



# DIOCESE OF DOWN & CONNOR



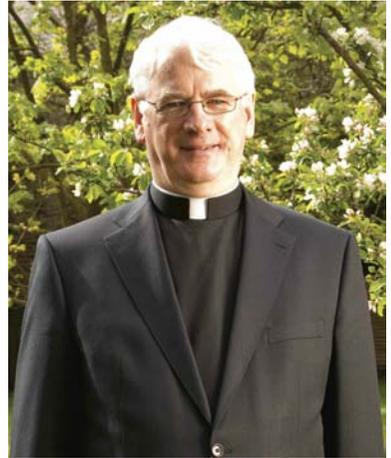
working together  
to safeguard children  
and young people

BEST PRACTICE IN SAFEGUARDING AND  
PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND THE ADULTS WHO WORK WITH THEM

# DIOCESE OF DOWN AND CONNOR



1. Portstewart
2. Coleraine
3. Portrush
4. Ballintoy
5. Ballycastle (Ramoan)
6. Culfeightrin
7. Ballymoney & Derrykeighan
8. Armoyn
9. Cushendun
10. Loughguile
11. Rasharkin
12. Dunloy & Cloughmills
13. Glenravel (Skerry)
14. Cushendall (Layde)
15. Glenariff
16. Portglenone
17. Ahoghill
18. Ballymena (Kirkinriola)
19. Braid
20. Carnlough
21. Glenarm (Tickmacreevan)
22. Duneane
23. Randalstown (Drumaul)
24. Antrim (St Joseph's)
25. Antrim (St Comgall's)
26. Ballyclare & Ballygowan
27. Larne
28. Carrickfergus
29. Glenavy & Killead
30. Belfast (City)
31. Holywood
32. Bangor
33. Newtownards & Comber
34. Aghagallon & Ballinderry
35. Lisburn (Blaris)
36. Saintfield & Carrickmannon
37. Kircubbin (Ardkeen)
38. Crossgar (Kilmore)
39. Killyleagh
40. Ballygalget
41. Portaferry (Ballyphillip)
42. Drumaroad
43. Loughinisland
44. Downpatrick
45. Saul & Ballee
46. Strangford (Kilclief)
47. Castlewelling (Kilmegan)
48. Dundrum & Tyrella
49. Killough (Bright)
50. Dunsford & Ardglass
51. Kilcoo
52. Newcastle
53. Lower Mourne
54. Upper Mourne (Kilkeel)



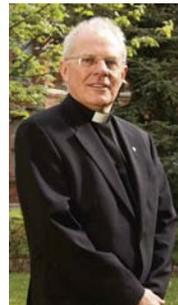
The Most Reverend  
**Noel Treanor**  
Bishop of Down and Connor



The Most Reverend  
**Donal McKeown**  
Auxiliary Bishop



The Most Reverend  
**Anthony Farquhar**  
Auxiliary Bishop



The Very Reverend  
**John McManus**  
Chancellor

# F O R E W O R D

My dear parishioners,

The safeguarding and protection of children is everybody's responsibility. We all share this responsibility and we need to play our part actively. I share this responsibility with you as Bishop of our Diocese. Making sure that our children's experience of the Church is both positive and edifying, must be our aim at all times. Let us ensure that all gatherings of Christians are settings in which children come to know the meaning and joy of the Gospel.

To our profound horror, regret and shame, the Church has not adequately fulfilled this responsibility in the past. The events of the last thirty years here on the island of Ireland highlight clearly and painfully the tragic reality that the Church has not always acted responsibly and dutifully to protect children and young people. Consequently, numerous children and young people were abused, maltreated and disregarded by those in the Church who were responsible for their care and well being.

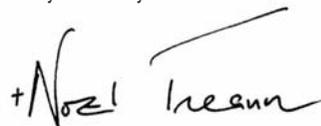
In other words the Church failed those children and young people and did not act in their best interests.

All Catholics - bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful - have a particular responsibility to learn of and recognise the deep wrong that has been done to those who were abused, to share their pain and to help in their healing. We need to show them that the whole Church community is appalled by what has happened to them. We must make it clear that we wish to listen, to understand and to respond as a whole Church community in the most practical ways we can.

It is therefore with hope and trust that I present to you this timely information booklet "Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People". Its aim is to make you aware of the work which has taken place and continues to develop in relation to safeguarding children and young people in all parishes throughout the Diocese of Down and Connor.

