



NEWSLETTER



NEW DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING DOCUMENT

Chapter 1 is the Child Safeguarding Statement of the Archdiocese of Dublin. The Diocese as a 'relevant service' as defined by the Children First Act 2015 is required to have such a statement and to make it publicly available.

Chapter 2 describes the safeguarding structure of the Archdiocese of Dublin. It will be of assistance to those who want or need to know who is responsible for what when it comes to safeguarding and child protection in the Diocese.

Chapter 3 sets out the basic requirements for the creation and maintenance of safe environments for children involved in church activities in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Chapter 4 explains how to deal with situations where there is information that indicates that a child has been abused, is being abused or is at risk of being abused. It describes the reporting requirements and the roles and responsibilities of mandated persons.

There are three appendices relating to: Confidentiality, Data Protection and Record Keeping; Dealing with Complaints; and Whistleblowing.

Over the coming weeks and months, members of the CSPS team will be attending meetings throughout the Diocese to discuss the new document and distribute hard copies of it. Andrew Fagan will be attending deanery meetings to introduce the new document, with particular reference to the responsibilities of mandated persons. Garry Kehoe will be meeting with the Parish Safeguarding Representatives in the deaneries to introduce the new document as well as a companion document describing the role and responsibilities of the Parish Safeguarding Representatives.

The new diocesan safeguarding document is now available and can be downloaded from the website of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service: csps.dublindiocese.ie. Entitled: Child Safeguarding in the Archdiocese of Dublin: Statement, Reporting Procedures and Good Practice Guidelines, it is intended as a short but comprehensive and user-friendly guide to good safeguarding practice. It replaces the 2011 document and incorporates recent changes to legislation and Church and national guidance, most particularly, Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016, the vetting legislation which also came into effect in 2016, and the Children First Act, significant sections of which became law in December 2017.

The document is divided into four chapters and three appendices. It is intended that people can refer to it when they need answers to questions that relate to child safeguarding and protection in the Diocese.

MANDATORY REPORTING

There have been two major legislative changes since the publication of the first diocesan safeguarding document in 2011. The first of these occurred in April 2016, when the legislation making vetting a legal requirement for those involved in 'relevant work or activities' with children and vulnerable persons came into force. The second occurred with the introduction of mandatory reporting in December 2017.

Since the first set of Church guidelines were published in 1996, the Diocese has reported all child protection concerns to the relevant civil authorities (currently: Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; and An Garda Síochána). This was in accordance with the national (state) child protection guidelines, Children First. The principle of reporting child protection concerns to the civil authorities is, therefore, well established. What has changed is that such reporting is no longer just a matter of complying with Church and national guidelines, it is now a legal requirement for certain people described in the legislation as 'mandated reporters'.

A "member of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care worker (howsoever described) of a church or other religious community" is a mandated person as is a "safeguarding officer, child protection officer or other person (howsoever described) who is employed for the purpose of performing a child welfare and protection function

of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational and other bodies and organisations offering services to children". Thus priests, religious, deacons and parish pastoral workers are all mandated persons. Parish Safeguarding Representatives, on the other hand, are not mandated persons. This is because, although they perform a child welfare and protection function on behalf of the parish, they are not employed to do so.

The new legal requirement for mandated persons to report child protection concerns is additional to, and does not replace, the civic and moral responsibility on others who are not mandated persons to report child protection concerns as has been the practice to date. Mandated persons are required to report child protection concerns directly to Tusla. Joint reports can be made with the diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and all diocesan mandated persons are urged to contact the CSPA for advice and assistance in reporting child protection concerns. Those who are not mandated persons are not required to report directly to Tusla. They can do so through the DLP as has been the practice to date.

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BOOK REVIEW:

Protecting Children and Adults from Abuse after Savile, What Organisations and Institutions Need to Do, edited by Marcus Erooga, published by Jessica Kingsley, 2018.

When Jimmy Savile died in 2011 at the age of 84 he was mourned by millions throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. He was seen as a person who had used his status as a celebrity to promote religious belief and support for good causes. He had raised millions for services to children, including for the Central Remedial Clinic in Dublin. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1990, the same year that he was made a Knight Commander of St Gregory the Great by Pope John Paul II.

We now know that Jimmy Savile was a serial and prolific abuser of children and vulnerable persons. He abused in his work in the BBC and in his voluntary involvement in such places as Broadmoor Special Hospital, Dunforth School (for girls with emotional problems), Stoke Mandeville Hospital (which specialises in the treatment of spinal injuries) and teaching hospitals in Leeds (his home town). A special police operation, known as 'Operation Yewtree', was established to coordinate the various investigations into his offending. The total number of allegations made was estimated at 450. The earliest reported incident occurred in 1955, the last in 2009. The age range of those alleged to have been abused was between 8 and 72. Over 80% were female and the majority were aged between 13 and 16. It is likely that the full extent of his abuse will never be known. To date, there have been 75 reports and reviews related to his offending. Many of these contain recommendations for changes in policy, procedure and practice in the various institutions where the abuse occurred.

