



NEWSLETTER

CONTACTING CSPS

Members of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service are working and available to deal with any concerns that you may have for the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults. In accordance with government guidelines our offices are closed and this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. However, the main office number: 01 8360314 has been diverted to the phone of Aileen Byrne. Aileen is available to take your call and if you need to speak to another member of the team Aileen will inform the team member and ask them to call you. The direct lines that used to go to team members' desks are no longer in use so please use the main office number only.

You can also contact team members by email.

CSPS Team Contacts

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CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS NEED YOU NOW MORE THAN EVER

We have learned a lot about the resilience of our local communities since the corona virus pandemic enforced restrictions on our contacts with each other. Almost certainly, all of you reading this have increased your contact with those most isolated and vulnerable in your local community. It is very important that you maintain these contacts. Sadly, we know from media reports of the increased vulnerability of those caught up in domestic violence situations. Our friends and colleagues in Tusla have spoken to us of serious child abuse cases that they are dealing with at the moment. If you are aware of such situations, or if you even suspect that something untoward may be going on, please act on your concerns. Julie and Andrew are available to offer advice and assistance. Social workers from Tusla (for children) and the HSE (for vulnerable adults) are also available for informal consultation even if you do not have grounds for a formal report of abuse. Remember also that, in an emergency, you should contact the Gardai if you have information that a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm.

TEAM NEWS

Our friend and colleague, Loraine Byrne, is leaving CSPS when her two-year contract expires in June. Loraine joined the team in June 2018 when we were in the midst of final preparations for the World Meeting of Families. Loraine threw herself wholeheartedly into these preparations and was one of a team of six people who made up the safeguarding team for the Meeting. Since then Loraine has worked mainly, though not exclusively, on developing our approach to vulnerable adult safeguarding. As a result of her work, the Diocese was able to publish *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Policy of the Archdiocese of Dublin* in July of last year.



Loraine provided support to a number of people who were abused as children by priests. Loraine approached this work with great skill and empathy. This work is at the very heart of what we do and we are grateful to Loraine for the generosity, compassion and sensitivity with which she approached this work.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Due to the current restrictions, all safeguarding training has had to be suspended. Garry Kehoe, our Training and Development Officer, is currently exploring ways in which training can be delivered safely when further easing of restrictions occurs. In the meantime, it is important that we use what resources are available to us.

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, have an e-learning programme that takes approximately 90 minutes to complete. It is available at:

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>

On completion of the course, participants are invited to complete a 10-question assessment. Those who successfully complete the assessment are issued with a certificate.

The course covers the 'Three Rs', that is recognising, responding to and reporting child abuse. This is a core part of any training in child protection, including the one-day training delivered by the diocesan trainers. The key message: that you must act on concerns for the safety and protection of children without delay; is repeated throughout the programme. The role of the designated liaison person (DLP) as the person within each organisation to whom child protection concerns must be reported is explained. **The DLPs for Dublin Diocese are Julie McCullough and Andrew Fagan.**

The course has been available for a number of years but it has been updated to take account of recent changes in legislation. One of these concerns the **Child Safeguarding Statement**. There is now a legal requirement on 'relevant services' to have such a statement and to make it available to the public and to Tusla. The first diocesan Child Safeguarding Statement was published on www.csp.dublindiocese.ie in 2018. It is currently being updated and amended and the revised version will be available shortly.



The Child Safeguarding Statement is a statement committing an organisation to protect children from abuse and describing the policies, procedures and practices that are in place to support that commitment. The Child Safeguarding Statement contains a risk assessment. This identifies the risks to the safety of children arising from their involvement in the organisation and the steps taken to mitigate the identified risks. For example, adults who wish to gain access to children for the purpose of abusing them may see involvement in their local parish as a means of contacting minors. One of the ways we mitigate this risk is by following safe recruitment practices and having people vetted.

The course also explains **mandatory reporting**. This is the legal obligation on mandated persons to report child protection concerns to Tusla. Reporting to the civil authorities is a key part of diocesan safeguarding policy but this has now been given the force of law for those with professional roles that carry this legal obligation. Doctors, teachers and social workers are all mandated persons as long as they are discharging their professional responsibilities but not when engaged in other activities. A doctor who is seeing a patient is a mandated person but this does not apply if she meets her patient at a social gathering. Clerics and pastoral workers are mandated persons. Priests and other ministers of religion are, like Gardai, considered to always be in a professional role and, therefore, mandated persons at all times.

Mandated persons do not discharge their legal responsibility by reporting a child protection concern to one of the diocesan DLPs. However, their responsibility is discharged if a joint report is sent by the DLP on behalf of them both. This is the practice recommended by CSPS for dealing with such situations.

Parishes who are taking on new volunteers to work with children or who have existing volunteers who have not attended diocesan safeguarding training are strongly advised to:

- Have their volunteers do the Tusla e-learning programme and ask for their certificate of completion of the course;
- Explain the diocesan DLP structure to them and ensure they know how to contact the diocesan DLPs.

REPORT ON SCOUTING IRELAND



In May, Scouting Ireland published a report entitled 'Historic Sexual Abuse in Scouting: A Learning Review'. It was prepared by Ian Elliott, former CEO of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. The findings were depressingly familiar to anyone who has read similar reports about other organisations, including Church organisations. There was little concern shown for scouts who reported abuse in the past and a failure to report to the civil authorities. The extent of the abuse of minors within scouting may never be known because records were destroyed.

Ian Elliott criticised 'cronyism' in the scouting organisations (Scouting Ireland was established in 2004 as an amalgamation of two separate scouting organisations). He found that people with a sexual interest in children rose to positions of responsibility and prevented proper accountability when it came to dealing with complaints, thus "preventing known offenders from being removed from scouting".

The sexual abuse of children within scouting has done enormous damage to the organisation and its reputation but, much more significantly, to those who were abused and to their families. It is a story of betrayal of children and of those good and generous adults who gave, and continue to give, generously of their time and energy, for the sake of children.

Ian Elliott was the sole author of the report and the terms of reference were written so that the Board of Scouting Ireland had no editorial control over the contents of his report. This demonstrates a commitment to transparency and is evidence of a fundamental change in the ethos of the organisation. One can only wish Scouting Ireland, their Board and members, and the children they serve well as they embark on a new beginning.

Ian Elliott makes an interesting observation which is well worth consideration and reflection. He says repeatedly that no one has a right to be a scout leader. It is a privilege. We do not own the organisations of which we are members. We serve them.