



# Safeguarding Development Newsletter



**(Oct. 2016, Issue 1)**

*Walking the Safeguarding Journey*

## Province *Safeguarding Development Group* Established

### **Primary Purpose:**

*To ensure the ongoing development of safeguarding standards and practices across the Augustinian Province in response to identified needs.*

In April 2016 seven people attended an induction session facilitated by Niall Moore and Colette Stevenson of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI). Those in attendance were members of the newly established *Safeguarding Development Group*: Pauline Ní Dhuibhir (Ballyboden), Joan Donovan (Drogheda), Geraldine Carey Van Dam (Limerick), Annette Comiskey (New Ross), Fr. Michael Collender (New Ross), along with the Provincial and Safeguarding Officer/DLP.

The group membership represents a range of skills and expertise including, among others, nursing, hospice care research, chaplaincy, employee assistance, counselling, parenting, school management, training and organisation development. Three of the current members are Local Safeguarding Representatives. No Chairperson has been appointed just yet, while the intention is to bring the total membership to 10 max. over the next year.

The current members believe that consulting with Local Safeguarding Groups (LSGs) will be important to ensure that the work undertaken is relevant, practical and needs driven. This *Newsletter* is one means of doing that - as well as providing all Friars with information and updates informed by *Safeguarding Children (2016)* adopted by all Dioceses, Orders and Congregations.

Two SDG priority pieces of work being advanced at the moment are:

- Developing Child & Young People Friendly Posters and Leaflets  
Communicating our good news message is extremely important. Therefore using clear, simple language and images is vital. Some well-planned consultation sessions will be organised over the next few months with specific age groups in 3/4 church locations. The views and suggestions gathered from children and young people will then be used to design and draft colourful and creative posters and leaflets for circulation and display throughout the Province.



- Safeguarding Development Plan '17 – '19

Planning ahead is necessary for any group trying to take a long-term view. Between now and the end of November the SDG will be working on a three year plan to guide our future work. An early draft will be circulated around mid-October to all Local Safeguarding Groups for comment and feedback. It may prompt questions, suggestions and/or conversations about what is to be done locally and what might be done at Province level (more than the sum of the parts). The NBSCCCI and other external peers will be asked for their feedback. The final document will be submitted to the Provincial Council in December for consideration and hopefully, adoption. Annual reviews will make it possible to amend it further, where appropriate, as we learn more about what's working and what new challenges are arising.



### **New Vetting Policy**

The *National Vetting Bureau (Child & Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012* was commenced 29 April 2016 providing an updated basis for vetting. This legislation makes it a crime for people (18 yrs. plus) who have access to and regular work with children and vulnerable adults not to be vetted by the host organisation or employer. Such work is role specific and not 'incidental' (e.g. Children's Mass Volunteer vs. child walks into church when Cleaner is present).

Current arrangements with local dioceses will continue. The responsibility for verifying the identity of an applicant will lie with the host organisation (i.e. represented by the Prior who retains documentary evidence on file locally). Vetting will not be transferable into another setting or organisation unless what the person is doing is a direct extension of the original role (e.g. Friar – School or Hospital Chaplaincy).

To-date the OSA policy has been to have all Friars and Volunteers vetted. That is now changed based on the following SDG's recommendation having been adopted by the Provincial Council (July 2016):

**That all Friars in ministry be vetted, and re-vetted every four years, along with the following categories of voluntary and staff roles active within the local church/parish and related ministries: Children's Liturgies & Youth Folk Choirs; Parish Sister(s); Visiting Baptism Team, Bereavement Team & Eucharistic Ministers; Sacristan & Co-ordinator(s) of Altar Servers and Local Safeguarding Representatives.**

## SDG & Local Practice Audits

Two key questions are still under consideration by the SDG members:

- ✚ *Is this an effective tool in encouraging LSGs to actually monitor and improve local practices?*
- ✚ *What is the benefit of this audit process to the SDG in fulfilling its responsibilities, if at all?*

However, for the moment, the next cycle of local audit reviews will take place March–April 2017 in preparation for a report being drafted for the Provincial Chapter (July 2017). This annual cycle will then be repeated and coincide with the re/appointment of Priors across Community Houses.

The NBSCCCI will focus more on local safeguarding practices during the next Augustinian Review expected in 2018. That gives us time to prepare and improve our team game!



## Local Safeguarding File

Each Local Safeguarding Group should, if not already started, set-up a hard copy file. This can contain copies of your meeting agendas, minutes and any documents relevant to the work. Separate sections can be devoted to the Register of Friars and Volunteers, Vetting and Training, External

Groups, Annual Plans, Audits & Progress Reports.

This narrative will tell some of the local safeguarding story of what has been done and achieved each year.



## Province Safeguarding Networking Event (Spring 2017)

The SDG plans to invite all members of Local Safeguarding Groups together in Dublin early in the New Year. Why? To introduce themselves and to get to know Priors, Friars and Local Safeguarding Reps. We need to be talking to each other about practical and imaginative ways of creating safe and sacred spaces.

A 'group up there' with fanciful ideas will be of little help to anyone, particularly the communities of faith we wish to re-assure and encourage in their ministries. We are better talking about how practices really are rather than 'talking them up' for the sake of an audit.

So the actual networking date will be confirmed following the next SDG meeting (26 Nov. 2016). We hope you and local colleagues will be able to join us in 2017.

## Comments/Feedback or Queries:

Contact Tony Murphy (087 2211235) & [osasafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:osasafeguarding@gmail.com) or the Provincial directly. Many thanks.