

# **Region Of Ireland, Missionary Society of St. Columban**

## **SAFEGUARDING**

## **VULNERABLE PERSONS**

**Interim Guidelines for Clergy, Staff and  
Volunteers 2016**

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## **Section 1 - Introduction**

The Region of Ireland, Missionary Society of St. Columban recognises that there are many people with whom Church personnel have contact who require special care and attention. The Region values and encourages the participation of vulnerable persons in all parish liturgies and activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. We believe that all Church personnel, including priests, religious, staff and volunteers must carry out their ministry respecting the rights of the individual in line with gospel values and human rights legislation.

The Region recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of vulnerable persons and is committed to safeguarding all our members. The guidance set out in this document provides a framework of how it is recommended that the Region ministers and cares for vulnerable persons. It identifies what we mean by the term and highlights values and principles which should underpin such necessary work.

These guidelines apply to all clergy (both Society and visiting), staff, volunteers, and religious and adhere to current practice and guidance in the Republic of Ireland. They should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, both of which are available on the Regional website.

The Region, through these guidelines, sets out to protect vulnerable persons from harm and exploitation and to uphold their rights by acting in their best interests and with their consent.

This is an Interim document. It will be reviewed and amended by the Region during its first year of operation. It will then be reviewed and amended, as required, but at least every three years, to take account of any major changes including legislative or policy changes in safeguarding.

## **Section 2 - Guiding Principles**

### ***Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Statement***

The Region is committed to safeguarding as an integral component of the life and ministry of the Church and recognises that we have a special responsibility towards all vulnerable people who are members of our faith community.

We are committed to creating a safe, caring and compassionate environment for all but especially those parishioners/residents defined as "vulnerable".

## *Underpinning Principles*

The Principles which underpin our work with vulnerable people are based on gospel values and are rooted in respect for the rights of vulnerable adults who are entitled to:

- To live in safety and be free from abuse or fear of abuse by others
- Be treated with respect, kindness and understanding
- Be supported in receiving the sacraments and spiritual direction
- Be protected from all forms of harm and exploitation.
- Have their emotional, physical and sexual integrity respected.
- Have their ethnicity and sexual identity respected
- Be supported in making their own decisions
- Have allegations of abuse investigated
- Have their consent<sup>1</sup> sought and taken into consideration in notifying civil authorities
- Be offered guidance in seeking help and counselling

In order to ensure that these principles are embedded in ministry with vulnerable persons, we will induct, train and support those who minister to vulnerable persons. The training must include knowledge around abuse and exploitation of vulnerable persons and how to work safely, ensuring that any potential risks to both the vulnerable person and the worker are recognised and managed.

The Regional Guidelines will ensure the welfare of "Vulnerable Persons" by:

- Making the welfare of the vulnerable person a central element of safeguarding.
- Ensuring that these guidelines are supported by robust procedures.
- Implementing the existing procedures for safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to work with vulnerable persons.
- Providing a Code of Conduct for personnel whose ministry/care brings them into contact with vulnerable persons.
- Have clear procedures for dealing with and reporting concerns and allegations of abuse.
- Managing personal information and sensitive data, confidentiality and the sharing of information in line with legal requirements.
- Establishing and maintaining links with statutory and voluntary agencies/organisations to ensure "best practice" throughout the Region.

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<sup>1</sup> See section on consent, with reference to capacity to consent

## ***Values and Principles***

Regional practice and Safeguarding Guidelines are underpinned and guided by a number of values and principles as outlined below:

- Access to information and knowledge
- Choice
- Consent
- Confidentiality
- Dignity and Respect
- Equality and Cultural Diversity
- Independence
- Privacy
- Safety

## ***Consent and Capacity***

It is important that clergy, staff and volunteers understand the issues of consent and capacity in order to establish an individual's ability to give meaningful consent.

Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. The vulnerable person may signal consent verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. Decisions with more serious consequences will require more formal consideration of consent and appropriate steps should always be taken to ensure that consent is valid.

