

NATIONAL BOARD REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING IN DOWN AND CONNOR - JUNE 2023

The National Board have been invited by the Church Authority to review safeguarding in the Diocese of Down and Connor.



Two Independent Reviewers will be visiting the Diocese on the 6th 7th 8th and 9th June 2023.

There will be two main elements to this Review;

- ⇒ **Case Management** , how the Diocese manages suspicions, concerns knowledge and allegations of a child safeguarding nature.
- ⇒ **Safeguarding within Parishes**, what we could define as practical safeguarding in action, in essence how Parishes with the support of their local Parish Safeguarding Committee, work to the guidance outlined in Standard 1 Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments. Processes in place within our Parishes which provide safe opportunities for children and young people to grow and develop in their Catholic faith.

The Diocese of Down and Connor welcomes this Review and will engage at every level with the two Reviewers.

This is an important event for the Diocese and it will be a beneficial learning opportunity for the Diocese in continuing all our efforts in maintaining a safe and welcoming Church for children and young people.

It is also an opportunity to acknowledge and endorse the work of Parish Safeguarding Committees and the clergy in creating the safeguarding ethos in Down and Connor

Philip O'Hara

Down & Connor

Safeguarding & Vetting Office

120 Cliftonville Road
BELFAST
BT14 6LA

Contact Us:

Safeguarding: 028 9049 2798

Email: office@soddc.org
www.downandconnorsafeguarding.org

Vetting: 028 9049 2783

Email: vetting@soddc.org
<https://downandconnorsafeguarding.com/>

Contact Details for the DLP

DLP in Down and Connor
07534 992 124

Inside this Issue

[National Board Review](#)

[Annual Parish Audit Update](#)

[Training News](#)

[Other News](#)

[Parish Safeguarding Support Officer](#)

[Vetting](#)

[Safeguarding Website](#)

[Useful Contacts](#)

ANNUAL PARISH AUDIT 2022

Thank you to all those parishes who completed the Annual Parish Audit for 2022.

The Annual Audit of Safeguarding across the Diocese is a requirement under the National Board for Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland - Standard 7 - Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards.



There is a requirement under this standard that the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese confirms the status of child safeguarding within the parishes of the Diocese on an annual basis.

The returns made by parishes inform the Apostolic Administrator's report to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland on the Diocese's compliance with its Standards and Guidance. This return has now been completed by Bishop Donal McKeown,.

This audit is your unique Parish's statement with regards parish safeguarding, areas of strength and innovation and areas where you identify the need for development.

Themes of the Audit

Parishes are working exceptionally hard and diligently to create and maintain safeguarding arrangements to ensure our Church is a safe and nurturing environment for children and young people as they grow in their Catholic faith.

Safeguarding Committees are an established feature across the vast majority of Parishes in our Diocese. There are a small number of Parishes where the reviving of parish life has been a difficult process marked by losing dedicated volunteers. The Safeguarding Team acknowledge this difficult journey and would sincerely thank those volunteers who have previously given their time so unselfishly. We would plea that those people who may be thinking about their baptism and lay vocation in the spirit of the Good Shepherd, to actively become involved in safeguarding within their Parish. Parishes experiencing this difficulty will be supported by the Safeguarding Staff.

Our Clergy continue to be a key part of the Parish Safeguarding Committee.

The Audit confirmed that Parishes were working to the guidance and best safeguarding practice with regards to Recruitment and selection of volunteers and their Induction process and attendance at the appropriate level of training. A small number of Parishes reflected the need for support in their adoption of the Whistleblowing Guidance, the Safeguarding Team will work with these Parishes.

Some other themes emerged from the Audit which together we will work with, the necessity of the Sacristy Register, the key arrangements that should be in place for the safe running of children's activities , Consent Forms , Risk Assessments. The Safeguarding Team will continue to support Parishes in these important arrangements.

The Audit confirmed a trend that reflects the journey the Diocese is beginning with the adoption of the **Pathway to the Future Strategy**. There are now, across the Diocese, 10 Joint Safeguarding Committees who are covering 31 Parishes. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team is fully committed and will work with Parishes and Pastoral Community Forums and VF's who are considering this local safeguarding arrangement.

The Audit is also important in that, it will direct the Team in the Safeguarding Office as to how best it can support your Parish in the coming year. This will inform the work of the newly appointed Parish Support Worker.

TRAINING NEWS

Training Delivered Sept 2022 to April 2023



LEVEL 1 INFORMATION SESSION

13 sessions delivered with a total of 178 volunteers trained across the parishes

LEVEL 2 CHILD SAFEGUARDING SESSION

9 sessions delivered with a total of 116 volunteers trained across the parishes

LEVEL 2 CHILD SAFEGUARDING REFRESHER SESSION

9 sessions delivered with a total of 96 volunteers trained across the parishes

This figure includes Clergy who have completed Refresher training.

OTHER SESSIONS

Adult training for SPRED Leaders was completed in Sept 2023

PSC Chair & Deputy Chair Training was completed in Feb and March 2023

Parish Training Needs—Child Level 1, 2, Refresher & Adult



Do you have any Safeguarding Training Needs in your parish?
If so, please register your need by using the link below:

[REGISTER FOR TRAINING NEEDS](#)

New Procedure for Booking Training Courses

The procedure for booking onto Safeguarding Training Courses has now changed. We are now using Online Microsoft Forms as a means of booking.

