



NEWSLETTER



"Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children. They should also know that they have every right to turn to the Church with full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home".

Pope Francis, letter to Presidents of Episcopal Conferences and Religious Superiors, 2 February 2015

DEVELOPMENTS IN TRAINING

Since the establishment of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee in 2013, there has been an increased emphasis on the training and development work of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service. Fr Paddy Boyle carried the responsibility for delivery of the training delivered by CSPS up to

that point. In this he was ably and generously assisted by two volunteer trainers, Garry Kehoe and George Maybury. Over the past few years, however, the number of diocesan trainers has increased. In 2014, Louise Fenelon (volunteer) and Andrew Fagan (Director, CSPS) qualified to become accredited trainers with the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI). Later that year, Julie McCullough joined CSPS as our

new Child Protection Officer. Julie has been training alongside the NBSCCCI accredited trainers, pending her own qualification as a trainer. As reported in January, Garry Kehoe, has joined the team on a part-time contract. This brings to six the number of trainers. This will allow us to roll an enhanced programme of training over the forthcoming months and years.

Fr Paddy coordinates safeguarding training on behalf of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Fr Paddy also delivers training to non-diocesan groups, often at the request of the NBSCCCI, for whom Fr Paddy acts as a tutor for other NBSCCCI accredited trainers.

QUALITY OF TRAINING

As well as trying to provide more training, CSPS is committed to providing good quality training. We have paid close attention to what people have told us about their experience of training in order to improve what we do. In future, we will try to have two trainers delivering



Fr. Paddy Boyle, Training and Development Coordinator

the one day training, though the information sessions will continue to be delivered by one trainer. You have told us that you like working in groups and in order to facilitate this we will limit the numbers attending each one day session to 30 or so.

Those who complete the training will be given a Certificate of Attendance and this will be recorded on our database. We can only issue Certificates to those who attend for the whole day. While we appreciate that people can get held up and arrive late or sometimes have to leave

a bit early, we will not be issuing Certificates to those who, for example, only attend for either the morning or the afternoon.

Details of forthcoming training sessions are given at the end of this Newsletter.

Requests for training can be made through Fr Paddy Boyle at 086 1011415. Bookings and other information can be obtained from Geraldine Tierney at 01 836 0314, cps@dublindioocese.ie

DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING DAY

Diocesan Safeguarding Day 2015 will take place on Sunday, 3 May. Each parish is being asked to use the occasion to highlight the work that is being done to ensure that their parish is a safe and nurturing environment for children.

At a recent training day there was a very interesting discussion about why there are so few children attending many parish churches. In reporting back on a small group discussion, a priest said he felt that this had to do with a wide variety of factors, of which the scandal of clerical child abuse was but one and not necessarily the most significant. However, he added that the parents who participated in the small group discussion with him thought differently. They thought that the clerical child abuse scandal was a major factor in the decision of many younger parents not to bring their children to Mass. There is a very clear obligation on us, therefore, to do all we can to ensure that parents know what we are doing to make sure that those of their children who are involved in activities with the parish will be looked after safely and well.

Talking about our safeguarding

policies and practices in our parish churches is, to some degree, 'preaching to the converted'. We need to take the message beyond our own congregations. However, even those parents who bring their children to Mass need to be assured that it is safe to allow their children become altar servers, join children's choirs and so on. In addition, we know that news spreads by word of mouth. The more we are seen to becoming a model of best practice in the safeguarding of children (and we should aspire for nothing less), the more other organisations will look to the Diocese as a source of ideas and inspiration and this, in itself, will encourage people to re-evaluate their attitude to the Church.

We will be sending out materials to parishes on Diocesan Safeguarding Day. Included will be homily notes, prayers of the faithful and a template for an address to the congregation by the parish safeguarding representative.

Some parishes may not be able to mark Diocesan Safeguarding Day on 3 May. They are asked to do so on the next suitable occasion.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

On our training days we provide some training on how to respond to a child who discloses that he or she has been abused. We always preface this part of the training by telling those in attendance that they are unlikely to have a child make such a disclosure to them. Nonetheless the possibility cannot be ruled out entirely and we hope that by providing some basic guidelines, people will feel somewhat prepared for such an eventuality.

It is much more likely that a priest or parish sister, for example, will be approached by someone who was abused as a child. This is a not infrequent occurrence and, in CSPS, we pick up such cases when they are referred into us from parishes. Some of what we tell people during training applies just as much to disclosures by adults as it does to disclosures by children. It is important to assure people that telling their story is a good thing to do, for example, just as we have to be clear that such information must be shared with the civil authorities.

