



# NEWSLETTER

## SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

Reaching out to and supporting those who experienced abuse by priests and religious or in institutions run by the Catholic Church in Ireland is a central part of the work of CSPS. Archbishop Dermot Farrell has asked us to give priority to this work, both in terms of the support we provide ourselves and in promoting the support provided by Towards Healing and Towards Peace.

Recent events have brought this matter to the fore of public and media attention again. These events include the recent publication of the report on the Mother and Baby Homes, the publicity surrounding the release by the Jesuit Order of the name of a priest who had abused children in Belvedere College; and the conviction of a former teacher for offences against children in Terenure College, a secondary school run by the Carmelite Order. We are reminded once again that there are many, many people in Ireland carrying a life-long burden of pain and trauma. It is likely that every one of us knows at least one person in this position. It is important, therefore, that there is awareness of the help and support that is available to victims/survivors.

Both Towards Healing and Towards Peace are funded by the dioceses and religious orders and provide services that are free to those who wish to avail of them.

Towards Healing provides counselling and related services to all those people who experienced abuse in a Church context on the island of Ireland. Towards Healing operates by contracting with qualified and accredited counsellors and therapists to provide counselling, for which it pays. Thousands of people have availed of the services provided by Towards Healing. This includes people now living outside Ireland for whom funding has been made available allowing them to avail of services locally.

A downloadable poster for Towards Healing is available at: [https://towardshealing.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/towardshealing\\_A3.pdf](https://towardshealing.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/towardshealing_A3.pdf)



Towards Peace is a newer organisation. It is a response to the needs of those whose spirituality has been damaged through abuse in a Church context. Those who avail of the service meet with a spiritual director or companion who helps them to explore their sense of themselves and their relationship with God. The spiritual companions are also trained and accredited. Towards Peace is in the process of exploring other means of providing spiritual support. Towards Peace does not currently have a downloadable poster but one is being sent out to the recipients of this Newsletter by email attachment.

Towards Peace has a website: [www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)

Parish clergy and/ or parish safeguarding representatives are asked to print off these posters and display them in a prominent position in the parish church or churches. You are also asked to ensure that they are not covered by other posters or notices. If they are taken down, please replace them.

## CSPS'S WORK WITH VICTIMS/ SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

People who approach the Diocese because they wish to talk about their experiences of abuse receive a prompt response. Failure to respond in a timely manner risks conveying a message that their concern is not important to us. Nothing could be further from the truth. Therefore, we respond as soon as possible to calls, emails or letters from those who indicate a wish to disclose abuse.

We arrange to meet anyone who wishes to disclose abuse, either of themselves or of a family member, at a date, time and venue that is comfortable to them. We invite them to bring a support person. We explain the reporting requirements to them, that is, that allegations of the abuse of children or vulnerable persons are reported to the civil authorities.

Typically, two members of the CSPS team meet with victim/survivors, one to facilitate their disclosure, the other to make a record of it. This record is then sent to the person so he or she can amend and correct it if necessary. One member of the team maintains contact with the person after the meeting to provide ongoing support and information is provided about the other support services available, Towards Healing and Towards Peace.

For some people it is enough to meet a representative of the Diocese, tell their story in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, knowing that it has been heard and taken seriously and that appropriate action, where required, has been taken to prevent further abuse. For others, this first meeting is the start of a process that may include a statement to the Gardai that triggers a criminal investigation and possible prosecution. The support provided by the Diocese does not come with any conditions. Some people may assume, for example, that those who initiate a criminal prosecution will not be supported by the Diocese. This is not the case. Indeed, CSPS will assist those who decide to pursue this option, for example, by putting them in touch with Gardai with experience and expertise in dealing with such cases.

Some people look for advice and support for themselves and their families. The Diocese has provided practical support to many, including for the education of victim /survivors and also for members of their families. Pastoral meetings have been arranged with Archbishop Martin, a practice that Archbishop Farrell is keen to continue. Some people need to check in with

the Diocese from time to time. There are some with whom CSPS has been in contact for ten years or more.

The Diocese does not wait for people to take the first step. Through CSPS, the Diocese reaches out to people known to have experienced abuse. For example, it can happen that a Garda or social worker contacts CSPS as part of an investigation or assessment of child abuse. In those cases, the person carrying out the investigation or assessment is asked to give information about our service to the person making the complaint. We send a leaflet about the support services available to victims/survivors of abuse and ask the Garda or social worker to hand it on. Similarly, if the Diocese receives a letter from a solicitor, we write to the solicitor concerned, enclosing a leaflet about our service and request them to pass it on to their client.

Most of those who make contact with CSPS do so of their own initiative or after having spoken to a priest or member of a religious order. It is less common to hear from someone who has learned about our service from a solicitor, Garda or social worker. We are not sure why this is. It may be because the information has not been passed on or it may be that the person, once they receive the information, has no confidence that the Diocese wishes to help them. Trust and confidence in the Catholic Church in Ireland is at a low ebb and rebuilding that trust and confidence is slow work.

Even those with whom the Diocese has an ongoing relationship can sometimes question whether the Diocese is acting in good faith. This can happen, for example, when people ask for information that we cannot provide for them. Our practice is to be open and to share information wherever possible. However, sometimes we cannot share information because we simply do not have it. People can find this difficult to accept. Given the history of cover up of abuse in the past, this is understandable. Child sexual abuse is a profound breach of trust, the trust that a child places in an adult to care for her, nurture and protect her. The impact lasts a lifetime.

The support that the Church provides to victims and survivors of abuse will change over time and be provided by different people at different stages and in response to different needs. The work of CSPS is one small, but important, part of this good work.

## VETTING UPDATE

Some parishes may be aware of queries about some vetting applications coming from the National Vetting Bureau. These queries relate to whether the role to which the application refers requires vetting. It remains the policy of the Archdiocese of Dublin that all those involved in public ministry in our parishes and diocesan offices should be vetted. This includes, for example, Ministers of the Word and Eucharistic Ministers. A letter has been sent to the National Vetting Bureau in relation to these queries and it is our intention to continue to submit applications for those who minister in this way in our parishes.



## NEW APPOINTMENT

Archbishop Farrell has appointed Garry Kehoe as Safeguarding Training and Compliance Manager with CSPS. Garry has a long history of delivering safeguarding training in the Archdiocese of Dublin. He was part of the first group of diocesan safeguarding trainers to be accredited in 2007, when accreditation was awarded by the Volunteer Development Agency. Garry worked alongside Fr Paddy Boyle as a volunteer trainer for many years until he succeeded Fr Paddy as Training and Development Coordinator in 2015. During this time Garry completed his accreditation with the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

Garry's promotion to the post of Safeguarding Training and Compliance Manager is part of the reorganisation of CSPS brought about by last year's diocesan voluntary redundancy scheme which saw a number of people leave the service. It is also recognition of the extra responsibilities that Garry has carried over the past few years, especially in the work he has done with parishes to help bring them into compliance with national and Church child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policies and guidelines. Commenting on this appointment, Monsignor Paul Callan, Moderator of the Curia, said: "I hope it will be an acknowledgement to Garry of his excellent work and encouragement in the midst of the new demands and challenges".

## CSPS TEAM CONTACTS

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In keeping with government guidelines, the staff team are working from home. The main office number, 01 8360314, is diverted so that calls to the office will be picked up by a member of the team. If your call is not picked up immediately we will respond to any message you leave within one working day.

Vetting enquiries and applications can be submitted online to: [garda.vetting@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:garda.vetting@dublindiocese.ie)