Clergy, staff and volunteers should remember that no one can give, or withhold consent on behalf of another adult, unless special provision has been made for this, usually in law. In certain situations the need for consent may be overridden. This is generally done when it is in the interests of the public to do so, for example, the disclosure of information to prevent a crime or risk to health or life.

## ***Gaining consent from a vulnerable person***

Consent is a process - it results from understanding through dialogue and the provision of information. It may be expressly given or, alternatively, it may be signalled by a person's conduct. For example, an individual may signal his/her consent to participate in informal situations such as staff party or party in residential home or the weekly parish luncheon club, or by willingly asking a volunteer to assist them in accessing toilet facilities.

As a general rule, the method of gaining consent is likely to be influenced by the seriousness of what is being proposed. The more serious the proposal and the consequences of agreeing to it might require that the vulnerable person is asked to sign a form. The type of services and activities offered by

Region to vulnerable persons would be unlikely to require written consent. There may, however, be occasions when written consent is required and if clergy have concerns about consent, e.g. as to its validity, they should always seek advice from their Superior and/or the Safeguarding Officer. In such circumstances, members of staff or volunteers should always seek advice from their line manager/leader and/or the Safeguarding Officer. In such cases the safeguarding officer will, in turn, seek professional advice on the matter from the relevant Statutory Authorities. Individuals always have the right to consult directly with statutory agencies.

The important issue is to ensure that the consent given is valid. The consent of a vulnerable person is considered valid ONLY if:

1. He/she has the capacity to consent, i.e. he/she can understand and weigh up the information needed to make the decision.
2. Sufficient information has been given to him/her, in an appropriate way, on which to base the decision.
3. Consent has been given on a voluntary basis that is free from coercion or negative influence.

If any of these three factors is absent, consent cannot be considered to be valid.

Circumstances may arise where the vulnerable person is unable to make decisions for themselves; for example, a learning disability, a severe mental health issue, impaired functioning as a result of a stroke or some form of dementia or any brain injury or trauma which could severely affect his/her intellectual functioning. In these situations, mental capacity, in terms of decision making in respect of treatment, care, care provision, welfare and/or financial assets affairs may be impaired.

Legal protections need to be put in place if someone such as a family member, an advocate or health professional has to make decisions for a vulnerable adult who has been deemed to lack capacity.

If clergy, staff or volunteers have any doubts or concerns about whether the consent of a vulnerable person is valid, or whether he/she has the capacity to consent, they should bring this to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer who will consult with the relevant statutory authorities.

## Section 3 - Legal Framework

Vulnerable persons are protected against criminal acts in the same way as any other person. Where there is reasonable suspicion that a criminal offence may have occurred, it is the responsibility of the Gardai to investigate and make decisions about what action should be taken. The Gardai should always be consulted about criminal matters.

Key relevant legislation within the Republic of Ireland is as follows:

- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information of Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

### **Definition of a Vulnerable Person**

The current definition of a vulnerable person within the Republic of Ireland is taken from ***“The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012”*** which states:

"Vulnerable Person" means a person, other than a child, who –

- a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
- b) has an intellectual disability,
- c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or
- d) has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

In addition, the ***“Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information of Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012”*** provides for a very similar (but not exactly the same) definition of 'Vulnerable Person' in the following terms:

"Vulnerable Person" means a person (including, insofar as the offences specified at paragraph 8 of Schedule 2 are concerned, a child aged 17 years old) -

- a) who is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia, or
- b) has an intellectual disability which is of such a nature or degree as to severely restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against serious exploitation or abuse, whether physical or sexual, by another person, or

- c) who is suffering from an enduring physical impairment or injury which is of such a nature or degree as to severely restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against serious exploitation or abuse, whether physical or sexual, by another person or to report such exploitation or abuse to the Garda Síochána or both.

The rights of vulnerable persons to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected under the Human Rights Act 1998. Specifically, a vulnerable person's right to life is protected under Article 1; their right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment under Article 3; and their right to liberty and security under Article 5.

We are also guided by Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk, National Policy & Procedures HSE 2014.

## **Section 4 - Recruitment and Selection**

The Region consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers, in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

The Safe Recruitment and Vetting Procedure in the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures document which is in line with legislative requirements, Church guidelines and best practice, must be adhered to. The requirements listed apply to all clergy, staff, and volunteers who through their ministry/care have regular and necessary contact with children and vulnerable persons.

## **Section 5 - Recognising Abuse**

### ***What is abuse?***

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse is defined as: ***'The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.'***

***Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is a breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship'*** (Department of Health and Social Services Guidance 2006)



Abuse can take many forms including the following:

**Physical Abuse** - Including hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, giving a person medicine that may harm them, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.

*Possible signs – may include fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Psychological Abuse** - Including emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and the use of threats.

*Possible signs - being withdrawn, too eager to do everything they are asked, showing compulsive behaviour, not being able to do things they used to, not being able to concentrate or focus.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Financial or Material Abuse** – Including misusing or stealing the person's property, possessions or benefits, cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on them about wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.

*Possible signs - having unusual difficulty with finances, not having enough money, being too protective of money and things they own, not paying bills, not having normal home comforts.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Sexual Abuse** - Including direct or indirect sexual activity where the vulnerable adult cannot or does not consent to it.

*Possible signs - physical symptoms including genital itching or soreness or having a sexually transmitted disease, using bad language, not wanting to be touched, behaving in a sexually inappropriate way, changes in appearance.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Neglect or Acts of Omission** - Including withdrawing or not giving the help that a vulnerable adult needs, so causing them to suffer.

*Possible signs - having pain or discomfort, being very hungry, thirsty or untidy, failing health, changes in behaviour.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Discriminatory Abuse** - Including the abuse of a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexual identity or disability.

*Possible signs - the person not receiving the care services they require, their carer being overly critical or making insulting remarks about the person, the person being made to dress differently from how he/she wishes.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Spiritual Abuse** - including denying access to sacraments and to the practice of their faith.

*Possible signs - person not receiving sacraments, being absent from liturgies.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

**Institutional Abuse** - This can happen when an organisation, where the person is living or receiving care from, fails to ensure that the necessary processes and systems are in place to safeguard vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care and service. Including - lack of training of staff and volunteers, lack of or poor quality supervision and management, poor record keeping and liaison with other agencies, low staff morale and high staff turnover.

*Possible signs - vulnerable adult has no personal clothing or possessions, there is no care plan, the person is often admitted to hospital, or there are instances of staff/ volunteers having treated the person badly or unsatisfactorily or acting in a way that causes harm, poor staff morale and high staff turnover and lack of clear lines of accountability and consistency of management.*

*(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)*

### ***Initial concerns:***

There may be a need for initial “checking out” with the vulnerable person if there are concerns, for example, if a member of staff or volunteer notices any of the signs as indicated above it may be appropriate to ask what happened or what is wrong. Care needs to be taken not to investigate; this should be avoided by not asking questions beyond initial checking out and listening to the words of the alleged victim for factual accuracy.

### ***Where might abuse take place?***

Abuse can happen anywhere, some examples are as follows:

- In someone's own home
- In a carers home
- Within day care, residential care, nursing care or other institutional settings
- At work or in educational settings
- In rented accommodation or commercial premises
- In public places

### ***Who might abuse?***

This could be anyone who has contact with the vulnerable person. It could be a partner, spouse, child, relative, friend, advocate, informal carer, a member of the clergy or religious order, a healthcare, social care or other worker, a peer or, less commonly, a stranger.

### ***Domestic/Familial Abuse***

This is the abuse of a vulnerable person by a family member such as partner, son, daughter, sibling or extended family member.

### ***Professional Abuse***

The misuse of power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems.

Possible forms of professional abuse include:

- Entering into inappropriate relationships with a vulnerable person
- Failure to refer disclosure of abuse
- Poor, ill- informed or outmoded care practice

- Failure to support a vulnerable person to access health/care treatment
- Denying a vulnerable person access to professional support and services such as advocacy
- Inappropriate response to challenging behaviours
- Failure to whistleblow on issues when internal procedures to highlight issues are exhausted

### **Peer Abuse**

This is the abuse of one vulnerable person by another vulnerable person within a care setting. It can occur in group or communal settings, such as day care centres, clubs, residential care homes, nursing homes or other institutional settings.

### **Stranger Abuse**

A vulnerable person may be abused by someone who they do not know such as a stranger, a member of the public or a person who deliberately targets vulnerable people.

## **Section 6 - Recording and Reporting**

Everyone is entitled to have their civil and human rights upheld and to live a life free from abuse and neglect. All concerns, allegations and disclosures must be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

When there are concerns or where a disclosure or allegation is made, people often feel anxious about passing on the information to someone else. Concerned individuals may ask themselves, "What if I am wrong?" and this may hold them back from taking action.

It is important for clergy, staff and volunteers to know that they are not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred and neither are they responsible for conducting an investigation. This is the role of the appropriate authorities. However, clergy, staff and volunteers do need to pass on any concerns they have.

If there are concerns about a vulnerable person's wellbeing which are not dealt with under vulnerable person safeguarding procedures they should be reported to the local HSE Department. A record of this referral should be retained.

## *How to Report*

All allegations/concerns/suspicious against **Church personnel** (clergy, staff or volunteers) must be reported without delay to the Designated Liaison Persons. Their contact details are as follows:

Sandra Neville, Tel: 087 9844779  
Fr Donal Hogan, Tel: 046 9021525

If your ministry involves visiting vulnerable persons in hospitals, residential care homes or other institutional settings, the reporting procedure is through the Designated Person/Manager of the relevant institution.

For allegations/concerns/suspicious against **non-Church personnel**, the person who is worried about possible harm to a vulnerable person should report the concerns directly to the civil authorities (e.g. abuse of a vulnerable person by a relative or non-Church carer and/or peer abuse).

## *Ways you may become aware that abuse is happening?*

There are a number of ways in which you might become concerned or suspicious that a vulnerable person is suffering or, has suffered abuse.

- The vulnerable person may tell you directly.
- Someone else may tell you of their concerns.
- Some incident that causes you concern.
- A vulnerable person may show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no credible or satisfactory explanation.
- A vulnerable person's demeanour/behaviour may cause you to suspect that something may not be right, or that possible abuse has taken place.
- The behaviour of another individual close to the vulnerable person makes you feel uncomfortable (this may be another staff member, volunteer, or leader of an activity or family member).

Being alert to possible abuse plays a significant role in ensuring that vulnerable persons are safeguarded and it is important that all concerns about possible abuse are reported.

### ***What if a vulnerable person discloses abuse?***

Where this happens, it is important that clergy, staff and volunteers know how to respond and do so in accordance with the following guidelines:

#### **DO**

- Stay calm
- Listen
- Reassure the person - tell him/her they did the right thing in telling you
- Let them know that the information will be taken seriously and give them information about what will happen next
- If urgent help is needed, call the emergency services – medical/Gardaí
- Ensure the safety of the person
- Be aware that forensic evidence might be needed
- Let the person know that they will be kept informed at every stage
- Record in writing (date and sign your record) and report to one of the Designated Liaison Persons for the Diocese
- Act without delay

#### **DO NOT**

- Stop someone disclosing to you
- Promise to keep secret what they tell you
- Press the person for more details or make them repeat the story
- Gossip about the disclosure or pass any information about this to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know
- Under any circumstances, contact the alleged abuser
- Attempt to initiate an investigation yourself
- Leave details of your concern on a voicemail or by e-mail
- Delay in responding

## **Section 7 - Inter-Agency Cooperation and Sharing of Information**

The principles and rights, which have been identified in these Guidelines, can be further strengthened through the promotion of effective Inter-Agency cooperation.

These include the requirements for agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to:

- Work together to protect the rights of vulnerable persons.
- Actively promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable persons through the services they provide.
- Work together with the aim of improving the quality of safeguarding work.
- Ensure that best practice in keeping vulnerable persons safe from harm is achieved.

The purpose of Inter-agency cooperation in relation to the protection and safeguarding of vulnerable persons is to ensure that by working cooperatively, a consistent response will be made when concerns are raised or allegations of harm are made.

### ***Sharing of Information***

All vulnerable persons and, where appropriate, their carers or advocates, need to be made aware that the operation of multi-disciplinary and inter-agency procedures will, on occasion, require the sharing of information in order to protect a vulnerable person or others, or to investigate an alleged suspected criminal offence.

### ***Confidential Information Sharing***

In normal circumstances, observing the principle of confidentiality will mean that information is only passed on to others with the consent of the Vulnerable Person. However, it should be recognised that in order to protect vulnerable persons, it may be necessary, in some circumstances, to share information that might, normally, be regarded as confidential.

The duty to protect takes precedence over individual confidentiality if a person or others are at serious risk of harm or have been seriously harmed. But information sharing will be proportional and on a "need to know" basis. The person will be advised before the information is shared and with whom it will be shared.

## **Section 8 - Role of the Designated Liaison Person**

The Region has appointed Designated Liaison Persons who are responsible for managing all concerns, allegations and complaints regarding actual or potential harm or abuse which come to the attention of the Region.

The Designated Liaison Person(s) are responsible for acting as a source of advice on vulnerable person safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the Region and for liaising with the relevant statutory authorities and other agencies, as appropriate, about suspected or actual cases of vulnerable person harm or abuse.

When you contact the Designated Liaison Person, he/she will undertake the following steps:

- They will establish contact with the Designated Officer in the relevant HSE or HIQA department and the Gardaí.
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding vulnerable persons.

- Ensure that the vulnerable person guidelines are followed, particularly in relation to informing the appropriate statutory agencies.
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of the referral to the statutory agencies and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
- Liaise with the relevant statutory authorities and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people within the Region informed about any action taken and any further action required.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of concerns about the abuse and the action taken by the Region, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.

## **Section 9 - Record Keeping**

Please refer to Recording Policy for Management of Cases in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Document for details on how all records relating to concerns, allegations of suspected or actual abuse of vulnerable persons are maintained.

## **Section 10 – Confidentiality**

It is important that clergy, staff and volunteers understand the importance of confidentiality. All information relating to concerns, suspicions and allegations about a vulnerable person should be treated as confidential and should only be communicated on a “need to know” basis. This information should NOT be shared with anyone, inside or outside the Region, unless they are involved in the case. Only the relevant personnel need to be involved. The Designated Liaison Person will advise on "who needs to know" and who should have access to records.

While information about vulnerable persons is confidential, it may be disclosed to external agencies to ensure the care and safety of an individual or others or where a crime is suspected. This includes the disclosure of information to An Garda Síochána and the relevant HSE/HIQA Department for such purposes.

In normal circumstances observing the principle of confidentiality will mean that the information is passed on to others with the consent of the person concerned. However, it should be recognised that in order to safeguard vulnerable persons, it may be necessary, in some circumstances, to share information that might normally be regarded as confidential.



All vulnerable persons, and where appropriate, their carers or representatives need to be made aware that the operation of inter-agency procedures will, on occasion, require the sharing of information in order to safeguard a vulnerable person or others, or to investigate an alleged or suspected criminal offence.

## **Section 11 - Code of Conduct for Those who Minister to Vulnerable Persons**

When ministering to Vulnerable Persons it is critical that boundaries are respected and that appropriate work practices are established which always place the needs and well-being of the vulnerable person as the primary concern. Those carrying out ministries should have clearly defined codes of conduct. A balance needs to be struck between the right to protection and the need to allow appropriate interaction between an individual and his/her priest, lay minister or volunteer. It is important for all clergy, staff and volunteers to:

- Adhere to the protocols and guidelines of any organisation whose premises they are ministering within.
- Treat everyone equally with respect.
- Engage and interact appropriately with vulnerable persons.
- Be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties.
- Respect the dignity of each individual and their right to personal privacy.
- Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you may be discussing sensitive issues with vulnerable persons.
- Avoid situations that might compromise your ministry with vulnerable persons, and which are unacceptable within a relationship of trust. This rule should apply to all such behaviours including those which would constitute an illegal act.
- Respect the religious, cultural, racial and sexual orientation of the vulnerable person and be open to and aware of diversity in their beliefs and practices and those of their families.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Operate within Regional Guidelines.

The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours as follows.

Clergy, staff and volunteers must never:

- Physically or emotionally abuse or exploit a vulnerable person.
- Become involved in either using the vulnerable person's money on his/her behalf or in giving the vulnerable person advice in use of his/her money.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.

- Do things of a personal nature for a vulnerable person that he/she is capable of doing for his/herself or are the responsibility of their family or carer.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Discriminate against the person on the basis of religion, race, culture, sexual identity or sexual orientation.
- Form inappropriate relationships with vulnerable persons.
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable persons and their families.
- Photograph or video a vulnerable persons.

Clergy, staff and volunteers must be made aware of the Code in the expectation that they will act in accordance with it when exercising ministry to the vulnerable.

## **Section 12 -External Groups**

External/independent groups/organisations, seeking to hire or lease Society property to deliver their own service/activity involving vulnerable persons will be made aware of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Guidelines, but will also be expected to meet certain requirements before an agreement of lease or rental of property is made.

## **Section 13 - Access to Advice and Support**

### **Designated Liaison Person(s) Contact Detail:**

Sandra Neville. Tel: 087 9844779  
Fr Donal Hogan Tel: 046 9021525

### **HSE Contact Details for the Region:**

HSE Senior Case Workers are in place all over the country, to take reports of Elder Abuse and provide help. Contacts your local Senior Case Workers are below:

#### ***Meath***

Mr. Frank McHugh, HSE CHO Area 8, Meath, La Nua, Ashbourne Primary Care Centre, Declan St, Ashbourne, Co. Meath Tel: 01 6914632 Email: frank.mchugh1@hse.ie

#### ***HSE Information Line***

Monday to Saturday, 8am-8pm  
Call Save: Tel: 1850 24 1850  
Email: info@hse.ie

### **An Garda Siochana:**

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit  
Harcourt Square Dublin: Tel: 00353 1 666 3430.

Garda Confidential Service: Tel: 1800 666 111

**The Samaritans:** Tel: 1850 609090

**Towards Healing Freephone:** Tel: 1800 303416

"Towards Healing" is a private and confidential counselling and support service for survivors of institutional, clerical and religious abuse, funded by the Catholic Church in Ireland. The operational hours of the helpline are: Monday and Wednesday (11.00a.m.- 8.00p.m.) and Friday (1 1.00a.m.- 4.00p.m.). An answering machine service is available at all other times.

**Towards Peace:** Tel: 00353 1 5053028

"Towards Peace" offers spiritual support to victims/survivors of clerical abuse whose faith in God may have been affected by their experience. Following initial telephone contact, "Towards Peace" offers an opportunity to talk to a trained spiritual companion in a one-to-one setting and to explore questions and concerns about God, and to get in touch with God's presence in their lives.

## **Section 14 - Roles and Responsibilities**

A summary of the roles and responsibilities within the Regional Safeguarding Structure are listed below.

### **Regional Director.**

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the safeguarding mechanisms for protecting all vulnerable people and groups are firmly established and working across the Region.

### **Safeguarding Officer:**

Established to oversee the implementation of a safeguarding strategy and to ensure that arrangements are set up within the Region and is accountable to the Regional Director.

### **Designated Liaison Persons:**

The Designated Liaison Persons are responsible for managing and coordinating all allegations, suspicions and concerns of child and vulnerable person abuse within the Region. This involves referral to the statutory services, setting up multi-disciplinary strategy discussion meetings and the internal management of cases, including preparing information for the Safeguarding Committee, Professional Conduct Advisory Group, (when it is established).

## **Section 15 - Whistleblowing Policy.**

(Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for copy of this policy)

*Use of the Intermin Guidance on Safeguarding Adults, Diocese of Elphin in developing this document is acknowledged.*