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## **Safeguarding Newsletter, Irish Province**

**Issue 2: May/June 2023**

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### Opening Reflection



#### **A Blessing**

*May the light of your soul guide you.  
May the light of your soul bless the work  
you do with the secret love and warmth of  
your heart.*

*May you see in what you do, the beauty of  
your own soul.*

*May the sacredness of your work bring  
healing, light and renewal to those who  
work with you and receive your work.*

*May your work never weary you.*

*May it release within you, wellsprings of  
refreshment, inspiration, and excitement.*

*May you be present in what you do.*

*John O'Donohue – (Anam Cara)*

### Safeguarding Committee Members

#### **Chairperson**

Avril Halley

#### **Committee Members**

Sr. Cait O'Leary, Province Leader

Avril Halley, DLP

Sr. Evelyn Fergus, Deputy DLP

Catherine Condon, CEO Beechlawn

The Safeguarding Committee met on four occasions during 2022 and have met twice this year.

The work of the Committee continues, and a number of required tasks are completed, and/or ongoing as follows:

- Self-Audit and Annual Report for 2022 in process.
- Development of an Interim Respect & Dignity Policy and Mediation Policy for the sisters.
- Training sessions rolled out in the communities and with our staff, including the newly developed Adults at Risk Policy.
- Ongoing training and review of our International Safeguarding Policy.
- Review of case files by DLP.
- Continued involvement with Statutory Inquiries.

## Training

Sisters appreciated the training sessions offered as it gave an opportunity to reflect and refresh on Safeguarding as it applies to us today. As we no longer have direct ministries to children, it reminded us to be aware of our informal/formal contacts with children and our role as mandated persons. Sharing on the recently developed Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse Policy, highlighted the many different areas of abuse that may occur and our responsibility in reporting it.

### Safeguarding at Congregational Level

The Congregational Safeguarding Policy review has been completed. Training in light of this Policy is being rolled out by the International Safeguarding Committee in person.

We attended the training in Angers at the end of March with the Circle of Europe Units and a representative from Burkino Faso and Angola-Mozambique.

#### **A personal view of my visit to Angers – Avril Halley:**

*'We were greeted with rain and wind as we arrived in Nantes at the end of March as we travelled to the Mother House of The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in Angers.*

*Sr. Cait and Sr. Evelyn were my companions on the journey. We were there to attend the Safeguarding Workshop for Province Leaders and their safeguarding personnel.*

*Each evening at dinner, I felt privileged to listen to wonderful stories of lived experiences by Sisters who had come from various congregations across many parts of the world. I was humbled as story after story I heard of all the good work that has taken place since 1835 and continues to this day in 73 countries.'*

*"Nothing is impossible to one who loves" – St Mary Euphrasia.*

We will now review our own Safeguarding Policy & Procedures with a view to complying with the Congregational Policy, keeping in mind our own Statutory/National Board requirements.

The Congregational Reporting Requirements:

- ❖ All Child and Adult Protection Concerns within the Province will be dealt with by Sr. Cait O'Leary with the assistance of Avril Halley DLP (Designated Liaison Person).
- ❖ As part of the Congregational Policy the Congregational Safeguarding Advisor; Sandra Neville will be notified of all reports by the Province Leader or the DLP.
- ❖ Sandra will communicate this report to the Congregational Safeguarding Committee and the Congregational Leader.

### News Board Items

- ❖ The NBSCCCI completed their report on an Adult Safeguarding Policy. This report has been forwarded to AMRI & the Bishops Conference and are now awaiting their feedback and recommendations. When approved, if necessary, we will adjust our Respect & Dignity Policy accordingly.
- ❖ To access the National Board's report please contact David Rose in AMRI
- ❖ The 2016 Safeguarding Children, Policy, and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, is presently under review, leading to a Revised Policy.

## Supports for Survivors / Complainants



**Towards Peace** is a service offering spiritual support for anybody who has been abused, physically, emotionally, sexually, or spiritually in a religious / church environment. It is a pathway, a safe space where people who have been hurt can connect with their own spirituality, their sense of God and their own journey Towards Peace.

The service is free and is also available to the families of those who have been affected.

Contact their office on 01 5053028 or 086 7710533.

Opening hours:

Monday and Tuesday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

Wednesday, 9.00am – 12.00 noon

Website: [www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)

Email: [towardspeace@iecon.ie](mailto:towardspeace@iecon.ie)

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**Towards Healing** is a Counselling and Support Service for Survivors of Institutional, Clerical and Religious abuse, funded by the Catholic Church.

It provides services to clients regardless of where they currently live.

Contact their Helpline on 1800 303416 (R o I) / 0800 0963315 (NI and UK)

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Website: [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

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### **Northern Ireland Victim and Survivors Service (VSS)**

This was commissioned by the NI Executive to provide specialist support services to survivors and their families. Institutions and Congregations involved in the Redress Scheme are requested to contribute to the costs of the service.

Tel: 0044 28 9027 9100

Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Website: [www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org)





If you have a child protection concern, please contact:

**Avril Halley**

Designated Liaison Person

Email: [dlp@rgs.ie](mailto:dlp@rgs.ie)

Mobile: 086 1721736

*You can report your concern(s) directly to:*

Án Garda Síochána Helpline:

Tel: 1800 555 222

**TUSLA** (Child and Family Agency):

General Enquiries Tel: 01 7718500

Website: [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**Or**

Tusla local Social Work Department

(Details on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie))