

Portstewart Parish Safeguarding Committee

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Down and Connor Designated Officer

Ms Margaret Burke

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National Board for Safeguarding Children for the Catholic Church in Ireland

CEO Mrs Teresa Devlin

Telephone: 00353 1 505 3124 email: teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie

Useful Contacts

PSNI 101

Northern Health & Social Care Trust - Gateway Team 028 7032 5462

Northern Health & Social Care Trust Adult Contact Details:

NHSCT Adult Safeguarding Team (office hours) 028 9441 3659

Regional Emergency Social Work (out of hours) 028 9504 9999

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Towards Healing 08000 963 315



Portstewart Parish Diocese of Down and Connor Safeguarding Committee



KEEPING OUR PARISH SAFE



Safeguarding Policy for the Catholic Church in Ireland

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the parish recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing. We recognise each person as unique and a gift from God, and we value and encourage participation in all activities that enhance spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment which supports their best interests and prevents abuse. **Our church has a National Safeguarding Board which has seven safeguarding standards. For more information on these standards please check the website www.safeguarding.ie or look at the leaflet on the church notice boards.**

In the parish of Portstewart, safeguarding involves all of us; the Parish Priest, the Safeguarding Committee (PSC), volunteers and the entire Parish community. The welfare of our children, young people and adults at risk is of paramount importance in everything we do.

We warmly welcome and fully appreciate the contributions made by all those who volunteer, in whatever way and using whatever skills they have, to enhance the temporal and spiritual life of our parish.

What is the Parish Safeguarding Committee?

Portstewart PSC is a committee of volunteers set up within the Diocese of Down and Connor in 2005 to ensure that the key messages of safeguarding and best practice in relation to children and adults are in place at parish level. We are guided and advised in all we do by the Down and Connor Safeguarding Office.

What is the role of the Parish Safeguarding Committee?

The PSC exists to develop and promote 'best practice' when working with children, young people or adults at risk and to ensure all volunteers have access to appropriate information relating to safeguarding. We ensure that all volunteers are vetted and trained through the correct channels and provide ongoing support to parish groups.

It is not the role of the PSC to become involved in any investigation or assessment of suspicion, concerns, knowledge or allegations relating to child or adult safeguarding matters. This is the role of the statutory authorities and/or the Designated Liaison Person.

I want to volunteer in the Parish – what happens next?

In law, anyone who works with children or adults at risk and undertakes what is referred to as Regulated Activity, must consent to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure vetting check with Access NI. In our parish this process is carried out through **The Northern Dioceses Vetting Office, 120 Cliftonville Road, Belfast** which has been approved by the Northern Dioceses Bishops' Conference to carry out the administration work involved.

A volunteer may not commence their role until an Enhanced Disclosure vetting check has been completed and clearance has been granted in writing. The Northern Dioceses Bishops' Conference have a further requirement that anyone who offers their services as a volunteer with vulnerable groups must complete an Application form, Self-declaration form, Confirmation of Identity form and provide two character references. They must also complete an Access NI Enhanced Disclosure vetting check online. Volunteers are provided with a role description and a code of conduct specific to the role that they will be carrying out and all volunteers are obliged to attend specifically designed training relating to their role.

A member of the PSC will be able to guide you through the vetting process and will assist with the completion of documentation.

What do I do if I have a concern about someone at risk?

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

- The Diocesan Designated Liaison Officer (DLP)
- The Police (PSNI)
- Social Services
- NSPCC

The Diocese follows mandatory reporting to statutory authorities. Details of who to contact should you have a concern about a child, young person or adult at risk are displayed on the church noticeboard.

The **Diocesan Designated Officer** is Margaret Burke. The DLP role is to provide a service which receives and helps manage all allegations of child abuse brought to the attention of the Diocese. In Down and Connor the DLP is also the Adult Safeguarding Champion. If you are concerned about a child or adult safeguarding matter, you can report this to the DLP or go direct to Social Services/PSNI.

The **Diocese has a Whistle Blowing Policy** which can be found on the Down and Connor website.

All contact details may be found on the back of this leaflet.

Parish Complaints Procedure

This procedure only deals with non-safeguarding issues. Any complaint should be raised in the first instance with the leader of the group. If you feel you do not wish to discuss the matter or you deem your query to be more serious, a formal complaint should be submitted to the parish priest.

Where can I get more information about Safeguarding?

You will find a range of information and publications relating to safeguarding within the Church on the Diocese of Down and Connor website: www.downandconnorsafeguarding.com
the national website: www.safeguarding.ie
and on our parish website: www.portstewartparish.website

Members of the PSC are happy to talk to you about safeguarding and to answer any question you may have.