Some of the lessons learned from examining Jimmy Savile's offending are specific to the institutions in which it occurred. Others, however, have a more general significance, including the following:

1. Policies and procedures are important and they have to be consistently applied to everyone. Savile used his celebrity status to by-pass policies in order, for example, to access patients in hospital. Codes of conduct are particularly important. They apply to everyone, every time.
2. In order to keep children and vulnerable people safe we need to monitor behaviour. People are understandably reluctant to make judgments about other people or to be seen to be accusing them of doing something untoward. That should not prevent us from asking questions about practices or behaviours that appear to us to be dangerous or inappropriate.
3. Everyone has a critical role to play in preventing abuse. Most of us will never be in a position to intervene directly to prevent a child or vulnerable person from being abused. However, we may notice something that does not seem right. If and when we do, we should check it out with someone else. If two people notice something that does not seem right the chances are it is not right and someone in a position of authority needs to be alerted.
4. The media has an important role to play in child protection. Jimmy Savile is not the only high profile abuser of recent times. There have been other cases in the world of entertainment and sport concerning abusers who, like Savile, were liked and admired. One of the key lessons we have learned is that those who make allegations of abuse must be listened to and taken seriously no matter how highly esteemed the person against whom the allegations are made. Even now, after all the scandals of recent years, the fear of not being believed is a major factor inhibiting people from make complaints about abuse. Once one or two reports are made and publicised, it encourages others to disclose their own experiences of abuse.

FILM REVIEW: The Florida Project

There is a scene in the film, *The Florida Project*, where a man turns up in a play area within the hotel where the film is set. There are children playing there and the man approaches them and starts talking to them. He is spotted by the hotel manager who is suspicious. He draws the man away from the children and questions his reason for being there. The man makes up a story which does not sound remotely plausible. The manager escorts him off the grounds of the hotel. He does so initially in more or less friendly manner but finally overcomes the man's reluctance to leave with hostility and a threat of violence. It calls to mind an incident from the childhood of the reviewer. It occurred long before our current societal preoccupation with child protection. A child was sitting on a bus and a man sat beside him. The man was recognised by the bus conductor who approached the man and told him, in no uncertain terms, to "leave that child alone". The man moved off to another seat. It is a reminder that even then, in the Dublin of the 1960s, people understood that certain adults presented a risk to the safety of children and were willing to intervene to protect them.

The hotel where the film is set is a 'welfare hotel', inhabited by people who do not have permanent homes of their



own. The 'guests' live on the edge of American prosperity. Their hotel is just beside Disneyworld in Florida but they are excluded from this world by reason of their poverty. Within this impoverished world, the children create a world of companionship and adventure but, in the absence of adequate parental supervision, this is always likely to lead them into danger. The somewhat idyllic world of these children begins to fall apart when they start a fire in an abandoned building. The reaction of two (single) parents to this is telling. One, who suspects her child was involved,



recognises the incident as a wake-up call and ensures her young son is no longer allowed to run wild. The mother of another of the children involved treats it as a bit of excitement and insists her daughter accompany her to watch the building as it burns.

The mother of the second child becomes increasingly reckless as she tries to secure the money she needs to pay for accommodation for herself and her daughter. Eventually she attracts the attention of police and social services and the film ends with the children desperately trying to hold on to the things they know and love by escaping into the fantasy that is Disneyworld.

The film is about many things. It is about the kindness of (some) strangers and how people in desperate situations often come to rely on the assistance and support of those scarcely less desperate than themselves. It is about the fragility of children's worlds and their need for protection.

The child at the centre of the film is loved by her mother but the mother is shown as isolated and unsupported, still in many ways a child herself. The statutory authorities intervene when she is at the end of her resources. Her daughter, by this time, has taken on enough of her mother's anti-social and self-destructive attitudes to seriously impair her chances of having a better life.

Our over-stretched child protection services are often forced into prioritising the most high risk cases. It is understandable that they should do so but these are precisely the cases where intervention may come too late to protect fragile family units from breaking apart. The World Meeting of Families 2018 provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how we, as a Catholic Christian community, can support families which, as we know, come in all shapes and sizes and all of which need and deserve our non-judgmental assistance and support.

CONTACT DETAILS

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