



April 2020

<http://www.downandconnorsafeguarding.com/>

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Safeguarding Office Arrangements during the COVID-19 Health Crisis

During this current health crisis of Covid-19, there will be no safeguarding staff based at the Safeguarding Office, (120 Cliftonville Road) and only limited access to the two remaining staff, who will be working remotely from home.

The Safeguarding Office is now limited to responding to **urgent matters only**, namely, case management and referrals of a safeguarding nature.

If you have an **urgent safeguarding matter** and wish to speak to someone you should always in the first instance, contact either, the police service by ringing 999 in an emergency situation, or if not an emergency, on 101 or the local social services office, whose contact details can be found on the safeguarding website:

<http://www.downandconnorsafeguarding.com/the-planned-work-of-the-safeguarding-office-for-the-period-of-the-coronavirus/>

Or you can contact:

Margaret Burke: Designated Liaison Officer (DLP) for Down and Connor at:

Duty Mobile: 075 3499 2124

E-mail: Margaret.burke@soddc.org

Or

Barbara McDermott: Director for Safeguarding at:

E-mail: Barbara.mcdermott@soddc.org

****Please note, the office telephone will not be manned during this time, although e-mails forwarded to the office, of an urgent safeguarding nature, will be responded to.***

All training events have been suspended during this time, as will contact with Parish Safeguarding Committees (PSC's). This is in line with Government and Public Health stay safe advice and guidance.

This arrangement will remain in place until the end of May 2020 and then reviewed.

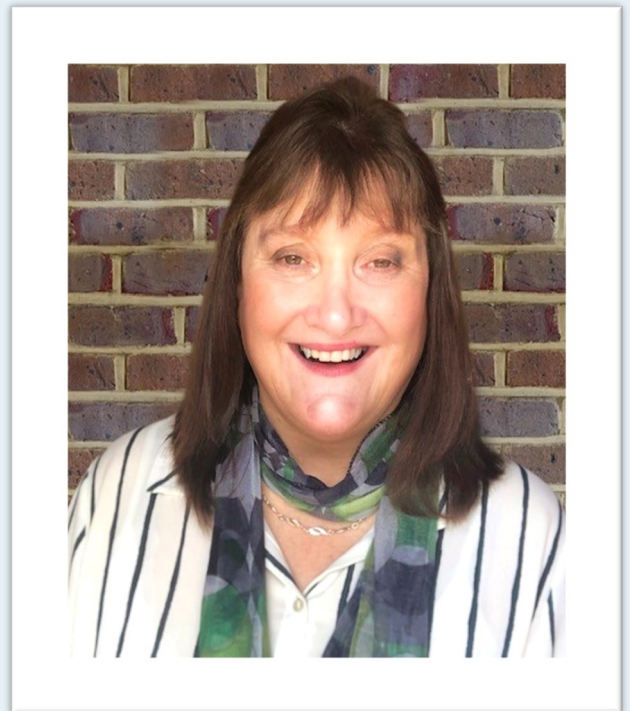
It is important that we all stay safe and adhere to Government guidance to "stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives".

Take care and stay safe.

Newly appointed Designated Liaison Person For Down and Connor

Hello, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all of you. My name is Margaret Burke and I have joined the Down and Connor Diocese Safeguarding Team as the Designated Liaison Person for the Diocese and will be replacing Philip O'Hara who will soon, sadly be leaving the Team.

I am a social worker and have worked in safeguarding children and young people for over 30 years in various roles. Just prior to coming to Down and Connor I worked as a Professional Officer with the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI). Close links between Down and Connor Diocese and the SBNI have already been established as our Director of Safeguarding Barbara McDermott, Co-Chairs the SBNI Interfaith Group and sits on the SBNI Board.



My key areas of work with the SBNI related to Case Management Reviews where cases are reviewed when children have died or been seriously harmed to identify any learning which can make children and young people safer, the development of Policy and Procedures providing guidance on Safeguarding to all staff who have links to children and young people and the issues of neglect and mental health which are part of the SBNI strategic priorities.

This knowledge and experience will greatly assist me in my role as Designated Liaison Person for the Diocese.

