



Diocese of Ossory

**SAFEGUARDING
VULNERABLE ADULTS**

**Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy,
Staff and Volunteers**

Contents

Section 1 – Introduction	2
Section 2 - Guiding Principles	2
Section 3 - Legal Framework.....	6
Section 5 - Recognising Abuse.....	7
Section 6 - Recording and Reporting.....	11
Section 7- Inter-Agency Cooperation and Sharing of Information.....	13
Section 8 - Role of the Designated Liaison Person.....	14
Section 9 - Record Keeping and Storage	15
Section 10 – Confidentiality.....	15
Section 11 – Code of Conduct for Those who Minister to Vulnerable Adults.....	16
Section 12 – External Groups	17
Section 13 – Access to Advice and Support.....	18
Section 14 – Roles and Responsibilities	19
Section 15 – Whistleblowing Policy	20
Appendix A - Bibliography	21
Appendix B - Role of Minister of the Eucharist to the Housebound	23
Appendix C - Forms	25
Appendix D - Key Relevant Legislation within the Republic of Ireland.....	29
Designated Liaison Person for Diocese of Ossory.....	31

Section 1 – Introduction

The Diocese of Ossory, hereinafter called “the Diocese”, recognises that there are many people with whom Church personnel have contact who require special care and attention. The Diocese values and encourages the participation of vulnerable adults in all parish liturgies and activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. We believe that all Church personnel, including priests, religious, staff and volunteers must carry out their ministry respecting the rights of the individual in line with gospel values and human rights legislation.

The Diocese recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and is committed to safeguarding all our members. The guidance set out in this document provides a framework of how it is recommended that the Diocese ministers to vulnerable adults. It identifies what we mean by the term and highlights values and principles which should underpin such necessary work.

These guidelines apply to all clergy (both Diocesan and visiting), staff, volunteers and religious and adhere to current practice and guidance in the Republic of Ireland. They should be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, both of which are available on the Diocesan website.

The Diocese, through these guidelines, sets out to protect vulnerable adults from harm and exploitation and to uphold their rights by acting in their best interests and with their consent.

This is an Interim document. It will be reviewed and amended by the Diocese during its first year of operation. It will then be reviewed and amended as required, but at least every three years, to take account of any major changes including legislative or policy changes in safeguarding.

Section 2 - Guiding Principles

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Statement

The Diocese is committed to safeguarding as an integral component of the life and ministry of the Church and recognises that we have a special

responsibility towards all vulnerable people who are members of our faith community.

We will want to reassure them, their carers and their advocates that we are committed to creating a safe, caring and compassionate environment for all but especially those parishioners defined as “vulnerable”. This commitment is based on Gospel values and teachings and on compliance with “best practice.”

The Diocesan Guidelines, when implemented, should ensure the welfare of “Vulnerable Adults” by:

- Making the welfare of the vulnerable adult a central element of safeguarding;
- Ensuring that these guidelines are supported by robust procedures;
- Implementing the existing procedures for safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to work with vulnerable adults;
- Providing a Code of Conduct/on-going formation materials for diocesan personnel whose ministry brings them into contact with vulnerable adults;
- Having clear procedures for dealing with and reporting concerns and allegations of abuse;
- Managing personal information and sensitive data, confidentiality and the sharing of information in line with legal requirements;
- Establishing and maintaining links with statutory and voluntary agencies/organisations to ensure “best practice” throughout the Diocese.

Values and Principles

Diocesan practice and these Safeguarding Guidelines should be underpinned and guided by a number of values and principles as outlined below:

- *Access to information and knowledge* – vulnerable adults will have access to information that they can understand in order to make an informed choice, including access to expert knowledge and advocacy, as required.
- *Choice* – vulnerable adults will have the opportunity to select independently from a range of options based on clear and accurate information e.g. the choice to participate or not to participate in a church based activity such as a parish party, outing or pilgrimage.
- *Confidentiality* – vulnerable adults will know that information about them is managed appropriately and that there is a clear understanding of confidentiality and its limits among staff/volunteers.

- *Consent* – vulnerable adults have the right to be supported in making their own decisions and to give or withhold their consent to an activity or service.
- *Dignity and Respect* – vulnerable adults will be accorded the same respect and dignity as any other adult, by recognising their uniqueness and personal needs.
- *Equality and Cultural Diversity* – vulnerable adults will be treated equally and their background and culture will be valued and respected.
- *Independence* – vulnerable adults will have as much control as possible over their lives whilst being safeguarded against unreasonable risks.
- *Privacy* – vulnerable adults will be free from unnecessary intrusion into their affairs and there will be a balance between the individual's own safety and the safety of others.
- *Safety* – vulnerable adults will feel safe and live without fear of violence, neglect or abuse in any form.

Consent and Capacity

It is important that clergy, staff and volunteers understand the issues of consent and capacity to comprehend in order to establish a vulnerable adult's ability to give meaningful consent to a particular act and/or situation or to any help or intervention.

Meaningful consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. The vulnerable adult may signal consent verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. Decisions with more serious consequences will require more formal or professional consideration of consent and appropriate steps should always be taken to ensure that consent is valid.

Clergy, staff and volunteers should remember that no one can give, or withhold consent on behalf of another adult, unless special provision has been made for this, usually in law. In certain situations the need for consent may be overridden. For example, to meet a legal responsibility to report or prevent immediate or significant harm either to the vulnerable adult or to the general public. As far as possible, vulnerable adults should be supported to communicate their concerns to relevant agencies.

Gaining consent from a vulnerable adult

Consent is a process - it results from understanding through dialogue and the provision of information. It may be expressly given or, alternatively, it may be signalled by a person's conduct. For example, an individual may signal his/her consent to participate in informal situations such as a staff

party or a party in residential home or the weekly parish club, or by willingly asking a volunteer to assist them in accessing toilet facilities.

As a general rule, the method of gaining consent is likely to be influenced by the seriousness of what is being proposed. The type of services and activities offered by parishes in the Diocese to vulnerable adults would be unlikely to require written consent. There may, however, be occasions when written consent is required and if clergy have concerns about consent, e.g. as to its validity, they should always seek advice from their Bishop/Superior and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator. In such circumstances, members of staff or volunteers should always seek advice from their line manager/leader and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator. In such cases the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator will, in turn, seek professional advice on the matter from the relevant Statutory Authorities. Individuals always have the right to consult directly with statutory agencies.

The important issue is to ensure that the consent given is valid. The consent of a vulnerable adult is considered valid ONLY if:

1. He/she has the capacity to consent, i.e. he/she can understand and weigh up the information needed to make the decision;
2. Sufficient information has been given to him/her, in an appropriate way, on which to base the decision;
3. Consent has been given on a voluntary basis, that is free from coercion or negative influence.

If any of these three factors is absent, consent cannot be considered to be valid.

Circumstances may arise where the vulnerable adult is unable to make decisions for themselves; for example, a learning disability, a severe mental health issue, impaired functioning as a result of a stroke or some form of dementia or any brain injury or trauma which could severely affect his/her intellectual functioning. In these situations, mental capacity, in terms of decision making in respect of treatment, care, care provision, welfare and /or financial assets affairs may be impaired.

Legal protections need to be put in place if someone such as a family member, an advocate or health professional has to make decisions for a vulnerable adult who has been deemed to lack capacity.

If clergy, staff or volunteers have any doubts or concerns about whether the consent of a vulnerable adult is valid, or whether he/she has the capacity to consent, they should bring this to the attention of the Diocesan Director for safeguarding who will consult with the relevant statutory authorities.

Section 3 - Legal Framework

Vulnerable adults are protected against criminal acts in the same way as any other person. Where there is reasonable suspicion that a criminal offence may have occurred, it is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána to investigate and make decisions about what action should be taken. The Gardaí should always be consulted about criminal matters.

(See Appendix D for key legislation within the Republic of Ireland)

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

The current definition of a vulnerable adult within the Republic of Ireland is taken from ***The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012*** which states:

“Vulnerable Person” means a person, other than a child, who—

- (a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
- (b) has an intellectual disability,
- (c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or
- (d) has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree—
 - (i) as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or
 - (ii) that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

In addition, the ***Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information of Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2012*** provides for a very similar (but not exactly the same) definition of “Vulnerable Person” in the following terms:

“Vulnerable Person” means a person (including, insofar as the offences specified at *paragraph 8* of *Schedule 2* are concerned, a child aged 17 years old)—

- a) who is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia, or
- b) has an intellectual disability which is of such a nature or degree as to severely restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against serious exploitation or abuse, whether physical or sexual, by another person, or

- c) who is suffering from an enduring physical impairment or injury which is of such a nature or degree as to severely restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against serious exploitation or abuse, whether physical or sexual, by another person or to report such exploitation or abuse to the Garda Síochána or both.

In addition to the legislative definitions above, the Church recognises the need to safeguard other adults who may be in a vulnerable position and who may be in need of pastoral care or be open to exploitation due to their current circumstances e.g. bereavement, relationship breakdown, undergoing counselling etc.

The rights of vulnerable adults to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected under the Human Rights Act 1998. Specifically, a vulnerable adult's right to life is protected under Article 1; their right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment under Article 3; and their right to liberty and security under Article 5.