In CSPS we are continually learning about how best to respond to people who tell us about abuse they experienced in childhood.

One of the things that we know about adults who disclose abuse is that the act of disclosure brings people back to the abuse experience. It is not a simple matter

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of remembering an unpleasant episode in their past lives, it is much more like a re-enactment of the experience. People will often say things like that they can see the face of their abuser or feel his touch against their skin. This is why disclosing abuse can be a very frightening and traumatic experience for some people. When the Gardai are investigating alleged abuse, they will ask the complainant for a very detailed description of what occurred. This is part of the process of gathering evidence for a prosecution. The Gardai approach this with great sensitivity. However, it is not an easy thing for people to go through. We need to remember that when we hear people say that people who complain of abuse in childhood ought to be prepared to make a statement to the Gardai. Not everyone will be able to do so. Not everyone who can make a statement to the Gardai will be able to do it to suit our wish to deal with the issues in a timely manner. This is just one of the many challenges of dealing with cases of alleged sexual abuse of children by priests, especially where those priests are alive and in ministry.

One of the most frightening aspects of being abused for a child is that they have no control over what is happening to them. Their wishes simply do not count as far as their abuser is concerned. Children who have been abused try to protect themselves from further abuse by avoiding situations where they cannot exercise control. Some children, for example, will avoid, and recoil from, any physical contact with an adult, even when such contact is initiated by the adult in order to comfort or reassure the child. This fear of loss of control is also apparent

in adults who disclose abuse in childhood because as they get in touch with the feelings their abuse

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aroused in them as children so the fear that went with it is also triggered. One man who spoke to us about his experience of being abused was very explicit about this. His experience was a particularly frightening one and led him to avoid being alone with men, including his own father, throughout his life. When we spoke to him about sharing his experience with others he told us that he could not do so because he feared putting himself into a situation over which he had no control.

When people tell us that they have a story to tell about childhood abuse, we make every effort to ensure that they have a sense of being in control of the environment in which this takes place. There are obvious things, such as, ensuring that people are not interrupted when they are telling their story. Even before we get to that point, however, we talk to people about how and where they want to tell their story. We ask them, for example, whether they want to come to our offices or to another venue. Many people do come here to tell their story but others have asked to meet elsewhere. Generally, people do not want to tell their story in their own homes. It may be that it is bringing the experience too close,

especially if they have children of their own whom they wish to protect. We have met with people in hotels, for example, sometimes in rooms that have been hired for the purpose but sometimes also in lounges, where other people are present. This brings its own challenges. We may prefer that people meet with us in a private place but they may be frightened to be alone with a person or persons they have not met before. We also encourage people to bring along a support person to be with them when they are telling their story. Many do, but some have never told anyone about their abuse and do not have someone to bring, at least at that first stage in the process.

Our preference is always to meet complainants in our offices, with two of us present. This allows one person to ask questions and the

“Best practice has to be the practice that best facilitates the person to tell their story”

other to take notes. It is also easier to control the environment, ensure confidentiality and minimise the risk of interruptions. In many ways, this would be considered best practice. However, best practice is not good enough if it does not work for the person who wishes to tell their story. In particular, we have to avoid anything that triggers that very frightening experience of being in a situation that the complainant cannot control. Best practice has to be the practice that best facilitates the person to tell their story.

SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS TRAINING DAYS 2015

Please contact the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service Office (Tel. 01-836014 or Email: cps@dublindiocese.ie) for further information or to reserve a place on one of these courses.

APRIL

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 18th	Parish Centre, Ballymore-Eustace	09:30 – 15:00	Open to all parishes

MAY

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 9th	Mount Merrion Parish Centre	09:30 – 15:30	Open to all parishes
Wednesday, 20th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	13:00 – 16:00	Priest Advisers only

JUNE

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 6th	Parish Centre, Balbriggan	09:30 – 15:30	Open to all parishes

SEPTEMBER

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 5th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30	Open to all parishes

OCTOBER

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 10th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30	Open to all parishes

NOVEMBER

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 7th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30	Open to all parishes

DECEMBER

Date	Venue	Time	Comment
Saturday, 5th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30	Open to all parishes

CONTACT DETAILS

Child Safeguarding and Protection Service

Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road, Dublin 3.

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