

Contact details

PSNI 101

Social Services

The Diocese of Down and Connor is located across four of the health and Social Care Trusts

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Children's Gateway Services 028 9050 7000

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Children's Gateway Services 0300 1000 300

Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Children's Gateway Services 0800 783 7745 (Freephone UK) / 028 3756 7100

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Children's Gateway Services 0300 1234 333

Out of Office Hours Regional Emergency Social Work Service (All Trust Areas) 028 9504 9999

Down and Connor Safeguarding Office 028 9049 2798

120 Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6LA office@soddc.org

Designated Liaison Person 07534 992 124

Philip O'Hara Philip.ohara@soddc.org

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

NEXUS Institute 028 9032 6803

(Sexual Abuse Counselling NI) info@nexusinstitute.org

Towards Healing 0800 0963 315 (Freephone UK)

National Board for Safeguarding Children 00 353 1 5053124

for the Catholic Church in Ireland

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What to do if you have a concern, suspicion or wish to make an allegation of child abuse.

The Diocese of Down and Connor takes seriously all allegations, suspicions and concerns of child abuse made against any member of clergy, staff or volunteer.

The Diocese has a Designated Liaison Person whose role is to provide a service which processes all allegations of child abuse brought to the attention of the Diocese.

As an adult if you have been abused as a child or you have a concern about a child or a young person there are several options for addressing this. You may contact any of the following:

- 1. The Police (PSNI)**
- 2. Social Services**
- 3. NSPCC**
- 4. The Church, through the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person**

Contact details for all the above agencies are on the back of this leaflet.

If you make contact with the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person then s/he will undertake the following:

1. Step One – GATHERING THE INFORMATION

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) will:

- Gather the information you wish to share
- Make a written record of this information (this is not a formal statement) and share this with you for accuracy.
- Explain that the information must be referred to the Police, and if appropriate, to Social Services by the DLP.

2. Step Two – SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

The Designated Liaison Person will:

- Offer you support which may include any of the following:
 - An identified person known as a Support Person (this is not the DLP.) who will help and advise you of the process as any inquiry progresses. The Support Person may assist you to make contact with your GP if you are agreeable, to access appropriate community services.

- Counselling. The Church has contracted an independent counselling service, “Towards Healing” which can be contacted directly by you. (Contact details can be found at the back of this leaflet.) – this is a confidential service.
- Information on how to access other organisations who may be suitable to provide the kind of support you need, for example, NEXUS (contact details at the back of the leaflet)

3. Step Three – WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once the information has been referred to PSNI/Social Services the Designated Liaison Person will:

- Inform the Bishop that an allegation has been received and that a file record has been created.
- Liaise with the PSNI and or Social Services to ensure the appropriate exchange of relevant information. The DLP **is not** involved in the statutory investigation of the allegation
- Make contact with the person (respondent) against whom the allegation has been made. The timing of this meeting will be determined by the police and will outline the following:
 - (i) *That an allegation has been made, and, if agreed, who made the allegation*
 - (ii) *Information to be shared with the respondent – again determined by the police.*

NB: Given the complexities of some allegations, this process can be lengthy and may take some time to complete.

What if you are unhappy with how your concern/allegation has been dealt with?

If you are unhappy with the way in which your concern/suspicion or allegation has been dealt with, the Diocese has a complaints procedure in place for addressing this situation. A copy can be obtained from the Safeguarding Office (see contact details at the back of this leaflet).

If, following this process, you remain dissatisfied with the way in which your concern/suspicions or allegation has been dealt with, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland has a complaints procedure to address such concerns.