Section 4 - Recruitment and Selection

The Diocese consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers, involved in a regulated activity, in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

To achieve this the following criteria is used

- There is an application form that includes information about past work and volunteering
- Two written references are sought
- There is a role description and a code of conduct
- A Confidential Declaration Form requesting information on previous convictions and investigations must be completed
- A Verification of Identity Form must be completed
- Garda Vetting is carried out
- All staff and volunteers must attend a safeguarding awareness session

Section 5 - Recognising Abuse

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse is defined as: ***'The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.'***

Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is a breach of that trust by those who have influence over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship'. (Department of Health and Social Services Guidance 2006)

Abuse can take many forms including the following:

Physical Abuse - Including hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, giving a person medicine that may harm them, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.

Possible signs may include fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Psychological Abuse - Including emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and the use of threats.

Possible signs – being withdrawn, too eager to do everything they are asked, showing compulsive behaviour, not being able to things they used to, not being able to concentrate or focus.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Financial or Material Abuse - Including misusing or stealing the person's property, possessions or benefits, cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on them about wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.

Possible signs – having unusual difficulty with finances, not having enough money, being too protective of money and things they own, not paying bills, not having normal home comforts, disparity between living conditions and assets.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Sexual Abuse - Including direct or indirect sexual activity where the vulnerable adult cannot or does not consent to it.

Possible signs – physical symptoms including genital itching or soreness or having a sexually transmitted disease, using bad language, not wanting to be touched, behaving in a sexually inappropriate way, changes in appearance.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Neglect or Acts of Omission - Including withdrawing or not giving the help that a vulnerable adult needs, so causing them to suffer.

Possible signs – having pain or discomfort, being very hungry, thirsty or untidy, failing health, changes in behaviour.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Discriminatory Abuse

Including – the abuse of a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.

Possible signs – the person not receiving the care services they require, their carer being overly critical or making insulting remarks about the person, the person being made to dress differently from how he/she wishes.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Institutional Abuse

This can happen when an organisation, where the person is living or receiving care from, fails to ensure that the necessary processes and systems are in place to safeguard vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care and service. Including – lack of training of staff and volunteers, lack of or poor quality supervision and management, poor record keeping and liaison with other agencies, low staff morale and high staff turnover.

Possible signs – vulnerable adult has no personal clothing or possessions, there is no care plan, the person is often admitted to hospital, or there are instances of staff / volunteers having treated the person badly or unsatisfactorily or acting in a way that causes harm, poor staff morale and high staff turnover and lack of clear lines of accountability and consistency of management.

(Please note that these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse is definitely taking place)

Initial concerns

There may be a need for initial “checking out” with the vulnerable adult if there are concerns, for example, if a member of staff or volunteer notices any of the signs as indicated above it may be appropriate to ask what happened or what is wrong. Care needs to be taken not to investigate; this should be avoided by not asking questions beyond initial checking out and listening to the words of the alleged victim for factual accuracy.

Where might abuse take place?

Abuse can happen anywhere, some examples are as follows:

- In someone’s own home
- In a carer’s home
- Within day care, residential care, nursing care or other institutional settings
- At work or in educational settings
- In rented accommodation or commercial premises
- In public places

Who might abuse?

This could be anyone who has contact with the vulnerable person . It could be a partner, spouse, child, relative, friend, advocate, informal carer, a member of the clergy/ religious order, parish volunteer, a healthcare, social care or other worker, a peer or, less commonly, a stranger.

Domestic/Familial Abuse

This is the abuse of a vulnerable adult by a family member such as partner, son, daughter or sibling.

Professional Abuse

The misuse of power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems.

Possible signs of professional abuse include:

- Entering into inappropriate relationships with a vulnerable adult
- Failure to refer disclosure of abuse
- Poor, ill-informed or outmoded care practice
- Failure to help a vulnerable adult to access health/care treatment
- Denying a vulnerable adult access to professional support and services such as advocacy

- Inappropriate response to challenging behaviours
- Failure to whistleblow on issues when internal procedures to highlight issue are exhausted

Peer Abuse

This is the abuse of one vulnerable adult by another vulnerable adult within a care setting. It can occur in group or communal settings, such as day care centres, clubs, residential care homes, nursing homes or other institutional settings.

Stranger Abuse

A vulnerable adult may be abused by someone who they do not know such as a stranger, a member of the public or a person who deliberately targets vulnerable people.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

Everyone is entitled to have their civil and human rights upheld and to live a life free from abuse and neglect. All concerns, allegations and disclosures must be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

When there are concerns or where a disclosure or allegation is made, people often feel anxious about passing on the information to someone else. Concerned individuals may ask themselves, “What if I am wrong?” and this may hold them back from taking action.

