**Diocesan Safeguarding Strategic Plan: September 2023 to September 2026**

**Introduction**

This is the fourth diocesan safeguarding strategic plan. Each plan has been for a period of three years. The last plan expired in June 2023. Work on this plan was commenced in March 2023 by members of the Safeguarding Committee and staff of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service. A draft of the plan was discussed at a meeting of the diocesan Safeguarding Committee in May 2023. The plan was then amended in light of the discussion at that meeting. It was signed off at the September meeting of the Committee.

Not all of the objectives of the 2020 to 2023 plan were achieved. This was due mainly to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. It impacted on the plan in two ways. A lot of activity was curtailed, especially in the period beginning with the first lockdown in March 2020. It took some time before activity both in parishes and in diocesan offices returned to pre-pandemic levels. By that time, however, the numbers employed to deliver the plan had decreased as a consequence of the voluntary redundancy scheme introduced by the Diocese.

This plan, following the one it succeeds, divides the strategic objectives into compliance objectives and outcome objectives. The first set of objectives are those things we are required to do in other to comply with legislation or Church or national guidelines. The outcome objectives have more to do with our vision of the future. This is really about changing the way we think about safeguarding. We want our diocesan and parish workers (cleric and lay) to move from thinking about safeguarding as something we have to do to something we want to do because we see is as an integral part of ministry, thus embedding a culture of safeguarding. Implementing our vision for the future will be a challenge, one that can be better achieved by aligning it with other developments within the Diocese, such as the *Building Hope* strategy and, within the Church generally, such as the *Synodal Pathway.*

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| **Strategic Objectives A: compliance with regulatory requirements** | **Reference** | **Timescale**  |
| 1. CSPS will revise and update the diocesan Child Safeguarding Statement, every two years as required under the Children First Act 2015.  | Children First Act 2015*Safeguarding Children*Standard 2 | July 2023,July 2025 |
| 2. CSPS will revise and update the diocesan safeguarding policy to complement the Child Safeguarding Statement | *Safeguarding Children*Standard 2 | July 2023 |
| 3. CSPS will complete the list of mandated persons working on behalf of the Diocese, as required under the Children First Act, ensure that all mandated person understand their responsibilities under the Act and establish a mechanism for keeping the list up to date. | Children First Act 2015*Safeguarding Children*Standard 5 | December 2023 |
| 4.CSPS will implement the legal requirement for risk assessment of activities involving children and young people across the parishes of the Diocese, through regional meetings and training for parish safeguarding representatives | Children First Act 2015*Safeguarding Children*Standard 1 | December 2025 |
| 5. CSPS will deliver safeguarding training across the parishes and agencies of the Diocese and ensure that such training is provided in every deanery area at least once per annum. | *Safeguarding Children*, Standard 5 | Ongoing |
| 6. CSPS will implement auditing of safeguarding practice in parishes on a three year cycle in order to ensure the exercise identifies those parishes in need of additional support so that such support can be provided to ensure compliance with diocesan safeguarding policy | *Safeguarding Children*, Standard 7 | Commencing Spring 2024 |
| 7. CSPS will produce child friendly safeguarding materials.  | *Safeguarding Children,* Standards 1 and 6 | Summer 2024 |
| 8. CSPS will update the diocesan vulnerable adult policy and/ or cooperate in the development of a ‘One Church’ policy  |  | Spring 2024 |
| 9. CSPS will design a safeguarding training programme specifically for Parish Pastoral Councils as a means of promoting and supporting the work of Parish Safeguarding Representatives | *Safeguarding Children*, Standard 5 | Autumn 2023 |

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| **Strategic Objectives B: promoting a culture of safeguarding** | **Reference:** | **Timescale**  |
| 10. CSPS will promote a culture of safeguarding as integral to good pastoral practice, to include:1. Review and upgrade the current CSPS website
2. Use of Newsletter to showcase best practice
3. Preparing materials for use on diocesan Safeguarding Day
 | *Safeguarding Children,*Standard 6 | 1. December 2023
2. At least twice annually
3. Annually
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| 11. The Safeguarding Committee will explore ways of aligning diocesan safeguarding initiatives with other Church and diocesan initiatives such as the National Synod and Building Hope as a further means of promoting a culture of safeguarding in the Archdiocese of Dublin |  | Commencing Autumn 2023 |
| 12. CSPS will canvass the views of young people on diocesan safeguarding activity in order to ensure it relates to the threats to their safety and well-being that they experience in their daily lives | *Safeguarding Children,*Standard 6 | Ongoing, as opportunities arise |
| 13. CSPS will engage with new Irish communities to ascertain their training needs in relation to child safeguarding and assist them to comply with Church and national safeguarding guidelines | *Safeguarding Children,*Standard 6 | Ongoing |
| 14. CSPS personnel will attend meetings of each deanery to explain the work of CSPS, the progress made in the implementation of diocesan safeguarding policy to date and the challenges that lie ahead. | *Safeguarding Children,*Standard 6 | By end of 2024 |