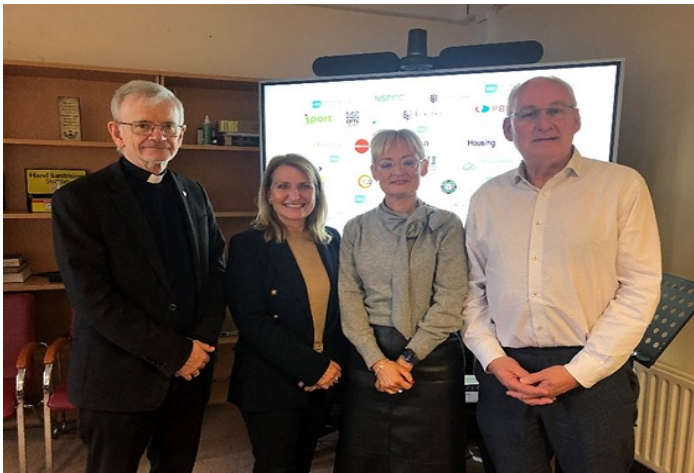

DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE NEWS

Bishop Alan recently attended the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Meeting in November.

It was a pleasure to have Bishop Alan's input and an affirmation of his support and commitment to safeguarding in the Diocese.

At this meeting, we had invited Helen McKenzie, Director of Operations, Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI). Helen gave a presentation to the Committee on the role of SBNI in promoting high standards of safeguarding work across all agencies including the Diocese of Down and Connor and the recent cross governmental departmental action planning, in relation to tackling Child Exploitation in whatever form this takes and how all elements of this work should be informed by trauma informed practice.



Pictured from left to right, Bishop of Down and Connor, Alan McGuckian, Director of Operations for the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, Helen McKenzie, Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, Amanda Stewart, and Director of Safeguarding in Down and Connor, Philip O'Hara

Down & Connor Safeguarding &
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<https://downandconnorsafeguarding.com/>

REPORT A CONCERN

Contact Details for the DLP

DLP in Down and Connor
07534 992 124

(Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm)

Inside this Issue

Diocesan Safeguarding
Committee News

Annual Parish Audit

Training News

Other News

Office Arrangements
over the Christmas
Period

Useful Contacts

ANNUAL PARISH AUDIT 2024

The requirement under the Catholic Church's safeguarding policy "A Safe and Welcoming Church; Safeguarding Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024, requires each Diocese to complete a yearly Audit as to how safeguarding is operating in each Parish.

On the basis of the Audit, Bishop Alan then provides assurances to the National Board with regards to Diocesan Compliance with Safeguarding Standards and Processes.

A correspondence was sent to all parishes and PSC Chairs with information regarding the Audit, including the link to the Microsoft Form.

We wish to remind you all that the closing date for submission of the completed Audit is **Friday 14th Feb 2025**.

This year, we have scheduled three Audit Support Meetings which will provide an opportunity for Parishes to discuss any questions in relation to the Audit.

The first of these meetings took place on the 28th Nov 2024 and there are two further meetings scheduled for 17th Dec 2024 and the 9th Jan 2025.

We welcome you all to take part in these meetings.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) 17th December 2024

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) 9th January 2025

TRAINING NEWS

This year, we have had a very positive response in the uptake of safeguarding training for our volunteers in the Diocese. It's very encouraging to see so many parishioners volunteering in their Parishes, across a wide range of roles and activities.

Remember, new dates are continuously added to the [TRAINING CALENDAR](#) on our [WEBSITE](#).

If you would like to book onto a course, simply click on the relevant course link under the [BOOKING COURSES](#) tab and fill out the Online Booking Form.

OTHER NEWS- HISTORICAL ABUSE WITHIN FAITH ORGANISATIONS

The Diocese of Down and Connor, along with all the other Churches and faith communities in Northern Ireland, is continuing to work with the NI Executive Office in their research into areas that were not covered in the previous inquiries, Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI) 2017 and the Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland Report, published in 2021.

The NI Executive Office commissioned this work in three related strands;

1. A survey to scope out information on records of abuse that exist in faith organisations, recently completed.
2. A study on the experience and expectations of victims and survivors of child abuse in faith settings in Northern Ireland.
3. A review of safeguarding policies and practices within faith organisations in Northern Ireland.

The Diocese is committed to this important work commissioned by the NI Executive and will continue to cooperate with openness and transparency.

Strand one has been completed and could I acknowledge the support of our Parish Priests in their engagement in this strand.

This work continues at pace, the other two strands are imminent and will commence in January 2025.

Certainly within strand three (safeguarding policies and procedures within faith organisations), a very short survey will be sent by the researchers, to each of our Parish Priests, (I have been assured 20 mins to complete !!). It may be useful for Parish Priests and the Chairs of Safeguarding Committee work together to complete this short survey.

Could I thank our Parish Priests and Safeguarding Committees in advance, for their input into the government research.

Our Church continues its safeguarding journey. Promoting a culture of safeguarding remains a priority for the Church, for this Diocese and for every Christian community and Parish.

Philip O Hara

OFFICE ARRANGMENTS OVER CHRISTMAS

The Safeguarding and Northern Diocese Vetting Office will be closed from:

Monday 23rd Dec 2024 until Tues 31st Dec 2024.

Both offices will be open again as normal from Tues 2nd Jan 2024.

Details of whom to contact if you have a concern, in relation to a child or an adult at risk are overleaf.

