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Curial Office, 30 Lawside Rd. DUNDEE. DD3 6XY

## **Diocese of Dunkeld**

### **Annual Safeguarding Statement**

### **November 2022**

As with the previous two years, our parish communities have continued to be affected by the Covid 19 Pandemic throughout 2022. We have witnessed a very gradual reintroduction of ministries throughout the Diocese as we all begin to experience this new situation.

Despite this, the work of safeguarding within our diocese has continued to be prominent within parish and diocesan life.

In February, the Diocese was visited by auditors of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). The audit was part of the national audit of safeguarding standards within all the Diocese of Scotland to assess the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the McClellan Commission (2015). This audit was also intended to measure our compliance with the safeguarding standards as set out in 'In God's Image' our national safeguarding manual.

We were pleased to receive in June a very positive audit report highlighting a positive culture of safeguarding within our parishes and Diocese. Nevertheless, the report presented us with challenges to consider, none as important as to how we better reach out to those who have been abused within our Catholic communities.

Each year our Diocese is required to devise and present an action plan of safeguarding priorities to the Bishop's Conference of Scotland Safeguarding Service. This year, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor along with the Chair and members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group have worked hard to ensure that all the challenges presented by the audit report are referenced and developed within our plan as we move forward.

There has also been significant change nationally in the field of safeguarding with the establishment of the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA). The SCSSA was established as an independent Safeguarding agency to promote and assure compliance with national safeguarding standards across all Church jurisdictions in Scotland. Although still in its infancy and ongoing development, the Diocese of Dunkeld welcomes its establishment and looks forward to working closely with them to ensure its success. Crucially, part of the SCSSA's mandate is the formation of a forum in which those who have experienced abuse can contribute their own perspectives to the development of safeguarding work.

At parish level, we remain very grateful to all those who step forward to volunteer for our various ministries and thankful of their commitment and understanding of our safeguarding practices and procedures. In particular, we pay tribute to our Parish Safeguarding Coordinators for the tireless work they do supporting our parish priests in their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

As a diocese, we will always seek to uphold the highest safeguarding standards in our relationships with people of all ages who are involved in whatever capacity within the Church and its organisations. As a Diocese, we readily accept the responsibility to work together to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or harm.

As ever, a significant part of our commitment to Safeguarding, is our duty to remember those who have been harmed or abused by a member of the Church.

Therefore, may we take this opportunity to again reach out to those survivors of abuse. There is no time limit for those who have suffered to come forward and tell us of their experience of abuse. We are committed to offering the best support possible to anyone who seeks our help.

We ask that you continue to keep in your prayers all survivors of abuse as we pray for their healing and comfort.

The task of Safeguarding within our parishes, remains a vital element of our Diocesan life and the commitment to caring for each other and for others. On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group and with each priest of the Diocese, we remain grateful for all the hard work done by all our parish volunteers.



+Stephen Robson  
Bishop of Dunkeld  
*On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group*

If you are a survivor of abuse by someone within the Catholic Church and you want to find out what support is available, you can do so by contacting our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in confidence:

***Email: [safeguardingadvisor@dunkelldiocese.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingadvisor@dunkelldiocese.org.uk)***

***Tel: 01382 225453 (Option 5)***

***Address: Safeguarding Advisor, Diocese of Dunkeld, Curial Office, 30 Lawside Road, Dundee. DD3 6SB***

*The Catholic Church in Scotland has a mandatory reporting policy. This means that ALL allegations of abuse are reported to the Police, whether the accused is alive or deceased. Although all allegations are reported to the Police, you have the right to decide whether or not to engage with the Police at this stage.*

*If you wish to make a statement to the Police, or if you decide that you are unable to do so at the moment, Safeguarding personnel are still available to offer you support.*