which parishes did not return the audit and where other parishes have practices to be completed, such as health and safety reviews underway, training yet to take place or Codes of Behaviour to be finalised. This list has been given to the Resource Team.

## Standard 1

### Written policy on keeping children safe

Standard 1	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1. The Diocese has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Yes	Revised diocesan policy document, incorporating additional procedural elements from the NBSC Guidelines, has been developed by a sub-committee of the Safeguarding Committee and published in hard copy and electronic format.		
2. The policy is approved by the Safeguarding Committee and signed by the Bishop.	Yes	Signed off by the Bishop and sent to NBSC March 2010		
3. The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Yes	See p. 4 of policy document		
4. The policy is reviewed every two years and adapted whenever there are significant changes in legislation or the church.		The diocesan Action Plan (sent to NBSC July 2010) provides for review in accordance with 1.4. Date for first review May/June 2012 .Any additional elements, developed by the NBSC or consequent on legislation, will be incorporated and disseminated to the relevant people, by the Resource Team, as they become available	Yes	
5. The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work	Yes	In each section of document under the headings: Developing a Culture of Safety; Responding to Concerns; Implementing the Diocesan Policy		

Standard 1	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
6. The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Yes	By reference to NBSC Guidelines –see p. 9		
7. The policy clearly describes the Church’s understanding and definitions of abuse.	Yes	See p14 and Resource L See p14+15 and Resource M		
8. The policy should be created at diocesan level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the relevant diocesan policy and approved by the relevant authority before distribution.	Yes	Document available in printed format in all parishes and on the diocesan website. It incorporates an abbreviated version which parishes adopt as the parish policy –see p8 and Resource A		

## Standard 2

### Procedures-how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions

	Standard 2	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1.	There are clear written child protection procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse about a child	Yes	See p.14 and Resource M		
2.	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare and civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Yes	They are based on the NBSC Guidelines and Children First and have been discussed with relevant HSE personnel.		
3.	There is a safeguarding / designated person with clearly defined role and responsibilities for child protection.	Yes	See p. 8+9 (1.3 and 1.4)		

Standard 2	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
4. There is a process for recording incidents, allegations, suspicions and referrals and storing these securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.	Yes	See 3.5 – ps 25, 26, 27.		
5. There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.	Yes	See 1.6 p11, Codes of Behaviour, also Resource G Code of Behaviour for all Church personnel; Resource H Disciplinary and grievance procedure; Resource M, N, O		
6. There is guidance on confidentiality and information sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.	Yes	See p 25 (3.5) and Resource M and N		
7. The procedures include contact details for local child protection services	Yes	Contact details are included at ps 28, 29 for: Duty SW; Garda HQ; Designated Person; Resource Team; NBSC; and a range of agencies offering advice and support. See also p 21 – 3.2		

## Standard 3

### Preventing harm to children

Standard 3	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1. There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.	Yes	See p 10 – 1.5 and Resources B, C, D, E, F		
2. The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance	Yes	In line with NBSC Guidelines and Our Duty to Care		
3. All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as require by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.	Yes	See Resources E, F		
4. The Diocese provides guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children.	Yes	See p 11 – 1.6 and Resource G		

Standard 3	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
5. There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children.	Yes	See Resources I, K		
6. There are clear ways in which in which Church personnel can raise allegations/suspensions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel, confidentially if necessary.	Yes	See p 11- 1.6 and Resources H, M		
7. There are processes for dealing with children`s unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading treatment.	Yes	See p11 – 1.6 and Resource K		
8. Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language is not acceptable.	Yes	See Resources G , I		
9. Policies include guidance/intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and in appropriate touch.	Yes	See p17 and Resource J (plus reference to ODTC)		

	Standard 3	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
10.	There is guidance on assessing risks when working with children- especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Yes	See Resource J		
11.	There is guidance to ensure adequate supervision and protection of children when running projects/ activities.	Yes	See p 17 and Resource J		
12.	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of IT to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation	Yes	See p17 and Resource J		



## Standard 4

### Training and Education

Standard 4	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1. All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the diocesan policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working with Church organisations.	Yes	See policy document p10 (1.5); p20 (3.1) and Resource Q –Training		
2. Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.	Yes	See policy p20 (3.1) and Resource Q		
3. Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities	Yes	See policy p20 and Resource Q		
4. N/A				
5. Training programmes are monitored by the NBSC and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Yes	Training programme 2010 submitted to NBSC April 2010	Training programme 2011 in preparation and will incorporate new developments	