This makes the booking process much easier. The Registration Form can be accessed either via the date on the **Training Calendar** which can be found on the **Training Tab** on our website **Home Page** or via the **Booking Courses** option under the **Training Tab** [BOOKING COURSES](#)

UPDATE

OTHER NEWS

ONUS (Domestic Abuse and Violence) SAFE PLACE

What is Safe Place?

Domestic abuse is a highly prevalent form of abuse. Safe place is a simple but effective initiative that allows any church business organisation, school, or community group to provide information and signposting to anyone affected by domestic abuse and sexual abuse.



What is a Safe Place Zoom Webinar?

The Safe Place Zoom Webinar is a 90-minute information session that combines information on the Safe Place initiative along with Domestic Violence and Abuse awareness raising.

The aim of the session is to explain how through the Safe Place initiative, Parishes can become Safe Places for anyone to access information on the local services available for people living with domestic abuse.

The Safe Place initiative does not involve providing direct support services to anyone living with domestic abuse, instead the aim is to raise awareness and ensure that anyone affected by domestic abuse is signposted to appropriate support services.

UPDATE

Some parishes and religious organisations within Down and Connor recently completed the ONUS Safe Place Webinar on 29th March 2023 and are in the process of registering as a Safe Place.

Further Safe Place Webinars will be taking place throughout the year. We will keep you up to date.

PARISH SAFEGUARDING SUPPORT OFFICER

UPDATE

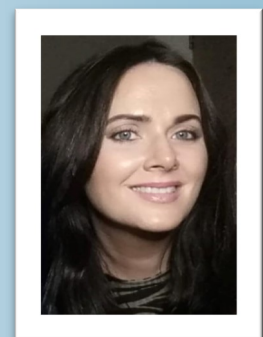
“Hello my name is Shauneen Doran and I have recently joined the Safeguarding Office on a part-time basis as the Parish Safeguarding Support Officer.

I have been involved in Music Ministry in Down and Connor Diocese for many years and some of you may already know me through this Ministry.

My role will be mostly parish-based so I’m hoping to be able to visit with you all in the coming months ahead.

I am delighted to be part of the team in the Safeguarding Office”.

Shauneen Doran



VETTING

Recent parish enquiries indicate that more volunteers are now recommencing their role after a considerable break caused by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The situation reflected by parishes is that those returning have been away from their role for periods exceeding one year, and sometimes nearer two years.

Remember volunteers must be re-vetted after a period of one year's absence from the role caused by the Covid 19 pandemic only.

Always check with the vetting office before you start the vetting process that you have the most recent version of all forms and the Access Ni PIN code.

Information and forms regarding new applications and changes in roles can be found at:

[VETTING AT DOWN AND CONNOR](#)



Remember, an individual can only carry out a Regulated Activity when the Vetting Office has issued a Free to Appoint letter to the Parish.



PSC CHAIRPERSON HAVE YOUR DETAILS CHANGED?

Has your mobile number or email address changed recently?

If so, please contact Marion in the Safeguarding Office office@soddc.org who will email you a contact form to complete.



OUR SAFEGUARDING WEBSITE

This is just a reminder of what is available on the Safeguarding Office Website. The information on the website is categorised under headings such as Training, Vetting, News, How to Report a Concern. The website is organised so that you can easily find the material that is of relevance.

[OUR WEBSITE](#)



REPORTING A CONCERN

Under this tile you will find information on how to report a safeguarding concern in relation to a child or young person. Please click on the link below where you can find information on Reporting a Concern:

[REPORT A CONCERN](#)



TRAINING

Under this heading you will find the Training Calendar, how to register for training and other training information such as ACE's and ONUS Safe Place. Please click on the link below where you can access our training Information:

[TRAINING](#)



PARISH RESOURCES

Under this heading you will find the Parish Resource Pack and relevant forms such as Child and Guardian Joint Consent, Use of Church Property by External Groups Form, Sacristy Register. Please click on the link below where you can access parish resources:

[PARISH RESOURCE PACK](#)



Did you know that you can also access the Safeguarding Website via the Down and Connor Website on [DIOCESE OF DOWN AND CONNOR](#)

Are the Safeguarding Office and DLP Contact Details up to date on your Parish Notice Boards, Bulletins and Websites? These contact details can be found on our Website Home Page.

If you need new Posters for your Church Notice Boards, these can be downloaded from our Website [RESOURCES FOR PARISHES](#)



USEFUL CONTACTS

TOWARDS PEACE	00353 (1) 505 3028 00353 (0) 8677 10533	https://towardspeace.ie/
TOWARDS HEALING	NI Freephone 0800 0963315	https://towardshealing.ie/

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES GATEWAY TEAM

During normal working hours (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-5.00pm)

Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 9050 7000;
South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 0300 1000 300;
Northern HSC Trust Tel: 0300 1234 333;
Southern HSC Trust Tel: 0800 7837 745
 028 3756 7100

Outside normal working hours (Friday 5.00pm – Monday 9.00am, including Bank holidays):

Regional Emergency Social Work Service:

Tel: 028 9504 9999
Email: resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES GATEWAY TEAM

During normal working hours (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-5.00pm)

Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 9504 1744;
South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 028 9250 1227;
Northern HSC Trust Tel: 028 9441 3659;
Southern HSC Trust Tel: 028 3756 4423.

Outside normal working hours (Friday 5.00pm – Monday 9.00am, including Bank Holidays):

Regional Emergency Social Work Service

Tel: 028 9504 9999
Email: resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net