



# Safeguarding Development Newsletter

(April 2022 – Issue 18)



**“He is not here. He is Risen  
as He said.” (Mt. 26:6)**

**Augustinian Chapter 2022**

**28 March – 1 April**

**Shamrock Lodge Hotel, Athlone.**

**Safeguarding Development Group Report**

**presented 29 March by**

**Pauline Uí Dhuibhir (Chair).**

“Good afternoon and thank you for the invitation to speak with you on behalf of the Safeguarding Development Group. I plan to provide you with a whistlestop tour of the work of our group since the mid-chapter in 2019. But before that, let me outline our membership which is drawn mostly from volunteers from around the Province:

Pauline Uí Dhuibhir (Chair) –  
Ballyboden  
Mary Byrne - Finglas South  
Geraldine Carey Van Dam –  
Limerick  
Fr Michael Collender – New Ross  
Lorraine Collins – Drogheda  
Joan Donavan – Drogheda  
Nuala Fahey – Dungarvan  
Fr John Hennebry – Provincial  
Tony Murphy – Safeguarding Officer.

We were set up by Fr John Hennebry in 2016 and the safeguarding officer Tony Murphy keeps us focused and on task. We

meet about 6 times a year and during Covid-19 restrictions we switched to Zoom meetings. When the SDG was formed, volunteers gave a 3-year commitment, but Covid means that some are still in place after 6 years. Because of this, Geraldine Carey van Dam, Joan Donavon and I will finish up this summer. This means new recruits are needed imminently.

The purpose of the SDG is to support the Province to implement the safeguarding standards and policies laid out in the ‘National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland’ policy. We take the church’s safeguarding policy (which is based on national policy and state law) and we focus on the standards deemed essential so that the safeguarding of children isn’t left to chance and isn’t an accident waiting to happen.

Some of you may understandably feel that the dwindling number of children in congregations in recent times means that we don’t need to give safeguarding much attention. However, I would urge you not to give in to this view. For me safeguarding addresses a danger that is always with us. And the church is not alone in this. The danger is in all walks of life. It’s in our homes, our schools, our healthcare and

social care settings, and our sporting clubs up and down the country. We cannot allow ourselves to believe that the problem of safeguarding children has somehow gone away. And the Catholic church in Ireland has been leading the way in how to be vigilant to the danger and how to respond to it.

More than anything else, what the Safeguarding Development Group wants, is to support every Local Safeguarding Group (LSG) to be confident that they have safe standards in place for all the ministries they provide and that they are ready to welcome children and child ministries when possible.

Since the mid-chapter in 2019, we have been working through a three-year plan of action. Some of the highlights include.

## WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

### 3 Year Plan (2019-2022)

- Annual Report Completion
- Annual Network Event
- Annual Safeguarding Weekend
- Safeguarding Newsletter for LSG
- Augustinian Safeguarding Webpage
- Risk Assessment Workshop (Nov 2020)
- NBSCCCI Safeguarding Review (Feb 2022)

The **Annual Report** document is completed at each site in May of each year. It is heartening to see the immense improvements year on year in how annual reports are completed by each community. Despite Covid-19, robust records for all ministries, garda vetting and safeguard training are now in place. We are conscious that in the next 12 months demand for volunteer training and garda vetting renewals will be high, due to Covid gaps.

The **Annual Network Event** (held annually in April or May) provides a vital link between the SDG and LSGs, where topics of interest and recent safeguarding development are explored and discussed. We switched from the usual face to face meeting to zoom in 2021, so we missed out on the real contact that is so valuable. But despite this, the event was well attended, and participants engaged enthusiastically with the content, and we received much positive feedback.

Each year for the **Annual Safeguarding Weekend**, the SDG develops and distributes materials to LSGs to assist in promoting the safeguarding message in parishes and communities.

The **Safeguarding Newsletter** issues four times annually with updates for LSGs of what is currently happening with regards to safeguarding policy and standards.

An **Augustinian Safeguarding Webpage** has been developed and is accessible on the Augustinian website. Here, LSG members will find multiple useful resources to download.

We ran a **Risk Assessment Workshop** in 2021 to explain the need for risk assessments for all child centred activities. Four church locations attended, and another workshop will be arranged in the near future to facilitate remaining interested sites.



The **Garda Vetting Policy** and the **Safeguarding Training Policy** have been updated to reflect a change from a 4-year to a 3-year renewal cycle.

New guidance documents (available on the webpage) were developed following requests from LSGs. These include guidance on how to conduct a '**Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment**' for child-centred activities, and how to develop a '**Code of Practice for Children**' in different age groups (ages 6-12yrs & 13-18yrs) involved in child activities. Guidance documents on '**Volunteer Recruitment**', and '**Working with Children**' and/or '**Visiting Homes**' are also available. A **Safeguarding Leaflet** (ages 13-16) and **Child Safeguarding Posters** were also requested and will be ready for distribution in the coming weeks.

In February 2022, the SDG took part in the **NBSCCCI Safeguarding Review** of the Augustinian Province. We met with the auditors to give an account of our work and to explain how we promote safeguarding. Their full report is awaited.

As a group we are fortunate to have created a working environment where all feel valued and supported. As chair, I hope that this will stand to us as we prepare for the changes that are coming in the months ahead. Recently, group members formally reviewed their participation in SDG and many reported that the work of the group

deepened their understanding of safeguarding and greatly enhanced their contribution in the work they do at local level in their LSGs. Of note, each member independently recommended that where possible all LSGs would have a representative on the SDG. This would allow better understanding and communication between what is happening at Provincial level and the reality of what happens at local level. With three members due to step down from the group this summer, we urge you all to consider who in your location might be suitable to keep this work going.

Before I finish, I would like to mention two people. Firstly, on behalf of the SGD, I would like to welcome the appointment of Fr. Tony Egan as our new Provincial. We look forward to working with you and the group would like you to know that you will have our full support in this work. I'm sure you will have many competing priorities as you come to grips with your new role. It is our hope that you will enthusiastically embrace the work of safeguarding children.

And finally on behalf of the entire SDG, I cannot finish today without expressing how blessed we have been in the last six

years to have had Fr. John Hennebry driving this work. Your commitment and your leadership have inspired us all and we will be forever grateful to you for all we have learned, for the friends we have made and for the sense of purpose we achieved in this work. It's been a joy to work with you. Míle, buíochas ó croí.

Thank you all for listening". End.



**“Faith is to believe what you do not yet see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.”**

**— Saint Augustine**



# Invitation

**OSA Safeguarding Network**

**Zoom Meeting**

**(10:00am – 12:30pm) Saturday, 7 May 2022.**

Keeping in touch across the Province is all important. Similarly, keeping ourselves safe while continuing our Safeguarding work remains a very important priority. Zoom, for now, will allow us to achieve these goals.

While Safeguarding is a vital means to enabling ministries to thrive, the following programme hopefully will offer some inspiration, useful guidelines and practical resources for friars and volunteers in their work.

## **Keynote Address**

***"We need to see each child as a gift, to be welcomed,***

***cherished and protected." Pope Francis***

**Mary Tallon** (Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the Dominicans, Franciscans, Capuchins & Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) & **Chris Lawson** (Volunteer Leader-in-Charge, Dominican Summer Camp) will share their story of how Safeguarding has and can breathe life into all involved in Ministry.

## **Other inputs will include:**

- *Guidelines for Recruiting Volunteers; Visiting Family Homes & Vulnerable Adults.*
  - *Local Progress Report '21 – '22.*
- *Launch of Safeguarding Posters & Leaflet (13 – 16 yrs.).*
  - *Safeguarding Sunday 2022.*

Finally, Fr. Tony Egan (Provincial) will offer his words of encouragement & challenge as he commences his term of office.