## Standard 5

### Communicating the Church's Safeguarding message

Standard 5	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1. The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster with policy statement and contact details displayed in all church porches</li> <li>• Printed copies available in each parish</li> <li>• Electronic version available on diocesan website</li> </ul>		
2. Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concern.	Yes	See policy p21.at present this is a task for group leaders. See guidelines Resource R	Child friendly information materials will be developed during 2011	
3. Everyone in the Church organisation knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Yes	Details of the DP posted in churches; on website; in printed material circulated in parishes		
4. Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services.	Yes	See policy document p28/29		

Standard 5	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
5. Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop their working relationships in order to keep children safe.	Yes	Training supported by the HSE; consultation re policy and procedures development; PSR advised to make contact with local agencies		
6. The diocese has an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness	Yes	Current practice includes: dedicated safeguarding website (meathsafeguarding.ie); notice in each church porch; occasional newsletters; regular briefing sessions; occasional message circulated for parish newsletters; regular contact with local press.	It is proposed to formalise existing practice will be formalised in a policy statement and will also incorporate communication with relevant agencies and producing child friendly information materials.	

## Standard 6

### Access to advice and support

Standard 6	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1. Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Yes	See policy p15 (2.3)		
2. Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Yes	Training supported by the HSE; consultation re policy and procedures development with HSE and NBSC; PSR advised to make contact with local agencies		
3. There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused, whether the abuse is by someone within the church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Yes	See policy p14 (2.2) and Resources M+N		

	Standard 6	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
4.	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Yes	See policy p16 (2.4) and Resources N+P		
5.	Appropriate support provided to those who have perpetrated abuse	Yes	See policy p16 (2.4)		

## Standard 7

### Implementing and monitoring the Standards

Standard 7	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
1. There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.	Yes	Action Plan/Implementation Strategy 2010-2012 submitted to NBSC July 2010		
2. The human and/or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Yes	Diocesan Safeguarding and Finance Committees responsible for policy and financial resources, Resource Team in place to support implementation. Trained volunteers in place in all parishes		
3. Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Yes	Through Resource Team; PSR; parish audit; diocesan audit		
4. Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and procedures for keeping children safe.	Yes			

	Standard 7	In place	Evidence	Proposed	Not in place
5.	All incidents, allegations/suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Yes	See policy p14 (2.2); p25 3.5) and Resource O		

## Training Plan | 2011

**Note:** This training Plan has been developed taking the following into account:

- Training undertaken in 2010
- The findings of the 2010 Parishes Audit
- The training strategy and new training materials under development by the NBSC

### Priority 1: Safeguarding and *Keeping Safe* training

#### Target

All Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSR) and clergy will have undertaken training in safeguarding. (Additional target groups may be included in line with the NBSC training strategy as it becomes operational.)

#### Action

Rollout the training programme to any PSR or parish clergy who have not yet availed of the programme. In 2011 it is proposed to offer one training session, jointly presented by Sandra Neville and Joan Walshe. A needs assessment will be carried out to establish whether there is demand for a further course. Venues for the course to be decided based on the location of participants. Liaison will be maintained with NBSC and HSE on the training programme in development and feedback given to Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee.

### Priority 2: Information sessions

#### Target

Church personnel in clusters of parishes will be offered information sessions, as needed, on awareness of safeguarding issues; relevant documentation; policy and procedures. Other target groups for information sessions include parish associations and the Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

#### Action

Prepare and deliver information sessions, as needed, on awareness of safeguarding issues; relevant documentation; policy and procedures on a cross-parish basis.

### Priority 3: Meetings with Parish Safeguarding Representatives

#### Target

All Parish Safeguarding Representatives

#### Action

Deanery level meetings will be organised with PSR at least twice per year to provide updates on developments (including new Standards introduced by the NBSC) and to support them in their role.

### Priority 4: Meetings with clergy and personnel

#### Target

Parish clergy, catechists and staff at Dowdstown House

#### Action

Input at deanery meetings once per year to provide updates on safeguarding issues, including new Standards introduced by the NBSC and new developments in training.

### Priority 5: Training and support for Resource Team

#### Target

Members of Diocesan Safeguarding Children Resource Team

#### Action

Completion of HSE Disability Module for *Keeping Safe*. Completion of training on delivering "combined pack" *Keeping Safe*. Attending relevant NBSC training sessions. Quarterly Resource Team meetings with Bishop's House to facilitate planning, delivery and evaluation of training. Meetings with HSE Children First Information Officers to maintain and develop liaison and support for safeguarding children in the diocese.

### Priority 6: Other training needs

Identify and respond to additional training needs (particular skills training) in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee.