



SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

in the Catholic Church in Scotland

March 2022

Praying for all who have experienced abuse

March 2022 saw the start of Lent, which is a time of repentance and renewed determination to make changes in our lives for the better.

In recent years, the Catholic Church in Scotland has observed a special **Day of Prayer** for those who have experienced abuse. In 2022, this day was observed on Friday 4th March, with resources being provided to encourage prayers in Mass and other services held in parish churches across Scotland.

These prayers recognised the “pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind and spirit”. They lamented the scars of abuse caused by those whose task it was to protect the vulnerable. They recognised that trust in the Church had been destroyed by scandal and hypocrisy. They asked for blessings on those who work to bring justice for all victims of abuse and to put in place the right measures to prevent abuse.

When Archbishop William Nolan was installed as the new Archbishop of Glasgow on 26th February 2022, his first words were to offer an apology to those who have been victims of abuse in the Church. He expressed his admiration for those survivors who have come forward and told their story:

“They have taken what has happened in the dark and brought it to light and therefore challenged us to face up to the reality of what has happened.”

Archbishop Nolan went on to say: *“We have to reach out to the victims and try to help them and we have to change our ways to ensure that what happened in the past does not happen again.”*

These words reflect the context for the establishment of the new independent Safeguarding agency being established by Lady Rae.

 Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Let us remember and pray for all those who have suffered abuse.

Day of Prayer

Friday 4th March 2022

As she works to appoint the agency's Board directors and staff who will oversee compliance with safeguarding standards, she is determined that the Church must learn from past failings and continue to improve safeguarding.

She appeals to anyone who has experienced abuse in the Church to contact her and to offer their thoughts on what the agency can do to improve safeguarding practice.

If you wish to offer your views on how Safeguarding can be improved, please email:

chair@scssa.org.uk

What did we learn from the 2021 Audit?

Every year, we check on the Safeguarding practice of every parish, diocese, religious congregation and Catholic organisation in Scotland, using standardised audit forms. This nation-wide exercise is intended to demonstrate how effectively the Church is growing a culture of care which respects, protects and nurtures the dignity of all people, keeps them safe and is compliant with legislation. Statistics relating to the numbers of allegations reported to the Church are published each year.

The annual audit exercise also prompts those responsible for safeguarding firstly to reflect on their current practice and then to plan actions that will lead to improved practice. Analyses of completed audits are used to inform the development of safeguarding at the local and national levels, including the provision of training courses and other resources. **So, what did we learn from the audits in 2021?**

CHURCH PEOPLE

IN PARISHES & DIOCESES

- **416** Clergy (priests & deacons) provided ministry in parishes
- **109** Priests from Religious Congregations provided ministry in parishes
- **93** Employees were involved in 'regulated work' (ie with children and/or vulnerable adults)
- **6,894** Volunteers were involved in 'regulated work'
- **1,022** people undertook training in 2021

IN RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

- **433** Congregation members reside in Scotland
- **200** of these members were involved in 'regulated work' (ie with children and/or vulnerable adults)
- **369** Employees were involved in 'regulated work'
- **81** Volunteers were involved in 'regulated work'
- **95** people undertook training in 2021

IN CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS

- **47** Employees were involved in 'regulated work' (ie with children and/or vulnerable adults)
- **552** Volunteers were involved in 'regulated work'
- **83** people undertook training in 2021

SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS 2021

The Catholic Church in Scotland has published the numbers of abuse allegations it has received dating back to 1943. Each year the Church publishes: the numbers of allegations received in the previous year, the type of abuse recorded, the year(s) in which the abuse took place and the outcome(s) of any criminal investigations, if known. These details for 2021 will be published on [the website of the Bishops' Conference](#).

Allegations reported to the Church in 2021 and referred to the statutory authorities:

19 WERE REPORTED TO DIOCESES

54 WERE REPORTED TO RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS¹

All allegations received are published as anonymised statistics. It is acknowledged, however, that each and every incidence of abuse represents a traumatic personal experience for the victim/survivor and his/her family.

