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SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

June
2021

in the Catholic Church in Scotland

A time to build ... and a time to mend

Bishop Joseph Toal reports on the major changes that are being planned for how the Catholic Church in Scotland will continue to support and regulate safeguarding in the Church.

“ I am very pleased to be able to report on the progress that has been made in our efforts to keep the young and the vulnerable safe.

IN GOD'S IMAGE - the document that describes how safeguarding must be provided in all Catholic parishes and religious communities - was first published in 2018. Now, after 10 months of consultation, reflection and discussion, we are preparing to publish version 2. I am sure that you will find that this offers helpful guidance and direction. **IGI v2 will be available online in August 2021.**

The other major development being planned is the re-structuring of the Church's national safeguarding service. The Bishops have been reviewing the work of all our various offices and agencies to ensure that they are providing the services that are needed to support people today.

As part of that review, our thoughts turned to how we can best promote and regulate the safeguarding standards that govern how we protect children and vulnerable adults.

We also want to improve our outreach to those who have experienced abuse so that their perspectives can influence the ways we offer support to them.



Bishop Joseph Toal

So, we are planning to transform our national office into the **SCOTTISH CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS AGENCY (SCSSA)**. Its core work will be to promote and regulate the consistent application of our safeguarding standards.

A key duty of the new agency will be to establish a forum in which the Church can continue to listen to, and learn from, those who have experienced abuse.

The Bishops are indebted to those who have already contributed so much to the steady development of safeguarding in the Church in Scotland and to those who will contribute to these new developments. ”

11,048

volunteers worked to keep people safe in parishes and religious communities

743

priests, deacons, religious sisters & brothers in Scotland

100%

parishes and religious communities that follow Church Safeguarding policies

The above figures are taken from the 2020 Safeguarding Audit of Catholic parishes, dioceses, religious institutes and Catholic organisations.

In God's Image

version 2



When IN GOD'S IMAGE was first published in April 2018, the Bishops of Scotland decreed that it was an 'instruction on Safeguarding' for all Catholic jurisdictions in Scotland. They also decreed that it should be published for an initial 3-year period in order to take account of other

developments that might occur in the field of safeguarding, both in Scotland and more widely. Having undertaken a full review of the text, the Bishops have chosen again to publish IGI v2 as an instruction that must be followed in all Dioceses in Scotland. The timeline for this work is set out below.

Our Safeguarding Standards

- 1 Creating and maintaining safe Church environments
- 2 Safely recruiting clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers
- 3 Responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations
- 4 Providing care and support for those who have experienced abuse
- 5 Managing and providing care for those accused of abuse
- 6 Working together to develop a culture of care in safeguarding
- 7 Training and supporting all who are responsible for safeguarding
- 8 Planning to improve safeguarding

Safeguarding is a task for ALL in the Church

POPE FRANCIS has made a number of significant statements on the scandal of abuse in the Church. In his *Letter to the People of God* in August 2018, he acknowledged the profound suffering of those who have experienced abuse and asked everyone in the Church to reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

“ Looking back to the past, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated.

The pain of victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

I am conscious of the effort and work being carried out in various parts

of the world to come up with the necessary means to ensure the safety and the protection of the integrity of children and vulnerable adults, as well as implementing zero tolerance.

Without the active participation of all the Church's members, everything being done to uproot the culture of abuse in our communities will not be successful in generating the necessary dynamics for sound and realistic change. ”



A light for the world

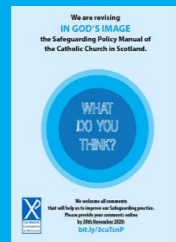
Our Lord Jesus Christ calls every believer to be a shining example of virtue, integrity and holiness. All of us, in fact, are called to give concrete witness of faith in Christ in our lives, in particular, in our relationship with others.

The crimes of sexual abuse offend Our Lord, cause physical, psychological and spiritual damage to the victims and harm the community of the faithful. In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church, so that personal sanctity and moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church's mission. (Vos Estis Lux Mundi)



IGI consultation begins

We invited everyone to submit their views on what changes they would suggest to the text of IN GOD'S IMAGE.



Editorial group gets to work

Consultation responses were analysed and the key areas for change in the text were identified to ensure that the revised text provided clear, accurate and up to date information and direction.



Writing ... and re-writing

Some months of intensive drafting and re-drafting took place, with particular attention being given to the text of the 8 Safeguarding standards. Work was also underway to build a toolkit of resources.



Bishops approve final text

Once they are satisfied that the IGI text has been appropriately revised, the Bishops will "sign off" the final text before it is prepared for online publishing.



Details of how to register will be provided in a flier to be circulated in late June.

Our core safeguarding message

- We regard as our paramount concern the safety of children and vulnerable adults.
- We demonstrate zero tolerance of abuse.
- We report all allegations to the statutory authorities.
- We show compassion for all who have suffered experience of abuse.
- We acknowledge and learn from our past failings.
- We open our procedures to independent scrutiny.
- We provide training and support to all who are responsible for safeguarding.
- Together we commit to continuous improvement in our safeguarding practice.



Looking with Hope Towards the Future

Even if so much has already been accomplished, we must continue to learn from the bitter lessons of the past, looking with hope towards the future.

(Pope Francis, Vos Estis Lux Mundi)

Pope Francis has urged all in the Church to learn from the lessons of the past and to hold accountable those who have perpetrated or covered up crimes of abuse. He has called on all the baptised to respond to the personal and communal conversion required to demonstrate a commitment to "a culture of care that says 'never again' to every form of abuse".



An agency for change

To build on improving safeguarding practice, our Bishops have decided that the time is right to establish the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA).



Listening and learning

The Bishops recognise that those who have been harmed through their involvement with the Church must be listened to, so that their experiences can inform our safeguarding practice.

Thus, the new national agency will be required to involve survivors in developing appropriate mechanisms to enable their voices to be heard and their views to be considered in the forming of Church policy and procedures.

SCSSA will be expected to:

- provide strategic leadership in safeguarding throughout the Church in Scotland
- promote and regulate consistent compliance with the standards of IN GOD'S IMAGE
- be informed by those who have been harmed by abuse
- develop the culture of evaluation and planning, and the sharing of good practice
- ensure independent scrutiny of safeguarding practice
- develop a transparent complaints-management system.

While the governance arrangements for the new agency are still at the planning stage, the Bishops are clear that they wish it to be founded on these principles:

- CONSISTENCY
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- TRANSPARENCY
- INDEPENDENCE



IGI version 2 applies

IGI comes into force on 8th September 2021. From this date you should follow the processes set out in the revised Standards. Diocesan and parish websites should now link to the new text.

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Safeguarding Webinar

This national webinar is open to all who have a Safeguarding role in a parish, religious community or diocese. It will provide a good introduction to the revised IGI text and to other changes that are taking place in safeguarding.

02

Our safeguarding practice is open to scrutiny



In recent years the Church has made significant progress in safeguarding by being open to learning from ongoing scrutiny of its practice.

The **annual audit** of every parish, diocese, religious community and Catholic organisation provides the opportunity to evaluate how we are doing and plan what needs to improve.

The **Independent Review Group** has published its own evaluations of these audits and made recommendations that have been acted on by the Church. **Independent reviews of safeguarding** in 4 dioceses by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) have been commissioned. Two reports have been published so far, with the other two due in June (Diocese of Aberdeen) and July (Diocese of Motherwell).

These reports can be accessed on the website of the Bishops' Conference: <https://www.bcos.org.uk/Safeguarding>

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