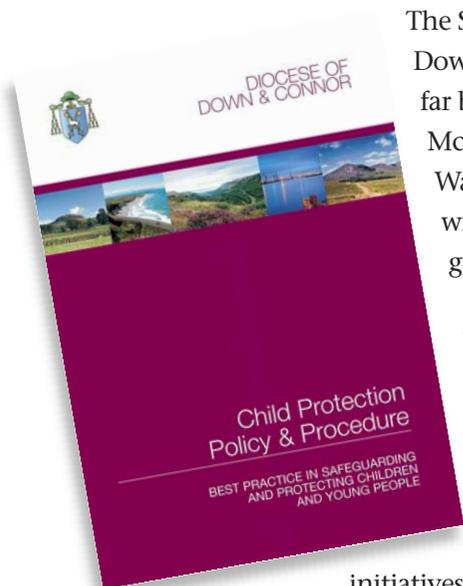
I take this opportunity to thank the Safeguarding Committees, the Safeguarding Office, and in particular the volunteers, who give so generously of their time, their skills and sense of community, to create safe environments within the Church for children to pray, meet, play and grow in faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

May the work, initiatives and structures presented in this booklet give us courage and hope to engage in promoting the safety of children for the good of the Church and therefore also for the good of society. May God bless us in our work. May the Holy Spirit guide us to ensure that children and young people may never again experience the hurt and pain suffered by so many.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Noel Treanor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

May 2010

# The development of safeguarding practices in the Diocese of Down and Connor

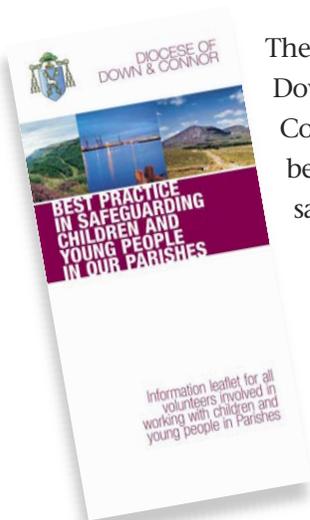


The Safeguarding Office for the Diocese of Down and Connor was initially developed as far back as 2003. Monsignor Colm McCaughan, at the request of Bishop Walsh, was tasked with making contact with the statutory sector for advice and guidance for the Diocese.

Up until this time the Catholic Church in Ireland had experienced a number of high profile allegations of child sexual abuse by members of the clergy. The Conference of Irish Bishops had commissioned several significant initiatives to address safeguarding children within the Catholic Church throughout Ireland which eventually culminated in the introduction of an all Ireland, one Church Policy and Procedures for Child Protection, known as “Our Children, Our Church”(2005). One of the recommendations of “Our Children, Our Church” was the introduction of a new National Board for Safeguarding Children for the Catholic Church and subsequently, the development of the National Safeguarding Office in 2006. By January 2009, the National Board for Safeguarding Children introduced the “Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland”. The seven standards contained in this document are designed to help Church organisations keep children safe. We have been inspired by the introduction of these standards and the Safeguarding Office of the Diocese of Down and Connor is working to implement these.

In parallel to these events in Ireland, Lord Nolan, in his report “A Programme for Action” 2001 in England, also made a number of recommendations for the Catholic Church in England and Wales regarding the issue of safeguarding children and referred to the importance of having a clear structure at parish level for managing this. We took this into consideration in developing our structures.

By 2003, within the Diocese of Down and Connor, the structures for managing safeguarding were established and we saw the introduction of new Child Care Committees (CCCs) and Vicariate Support Teams (VSTs). The ethos behind the establishment of CCCs was to ensure that parishes were engaged in the promotion of safe child care practices in all parish related activities involving children and young people, with a shared responsibility between priests and laity.



The Diocese of Down and Connor has been operating the same safeguarding structure since 2003.

# Key safeguarding initiatives by the Catholic Church in Ireland

- 1994** Irish Catholic Bishops' Advisory Committee on Child Sexual Abuse by Priests and Religious - 1996 Publication of Child Sexual Abuse: Framework for a Church Response (Green Book).
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- 1997** National Resource Group established.
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- 1999** Bishops' Committee on Child Abuse established under Bishop Eamonn Walsh.
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- 2001** The Royal College of Surgeons commissioned to carry out research on the impact of clerical sexual abuse on victims, perpetrators, colleagues, parishes and the wider community. The results were published in the "Time to Listen" document in December 2003.
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- 2001** The Child Protection Office of the Irish Bishops established.
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- 2002** Nationwide independent audit into the handling of all complaints of child sexual abuse by diocesan priests/religious as far back as 1940.
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- 2003** Establishment of the The Working Group on Child Protection, chaired by Maureen Lynott, by Bishop's Conference, the Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI) and the Irish Missionary Union (IMU) to develop a child protection policy document for the Irish Catholic Church.
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- 2003** Publication of "Time to Listen".
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- 2004** Bishops' Child Protection Office commences its national Training Initiative to train Child Protection trainers.
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- 2005** Publication of "Our Children - Our Church: Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland (OCOC).
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- 2006** National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland established (through OCOC) to provide advice in best practice as well as monitoring the safeguarding of children in the Catholic Church.
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- 2009** Publication of "Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland" produced by the National Board for Safeguarding Children.



**“All young people need to feel safe and know that the awful things that have happened in the past won’t happen to them”**

**a parish youth club member**



**“I feel the guidelines in the Down and Connor policy for reporting concerns and worries about children’s safety are very clear and manageable. The role of the Designated Officer is well defined and reassuring”**

**a participant having attended a training session**

# Key safeguarding initiatives by the Diocese of Down and Connor

- 1993** Monsignor MaCaughan identified as Diocesan Delegate by Bishop Walsh to be responsible for managing allegations of abuse.
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- 1995** Following the publication of “Child Sexual abuse: Framework for a Church response”, a working committee established to oversee the requirements of the Framework in collaboration with representatives from Armagh and Dromore Dioceses.
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- 1997** The Diocesan Advisory Panel is established in compliance with the Framework document.
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- 2000** Monsignor McCaughan approached Social Services to assist the Diocese in drafting a Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
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- 2002** The Diocesan Interim Child Protection Policy is established as a working document.
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- 2003** Barbara McDermott appointed as Child Protection Co-ordinator to develop and devise a structure within the Diocese to implement the policy.
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- 2005** The creation of Child Care Committees in each of the 88 parishes and the introduction of 12 Vicariate Support Teams.
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- 2005** The initial strategy for the training of Child Care Committees and Vicariate Support Teams across the Diocese began and was completed by 2007.
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- 2007** The Diocese of Down and Connor, on behalf of the 6 Dioceses in the North of Ireland, developed and co-ordinated the New Northern Dioceses Vetting Office.
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- 2008** Launch of the revised Diocese of Down and Connor Child Protection Policy and Procedures by Bishop Walsh including supporting materials.
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- 2008** Diocesan Safeguarding Management Committee restructured and the role of Diocesan Delegate transferred to the Safeguarding Office.
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- 2009** Diocesan Safeguarding Office restructured with 3 new posts: Director for Safeguarding, Training and Development Consultant and Vetting Officer.
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- 2010** Revision and update of diocesan safeguarding training materials.

# The Safeguarding Office

*The Safeguarding Office was formally established to co-ordinate and build upon the existing good work of safeguarding that had already taken place throughout the Diocese. The office now has three professional staff and three clerical support staff.*

## **Barbara McDermott**

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Barbara is the Director for Safeguarding for the Diocese, acting in a line management capacity for the office staff as well as undertaking the duties of the Diocesan Designated Officer whose role is to receive and manage all allegations of abuse.

Barbara is a professionally qualified social worker with 23 years experience in the field of child protection work with the statutory sector. Her role is to develop and oversee the implementation of safeguarding practices for the Diocese and to liaise with the statutory agencies in relation to the management of cases and the development of best practice.

## **Jim Tracey**

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Jim provides training and development for all safeguarding aspects within the Diocese. His key responsibility is to manage and support the diocesan Child Care Committees and the Vicariate Support Teams. This involves both practical tasks of responding to requests for information and advice and the development and delivery of training to a wide range of groups. Training in safe practices and raising awareness of child protection is central to the safeguarding work of the Diocese.

A former employee of the NSPCC and professionally qualified social worker of 23 years, Jim works full time for the Diocese.



**“Thinking about safeguarding children means taking the time to make some practical changes, for example I decided that the doors in our parish office and pastoral centre should have windows put into them. This creates an openness in the buildings and reduces the opportunity for adults and children to be behind closed doors”**

**a parish priest**

## **Andy Thomson**

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Andy is a retired civil servant with experience in the field of managing and sharing of information. He was a founding member of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults vetting system for Northern Ireland and subsequently General Manager of Access NI. Given his skills and background his role is to manage the vetting and barring arrangements for the six Northern Dioceses and is accountable to the Northern Bishops. He works closely with and on behalf of the Diocesan Representatives from the other five Northern Dioceses. Andy also acts as a Designated Officer with Barbara.

He is currently involved in establishing protocols with Public Protection Arrangements for N.I. (PPANI) for offenders wishing to return to faith. Andy works part time.



The Safeguarding Office staff are (from left to right) Andy Thomson, Jim Tracey, Barbara McDermott, Mary Foy, Natalie Gallagher and Marie-Thérèse Higgins

# Volunteer support across the diocese

*Over the years the Diocese has been fortunate enough to have had a significant number of trained parish volunteers who have willingly and generously given their time and experience to help build robust safeguarding structures throughout the Diocese. At parish level there are two sets of committees who help deliver and maintain safeguarding practices, our Child Care Committees and our Vicariate Support teams. A total of 500 parish volunteers support these two Diocesan structures. Other volunteer support is provided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and the Advisory Panel.*

## **Child Care Committees (CCCs)**

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In order to ensure that the key safeguarding messages and best practice in child protection are in place at parish level, CCCs were created throughout all of our 88 diocesan parishes. The main role of these newly created CCCs (between 5-8 members) was to identify who in the parish works along side children and young people and which of our volunteers require to be both vetted and trained. The Diocese has made a strong commitment to support parish volunteers in their work by offering training and the development of best practice guidelines. Keeping volunteers safe and up to date with best practice, keeps children and young people safe in their parish activities. In total some 480 volunteers make up our strong 78 CCCs. These committees have clearly defined roles and functions and receive advice guidance and support to carry out their vital role.

## **Vicariate Support Teams (VSTs)**

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Another addition to the diocesan safeguarding structure was the creation of 12 Vicariate Support Teams. Again these teams (of between 2-5 members) are made up of parish volunteers who willingly give their time to deliver training (which is referred to as the Parish Information Session). The VSTs link with the CCCs to identify who in the parish needs to attend these Parish Information Sessions.

The sessions are in essence a 2½ hour awareness training programme designed to share with participants the key messages from the Diocese of Down and Connor Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

During a recent national evaluation of current church training programmes for volunteers, the Down and Connor Parish Information Session was deemed to be a “straight forward fit for purpose training programme.”

*It is important to recognise that the Diocese of Down and Connor safeguarding parish structures comprise of some 500 volunteers who themselves are vetted and trained. These dedicated volunteers maintain a unique and robust safeguarding structure designed to ensure that best practice is driven and maintained at parish level where children and young people participate in parish activities.*





Some of our trained volunteers who contribute to the safeguarding work undertaken across the Diocese

**“At the start I found the process cumbersome and a bit over the top, but now I see how it is important to have clear structures in place and knowing who you can go to if you are worried about bad practice with children”**

**a parish sacristan**

## **Diocesan Safeguarding Committee**

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Overseeing safeguarding practices in relation to training, safe recruitment and the development of best practice is the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. This committee comprises a number of professionals who meet regularly to review the work of the Safeguarding Office. Their advice and support is invaluable in assisting with the development and implementation of the diocesan strategy for safeguarding. The role of the committee is not in anyway related to the management of individual cases of suspected or alleged abuse. The Diocese has an Advisory Panel created to carry out this role.



Members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee including the Safeguarding Office staff

## **Advisory Panel**

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The Diocese has a strong team of professionals who meet as required to provide expertise and advice to the Bishop regarding the management of allegations.

**“As a young person,  
I feel confident  
that parish activities  
are now closely  
monitored”**

**a young female parishioner**



## prevention

### in place in our Diocese

- Policies and Procedures (Standards and Guidance document)
- Recruitment and selection procedures
- Vetting and barring arrangements
- Training, advice and support

## safeguarding structures

### in place in our Diocese

- Safeguarding Office
- Safeguarding Committee
- CCC
- VST
- Advisory panel
- Designated Officers
- Northern Diocese Office for Vetting and Barring

# The elements for protecting children and young people in the Diocese

### still to do in our Diocese

- Develop young peoples' participation in safeguarding practice
- New training materials
- Annual training calendar
- Monitoring standards of practice

### still to do in our Diocese

- Develop joint initiatives with youth ministries within the Diocese

# managing allegations

## in place in our Diocese

- Designated officers
- Advisory panel
- Working in partnership with PSNI and Social Services
- Memorandum of Understanding with Public Protection Arrangements for N.I.
- Liaison with the National Board for Safeguarding Children

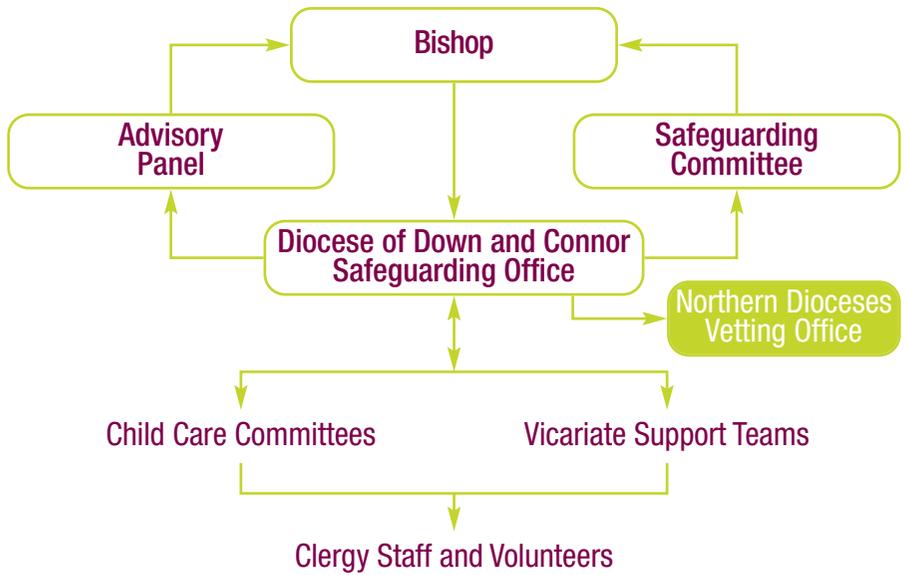
## of Down and Connor

## still to do in our Diocese

- To develop and improve a more effective management of offenders who wish to return to faith. This will require a regional and co-ordinated approach within the North of Ireland.



# The Structure for Safeguarding Children



# Achievements to date

**Since it was set up, the Safeguarding Office has been successful in:**

- Establishing a Diocesan Child Protection Policy and Procedures Document
- Identifying a new Designated Officer for safeguarding and a deputy Designated Officer with responsibility for managing and coordinating allegations of abuse.
- Developing and delivering a significant number of Parish Information Sessions across the Diocese to all staff and volunteers who are required to attend this training. To date approximately 3,256 individuals working in parishes have received this training.
- Establishing new, fully trained Child Care Committees, to oversee and ensure Best Practice in safeguarding children across the 88 parishes throughout the Diocese
- Establishing 12 Vicariate Support Teams who have been trained to deliver the Parish Information Sessions across the Diocese and also support the work of the CCCs.

**“Having clear guidelines for working with our altar servers has been great. The children know what to expect and the volunteers know what they should and should not do. Even though a written code of practice seems very formal, it is good that everyone working in the Church is aware of this.”**

**altar server supervisor**

- Developing and introducing new recruitment and selection procedures which are applied consistently in all parishes across the Diocese

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- Establishing the Northern Dioceses Vetting Office which is managed by Down and Connor Safeguarding Office on behalf of the Northern Bishops for the 6 Dioceses in the North of Ireland.

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- Developing professional working partnerships with the civil authorities - Social Services; PSNI; PPANI (Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland); Probation Board and also working closely with the Interfaith Based Regional Group

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- Initiating work to develop a structure for managing pastoral care for:
  - *Survivors of abuse (pastoral support)*
  - *Those against whom allegations have been made (Advisors).*

## Total trained and vetted to date in the Diocese of Down and Connor

Clergy, staff and  
volunteers trained

**3,256** (as of April 2010)

Clergy, staff and  
volunteers vetted

**4,145** (as of April 2010)

## Total vetted across the six Northern Dioceses

Clergy, staff and  
volunteers trained

**8,060** (as of April 2010)

**“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”**

**Gandhi**

# The way forward for the Diocese of Down and Connor

## The following are key objectives for the Safeguarding Office in 2010/11:

- To strengthen and build on the work of the VSTs and CCCs by providing opportunities for new members to participate, offering relevant training and gathering feedback from all volunteers as to what works and needs to be improved.

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- To develop ways in which the voice of young people in our parishes can be heard and provide them with opportunities to have their say in developing safeguarding practice. Work has already started with the Safeguarding Office in partnership with Youthcom, to develop young people's participation across the Diocese.

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- To develop and improve a more effective management of offenders who wish to return to faith. This will require a regional and co-ordinated approach within the North of Ireland.

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- To develop an annual training events calendar, which will provide a range of training at different levels for all clergy, staff and volunteers within parishes, including Youthcom.

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- To build upon and share best practice in safeguarding children and young people across and between Dioceses.

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- To develop the work of safeguarding and ensuring that we are all working to the agreed set of standards which have been produced by the National Board for Safeguarding Children.





# DIOCESE OF DOWN & CONNOR



**if you have a concern  
or worry about a child or  
young person's welfare  
please contact**

**Barbara McDermott  
Diocesan Designated Officer  
Tel: 028 9049 2798**

**Diocese of Down and Connor  
Safeguarding Office  
Good Shepherd Centre  
511 Ormeau Road  
Belfast BT7 3GS**



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**MAY 2010**

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