¹ Of these 54 allegations, 41 were of non-recent abuse which were reported to one Religious Congregation by the legal representatives of victims/survivors.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

- Since March 2020 and the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, all submissions indicate a huge reduction in activities involving adults and children. It is only now - in early 2022 - that some activities are slowly being re-established.
- Where Church activities are underway, there is good awareness of the need to manage these well to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults.
- Safeguarding information and advice is provided through the display of posters, newsletters, leaflets and information provided in parish bulletins.
- Since the publication of IN GOD'S IMAGE v2 in September 2021, extensive efforts have been made to promote awareness of the updated text. It is well recognised that this must remain a priority as the provision of training begins to pick up in 2022.
- Even though training opportunities were restricted, there was some online and face-to-face training that enabled almost 1,200 people to participate.
- The annual Day of Prayer for those who have experienced abuse is being observed across dioceses and religious communities, although some churches were closed at the time of the 2021 Day of Prayer.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

- **PARISHES, RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS** and **CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS** should address any issues that they have identified for action in 2022.
- **DIOCESES** are drafting Safeguarding action plans, taking account of the information that has emerged from parish audits. These plans will identify: WHAT actions are required to address needs, WHO is responsible, and WHEN they should be completed.
- The **SCSSA BOARD**, at the start of its tenure, will consider the information that has emerged from the 2021 audits, as well as the Diocesan Action Plans. They will use all this data when agreeing the priorities for the new agency in the coming year. They will ensure that guidance is provided on specific issues, such as: a new tiered Safe Recruitment process to replace PVG checks for some; how to conduct Safeguarding Risk Assessments.
- The SCSSA will also begin to plan for the further refinement of the audit process for 2022.

Key messages from the 2021 Audit



It is encouraging to note that, throughout lockdown, priority was still given to responding to Safeguarding concerns reported in dioceses, parishes, and religious congregations.

As we adapt to “living with” COVID-19 and Church activities resume, with more people gathering together than in recent times, it is clear that **THE PRIORITY OF CHURCH SAFEGUARDING NEEDS TO BE REFRESHED** in everyone’s mind. It is vital that we all play our part in mitigating all risks of harm to children and vulnerable adults.

Some particular challenges, identified in the Audit, are highlighted below.

EVERYONE needs to remain vigilant, both to ensure that victims / survivors feel able to disclose allegations and to **LISTEN, RESPOND, RECORD and REFER**.

SUPPORTING Victims / Survivors has been difficult when face-to-face meetings haven’t always been possible. Accessing independent Counselling support for victims / survivors has proven difficult in some parts of the country.

Some parishes and religious congregations report that they can struggle as they attempt to **recruit new safeguarding co-ordinators** to ensure that Church people, places and activities are as safe as they can be.

Very many **new volunteers need to be safely recruited**, and **PVG**-checked if they are to be working with children or vulnerable adults.

Until reforms are confirmed by Disclosure Scotland, the **existing Safe Recruitment processes** for volunteers, including **PVG** checks, should be followed.



Safeguarding training is needed by volunteers, clergy and religious, in particular to ensure a good working knowledge of the requirements set out in the 8 national safeguarding standards of ‘In God’s Image v2’.

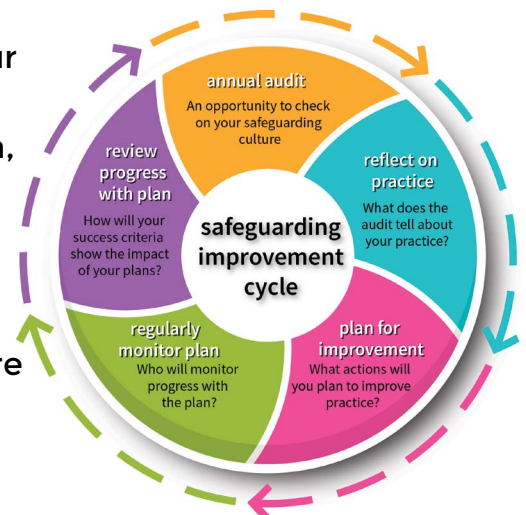
New trainers need to be recruited and trained in some dioceses so that they can deliver training that is effective.

While some initial training has been provided for **Support Persons** who manage respondents to allegations, more people need to be identified to take on this role and additional training is required.

Much interest has been expressed in having **access to online training** in some aspects of Safeguarding to make it more accessible.

HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR AUDIT TO IMPROVE SAFEGUARDING?

- ❑ **Reflect** on what your completed audit tells you about your Safeguarding practice.
- ❑ **Discuss** with others (in your parish, religious congregation, organisation, diocese) what is working well and what needs to improve.
- ❑ **Plan** the improvements that you want to see - **WHAT? WHO? WHEN?**
- ❑ **Monitor and review** how your plan is progressing to ensure that actions are having the impact you want.
- ❑ **Communicate** with others what you are doing.



Latest Safeguarding News

SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS AGENCY

In recent weeks, there has been a great deal of activity as preparations are made to establish the new agency that will oversee Safeguarding practice in the Church in Scotland.

RECRUITING BOARD MEMBERS

Many excellent candidates have come forward to express an interest in serving as Directors on the Board of the SCSSA. With the involvement of the recruitment agency *Aspen People*, all these applicants have been carefully considered in terms of the experience and skills they could bring to the work of the agency. Interviews have been held over a 3-week period to allow Lady Rae to find a balanced group of people who will assist her in her work. She hopes to announce the members of the Board in early April. Lady Rae commented, *"I have been greatly impressed by the calibre of so many who have shown an interest in the work of the agency. I am grateful to all those who have come forward to offer assistance."*

PREPARING THE GROUNDWORK

Preliminary work is being done to register the agency with Companies House as a private company limited by guarantee. The company's *Articles of Association* will authorise the Directors to manage the business of the agency with full independent authority.

A number of documents are being prepared to enable the Board to commence work as soon as possible. Among those papers are recruitment packs that will be used to advertise the full time posts of *Director of Safeguarding* and *Head of Training* as soon as possible.

MAKING CONTACT WITH PEOPLE

In recent weeks, Lady Rae has been meeting with various groups and individuals who are involved with Safeguarding in the Church. She is planning that, when the Agency Board is in place, its members will also meet a range of people across Scotland to listen to their views on how the SCSSA can help.

SCSSA PLANNING MILESTONES

APPOINTING THE SCSSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 14th - 30th March - Interviews take place
- w/b 4th April - Lady Rae announces appointments
- May & June - Training days for SCSSA Board

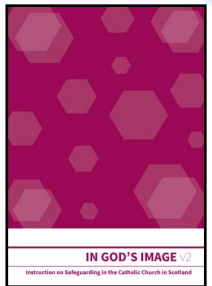
APPOINTING THE SCSSA STAFF

- in May - 2 full time posts advertised
- in June - Director of Safeguarding appointed
- in August - Head of Training appointed

Introducing In God's Image v2

A good way to become familiar with the contents of IGIv2 is to watch this video which lasts 18 minutes:

<https://youtu.be/eXhMwC15MIk>



INDEPENDENT DIOCESAN AUDITS

In addition to the Church's own annual audit exercise, independent audits of Safeguarding in all 8 Scottish Dioceses have been commissioned from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

The SCIE Audit Reports which have already been published can be accessed using the links below:

- [Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh](#)
- [Diocese of Galloway](#)
- [Diocese of Aberdeen](#)
- [Diocese of Motherwell.](#)

Independent audits of the remaining 4 dioceses have been scheduled to be completed by September 2022. Reports on these audits will also be published.



NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

for all involved in Church Safeguarding

You can participate in person or virtually.

SATURDAY 1st OCTOBER 2022

Details of how to register available soon.