I am looking forward to working in Down and Connor and to working with you all. I am based at the Down and Connor Safeguarding Office, 120 Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6LA but currently working remotely from home, given the current situation with Covid-19. Once things get back to normal, I plan to go around the parishes and meet with Parish Priests and Chairs of Parish Safeguarding Committees.

During the period of the COVID-19 outbreak, I can be contacted at:

Mob: 07534992124

Email: margaret.burke@soddc.org

Training Update

Due to the changing situation regarding the current COVID-19 health crisis, the Safeguarding Office have postponed all forthcoming training events. We are very sorry for the inconvenience this may cause, but our priority is for the safety of all and to of course, follow current Government and Public Health Advice.

We hope to provide some additional online resources going forward, that you may find helpful and could share with your group leaders.

As the office is closed due to the current COVID-19 health crisis the remaining staff working remotely from home will only be available to deal with urgent matters. We appreciate your help and support at this time. All training queries will be addressed once the office is reopened to its full capacity.

Parish Visits Update

Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 health crisis, we have had to cancel all parish site visits.

It goes without saying, that the Safeguarding Office have found these visits to parishes very useful and to hear first-hand about what is happening “on the ground”. It has been important to hear about the challenges of safeguarding faced by the parishes, ideas on how the Safeguarding Office can improve on aspects of our work and also seeing your “good safeguarding practice” rolled out in parishes.

Hopefully when this current crisis passes, we will be in a position to resume these parish visits with those we had not managed to connect with prior to this period of restricted contact. We all look forward to the period of resumed normality.

Vetting Office Update

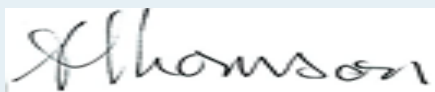
COVID-19 continues to present an ever-increasing threat to the health and wellbeing of everyone, as well as creating increasing disruption to our everyday lives, including our working lives. With major disruption of normal day to day activities within the Parishes and the various Diocesan Offices, it has become impossible for many of our Church staff to continue to carry out their normal work activities.

The priority for Trustees of the Dioceses continues to be the safety and welfare of each employee and in line with these circumstances, the Church Authorities have decided that all staff in the Northern Vetting Office will be Furloughed. In line with the regulations of the Furloughing Scheme it will not be possible for any of the Vetting Office Staff to undertake any work for, or in connection with Northern Vetting.

The Vetting Staff/Office will cease all work from close of play, **Friday 17 April 2020** and we will not be available to respond to correspondence or emails after that date.

Lorraine, Denise and I would like to say, at this difficult time, that we wish everyone safety and good health and we hope to be back fresh and well when the time is right.

As someone said in a letter I received today ‘stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.’



Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland—Useful Links



E-Safety Guidance

Due to the increased usage of the internet by children and young people and adults given the current situation with the COVID-19 health crisis, please find a link to E-safety Guidance which was produced for Faith Groups:

<http://www.downandconnorsafeguarding.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SBNI-Interfaith-E-Safety-Brochure.pdf#page=1>

See link below to a Child friendly short video available on the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland website regarding the COVID-19 health crisis:

<https://youtu.be/FqaXBtSaiUE>

Protecting and safeguarding children from Neglect

As part of our aim to raise awareness on Safeguarding, we plan to take a specific aspect and make available some information. We have decided to start with protecting and safeguarding children from Neglect.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child and young person’s basic needs. Neglect remains one of the most prevalent forms of child maltreatment and is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child and young person’s health or development.

The SBNI Neglect Sub-Group in accordance with the Neglect Strategy developed by the SBNI, put together some information on the ‘Profile of Neglect in Northern Ireland’ to help raise awareness of the issue. Please see profile below:

Profile of Neglect in Northern Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND has the **HIGHEST** proportion of **CHILDREN** in its population of all four UK countries

2017/2018

Total Population NI	1,862,137
Number of Children in NI	435,567

NEGLECT

is the **FAILURE** to provide a child's **BASIC** needs (e.g. adequate food, clothing, supervision, emotional, social, health, medical and educational needs) and can be a **CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

Neglect

may affect **10%** of children in the UK, in NI that equates to **4500** children

NEGLECT

is the most **prevalent** type of **maltreatment** in the family for all **age groups** in NI

80%

of children are on the Child Protection Register in NI due to **PHYSICAL ABUSE** or **NEGLECT** or **BOTH**

Northern Ireland Child Protection Register Statistics July - Sept 17

Children on the Child Protection Register by Duration at 31 December 2018

Source: Children Order Return CPRS

73%

of children in the UK know another child who is **SUFFERING**

Neglect

is an **Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)** that can have long term effects on a child

Staying Safe Online

The Internet and the use of social media can be a great means for children to feel connected and to stay in touch during this period of social distancing.

Not being able to go to school, having to stay at home and, not being able to meet up with your peers and friends is a very challenging time for children, young people and indeed, their parents.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of staying safe online and enjoying the benefits of social media.

Below are a few helpful links with advice and ideas about how to stay safe and what to do if you are worried or concerned.

*Tips for keeping your children and young people safe online

- 1 Keep the conversation going [Open conversation is always a good starting point](#)
- 2 Keep your computer in a common area of the house. ... [In that way everyone knows what going on](#)
- 3 Know which other computers your children are using. ... [Think about the mobile phone...it's the mini computer!](#)
- 4 Remind your children, "Don't talk to strangers online — or meet them" ... [the online world is the same as the offline world](#)
- 5 Make Internet time family time. ... [Enjoy the enormous benefits of social media](#)
- 6 Know your children's passwords. [Keep it open keep....](#) Keep it transparent this avoids any need for secrecy

*(Adopted from the NSPCC leaflet tips to keep your children safe online).

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>



Celebration of Mass via webcam

Did you know that you can still join in the celebration of mass at home?

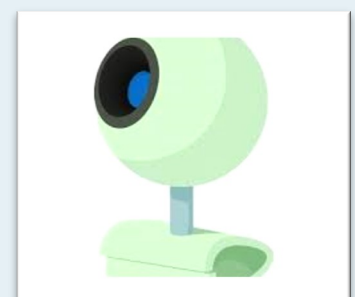
Several churches in the Diocese have webcams which stream masses live for you to view by visiting the Church Services Website at:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/>

The website is very simple to use and a great benefit to all parishioners at this challenging time.

Church Services can also be accessed via the Down and Connor website at:

<http://www.downandconnor.org/>



Useful Contacts

All the latest Government directives can be found on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

For all the latest health advice on the current COVID-19 health crisis, go to the NHS website at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

The BBC News page is very informative also:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/coronavirus>

Local Services

You might find the following links useful. Some stores are prioritising orders for the vulnerable, elderly and key workers, such as NHS staff.

<https://www.tesco.com/groceries/>

<https://www.asda.com/>

<https://www.iceland.co.uk/>

<https://www.sainsburys.co.uk/>

Children & Young people's Strategic Partnership



It is anticipated that CYPSP Locality based services will not be meeting face to face for some time. At this difficult time, we will continue to work hard to provide updates and information which may be of benefit to organisations, children and families. These can be found on the link below:

<http://www.cypsp.hscni.net/covid-19-daily-updates/>

Women's Aid: 028 9066 6049

Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline: 0808 802 1414

Useful Contacts (Cont'd)

Statutory Numbers for ease of access:

Social Services	
During normal working hours (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-5.00pm)	
Children/Young People	Adults
Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 9050 7000	Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 95041744
South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 0300 1000 300	South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 028 92501227
Northern HSC Trust Tel: 0300 1234 333	Northern HSC Trust Tel: 028 94413659;
Southern HSC Trust Tel: 0800 7837 745 / Freephone: 028 3741 5285	Southern HSC Trust Tel: 028 37564423
Outside normal working hours (Friday 5.00pm – Monday 9.00am, including Bank Holidays)	
For both Children/Young People and Adults	
Regional Emergency Social Work Service Tel: 028 9504 9999 E-mail: resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net	
Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)	
999 in an emergency situation 101 if not an emergency-Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm; Saturday and Sunday 9.00am - 5.00pm	

