



Bishops' Conference of Scotland
NATIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

**Awareness & Safety
in our Catholic
Communities**

**Issue 1
December 2006**

Welcome to the first edition of '***Awareness & Safety in our Catholic Communities***', the National Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults' news-letter for the people of the Catholic community in Scotland.

This edition features our work with the eight Dioceses and associated organisations in providing national policies to ensure ***awareness and safety*** in our Church activities. There is also an update on useful contact numbers.

We hope that this edition will be the first of many with everyone taking away a little piece of inspiration, information and a sense of community desire to ensure that all those who are vulnerable should be fully protected by the policies adopted by the Church.

Since taking up post as National Co-ordinator in April 2005, I have had a huge number and variety of issues brought to my attention - Bishops, clergy, religious and all those members of the diocesan teams including the many volunteers, have all asked for help in addressing the difficulties they face when working with others to protect children, young people, vulnerable adults and all those who undertake a role within the Church.

Clearly, while, there are many issues needing to be addressed it make sense to identify policy priorities. The issue of 'Disclosure' checks has been the focus of much work and resources over the last year.

The Bishops' Conference of Scotland approved the 'Disclosure Policy' in October 2005.

The recruitment process now takes account of the legal requirements of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003.

The policy development agenda builds on the considerable work undertaken on safe recruitment and selection procedures.

A new manual 'Awareness and Safety in our Catholic Communities' will provide a set of policies for all clergy, religious, paid and voluntary members of staff, parishes, dioceses and associated organisations in the care, welfare and protection of all vulnerable groups.

This 'Awareness and Safety' document should be used as a benchmark of requirements to provide a consistent, transparent and structured approach to safeguarding matters.

This document expresses the commitment of the Church to good practice in this area, including the development of structures for safeguarding groups, for responding to concerns or allegations of abuse and providing pastoral support and training.

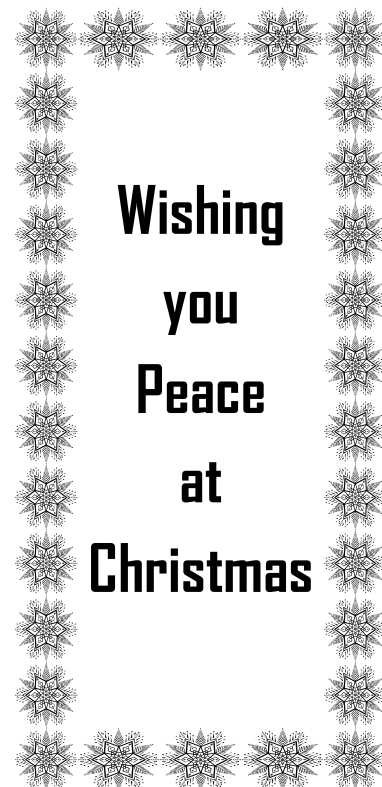
Following a presentation given by myself to The Bishops' Conference of Scotland in November, the first four sections of the document were fully endorsed. This will prove to be a significant contribution to thinking and practice.

It is intended that the new document will be issued in 2007.

**Jackie McCaig
National Co-ordinator**

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**Wishing
you
Peace
at
Christmas**



RECRUITMENT POLICY

Without volunteers, the Church's work among children and vulnerable adults would not be possible.

To demonstrate that the work of volunteers with vulnerable groups is valued highly. The Catholic Church operates a robust recruitment procedure.

- **An application form has to be completed.**
- **References have to be taken up.**
- **A Job Description has to be agreed including who you report to.**
- **An interview takes place.**
- **A Self Declaration Form has to be completed.**
- **A Disclosure Check must be included in the process.**

Volunteers should receive a Summary of Good Practice.

A Code of Good Practice

helps ensure that:

- ***we undertake to do all in our power to create a safe environment for all;***
- ***we appoint only those people who are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.***
- ***we know what to do if we have concerns about a child's/vulnerable persons' safety.***

The Code helps everyone to feel supported in their work.

The Church must demonstrate that it takes the care and protection of vulnerable groups and its workers seriously.

We have recently written to all parishes asking them to audit and review whether more work needs to be done to complete the recruitment process for their respective parishes.

Four categories of parishes exist:-

- ***those who appear to have been processing all volunteers as per the policy;***
- ***those who have completed many applications initially but need to review to see if anybody has been missed;***
- ***those who have processed a few applications with likely numbers outstanding;***
- ***the number of parishes who appear to have done very little.***

A gentle reminder and encouragement to all parishes if you could address your parish recruitment process.

A big thank you to all those who are currently working towards processing volunteers as per policy and to all of our Parish Co-ordinators for giving their time and service to this important area of parish life.

Jackie McCaig
National Co-ordinator

Training Update

We have begun a new development in this area '**Training for Trainers**'.

A core group has come together to look at how we can improve communication and training in each of the Dioceses. In policy matters, whether 'Disclosure' matters, basic child protection awareness and safety training, responding to allegations, training and general issues of working as a Parish Co-ordinator.

Initially, we began our involvement in St. Andrew's and Edinburgh. In Argyll & the Isles a resource pack was developed with current up to date information and it has been launched in the Dioceses of Galloway and Aberdeen. Those who attended said that the programme made them feel more confident about their role and about delivering training to others.

Jackie McCaig
National Co-ordinator



REPORT ON NATIONAL GATHERING All People Come to the Same Door'

*held on Saturday 9th September 2006,
in St. Mirin's Cathedral Hall, Paisley*

The National Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, in collaboration with the National Commission for Pastoral and Social Care, had pleasure in inviting over 100 delegates to participate in a National Gathering held at St. Mirin's, Cathedral Hall, Paisley (10:30 a.m. and closing at 3:00 p.m.).

This opportunity is to be part of a continuing programme to bring together key representatives from the Church to explore specifically the needs of vulnerable adults within the Church in Scotland. There are several crucial features of this journey of exploration and this session allowed us to look at our role and responsibilities in relation to best practice in our work in protecting adults in our communities.

This particular Gathering aimed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and good practice. Participants were provided with tools to support them in carrying out this work.

Representatives from the National Group for Vulnerable Adults facilitated the Gathering.

We allowed places for Diocesan/ Religious representation as well as personnel from associated organisations. The total number of participants, including Bishop Cunningham, our President, and Bishop Tartaglia, who welcomed us to his Diocese, was 76.

A detailed programme was sent prior to the day. Participants benefited from an activity, a real situation which allowed us to begin to feel the experience of vulnerability. We watched, we listened and shared our feelings with others.

After lunch, a presentation, which focused on our duty to respond and take steps to provide a safe environment to protect these we support, was given.

Resources used during afternoon sessions aimed to equip the delegates with key knowledge needed to address issues of care, welfare and protection.

A wide range of illustrative exercises were used throughout the day to allow, during this first national event, an opportunity for us to come together, share experiences and go away as thinking people.

*"an
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Jackie McCaig
National Co-ordinator



Notes from the Archdiocese of St. Andrew's & Edinburgh

Confidentiality Issues

Declaration Forms

As laid down in the "Keeping Children Safe" manual, all volunteers before commencing work in their parishes should go through the interview and recruitment process. Part of that process is the completion of an Application Form which includes a Declaration Form.

On this Declaration Form the volunteer is required to disclose very confidential information which should only be seen by members of the Diocesan staff.

It is important therefore that volunteers should be asked to complete these forms in private and once completed the form should be put into a sealed envelope and sent to the Diocesan office either directly or through the Parish Co-ordinator.

Disclosure Scotland Forms

Some difficulties have been experienced due to Disclosure Scotland checks being done for volunteers who have not completed Diocesan Forms. There may be a misunderstanding that Disclosure Scotland checks are completed in place of the Diocesan Declaration Form. This is not the case; Disclosure Scotland checks should be done in conjunction with Diocesan Forms as part of the interview and recruitment process as mentioned above.

Liz Carty
Team Leader Parish Support Services
St. Andrew's & Edinburgh

Parish Co-ordinator Support Group Sessions

Unfortunately over the last year or two, Support Group Sessions for Parish Co-ordinators have fallen by the wayside. It is the intention of the Archdiocese to start these sessions up again in 2007. Letters will be sent out to everyone informing them of dates and venues.

Training

There will be some changes made in the 2007 to the Training Pack used at present by our Archdiocesan Trainers. A Training for Trainers session will be held on 20th January 2007 and all trainers will be invited along.

If parishes require training to be done please contact the Diocesan Office and this will be arranged. Some parishes are still awaiting training, these training sessions will be organised as soon as possible in the New Year.

Liz Carty
Team Leader Parish Support Services
St. Andrew's & Edinburgh



Notes from the Diocese of Dunkeld

The activities in the Diocese are promoted by the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Team and currently include:

Vetting

Diocesan staff administer all Vetting and Disclosure matters in relation to those with access to Children. Recently this been extended to volunteers working with Adults at Risk. In the event that these checks report some trace on the applicant a risk assessment procedure is undertaken to prevent foreseeable risk to vulnerable individuals.

Training

Training for Trainers is being undertaken to cascade awareness courses, training and appropriate "welcome" guidance for volunteers who have yet to attend a course.

Seminar

A seminar to focusing on differing aspects of child protection and exploitation is being arranged for 2007.

Bill Spence
Adviser to the Bishop

**ADVICE OR
ASSISTANCE**

**CONTACTING THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Any questions or queries relating to Child Protection/ Vulnerable Adult issues should be addressed in the first instance to your Diocesan Office.

(See Contact details on page 6.)

The National Co-ordinator will be pleased to answer your questions and to discuss your specific requirements in relation to workshops, deanery meetings and road shows.



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USEFUL CONTACTS

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The Diocesan Child Protection Adviser
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Bishop's House
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The Diocesan Child Protection Adviser
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Diocesan Centre
Cathedral Precincts
Incle Street
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PA1 1HR

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E-mail; childprotectionAdviser@ntlworld.com

**If writing to the National Co-ordinator and/or Diocesan Advisers,
please mark envelope 'Private & Confidential'**