It is important for clergy, staff and volunteers to know that they are *not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred* and neither are they *responsible for conducting an investigation*. This is the role of the appropriate authorities. However, clergy, staff and volunteers do need to pass on any concerns they have.

If there are concerns about a vulnerable adult’s wellbeing which are not dealt with under vulnerable adult safeguarding procedures they should be reported to the local HSE Department. A record of this referral should be retained.

How to Report

All allegations / concerns / suspicions against **Church Personnel** (clergy, staff or volunteers) must be reported without delay to the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person. See inside back cover for contact details.

If your ministry involves visiting vulnerable adults in hospitals, residential care homes or other institutional settings, the reporting procedure is through the Designated Person/Manager of the relevant institution.

For allegations / concerns / suspicions against **non-Church personnel**, the person who is worried about possible harm to a vulnerable adult should report the concerns directly to the civil authorities (e.g. abuse of a vulnerable person by a relative or non-Church carer and / or peer abuse).

Ways you may become aware that abuse is happening?

There are a number of ways in which you might become concerned or suspicious that a vulnerable adult is suffering or, has suffered abuse.

- The vulnerable adult may tell you directly.
- Someone else may tell you of their concerns.
- Some incident that causes you concern.
- A vulnerable adult may show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no credible or satisfactory explanation.
- A vulnerable adult's demeanour/behaviour may cause you to suspect that something does not feel right, or that possible abuse has taken place.
- The behaviour of another individual close to the vulnerable adult makes you feel uncomfortable (this may be another staff member, volunteer, or leader of an activity or family member).
- Through general good neighbourliness and social guardianship.

Being alert to possible abuse plays a significant role in ensuring that vulnerable adults are safeguarded and it is important that all concerns about possible abuse are reported.

What if a vulnerable adult discloses abuse?

Where this happens, it is important that clergy, staff and volunteers know how to respond and do so in accordance with the following guidelines:

DO

- Stay calm
- Listen
- Reassure the person - tell him/her they did the right thing in telling you
- Let them know that the information will be taken seriously and give them information about what will happen next
- If urgent medical/police help is needed, call the emergency services

- Ensure the safety of the person
- Be aware that forensic evidence might be needed
- Let the person know that they will be kept informed at every stage
- Record in writing (date and sign your record) and report to the Designated Liaison Person for the Diocese
- Act without delay

DO NOT

- Stop someone disclosing to you
- Promise to keep secret what they tell you
- Press the person for more details or make them repeat the story
- Gossip about the disclosure or pass any information about this to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know
- Under any circumstances, contact the alleged abuser
- Attempt to initiate an investigation yourself
- Leave details of your concern on a voicemail or e-mail
- Delay in responding

Section 7- Inter-Agency Cooperation and Sharing of Information

The principles and rights, which have been identified in these guidelines, can be further strengthened through the promotion of effective inter-agency cooperation.

These include the requirements for agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to:

- Work together to protect the rights of vulnerable adults;
- To actively promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable adults through the services they provide;
- To work together with the aim of improving the quality of safeguarding work;
- To ensure that best practice in keeping vulnerable adults safe from harm is achieved.

The purpose of inter-agency cooperation in relation to the protection and safeguarding of vulnerable adults is to ensure that by working cooperatively, a consistent response will be made when concerns are raised or allegations of harm are made.

Sharing of Information

All vulnerable adults and, where appropriate, their carers or advocates, need to be made aware that the operation of multi-disciplinary and inter-agency procedures will, on occasion, require the sharing of information in order to protect a vulnerable adult or others, or to investigate an alleged suspected criminal offence.

Confidential Information Sharing

In normal circumstances, observing the principle of confidentiality will mean that information is only passed on to others with the consent of the service user. However, it should be recognised that in order to protect vulnerable adults, it may be necessary, in some circumstances, to share information that might, normally, be regarded as confidential.

The duty to protect takes precedence over individual confidentiality if a person or others are at serious risk of harm or have been seriously harmed. But information sharing will be proportional and on a “need to know” basis. The person will be advised before the information is shared and will be made aware of the names of those with whom it is intended to be shared.

Section 8 - Role of the Designated Liaison Person

The Diocese of Ossory has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is responsible for managing all concerns, allegations and complaints regarding actual or potential harm or abuse which come to the attention of the Diocese. (For DLP contact details on inside of back cover).

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for acting as a source of advice on vulnerable adult safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the Diocese and for liaising with the relevant statutory authorities and other agencies, as appropriate, about suspected or actual cases of vulnerable adult harm or abuse.

When you contact the Designated Liaison Person, he/she will undertake the following steps:

- They will establish contact the Designated Officer in the relevant HSE Department and the Gardaí.
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that the vulnerable adult guidelines are followed, particularly in relation to informing the appropriate statutory agencies.

- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of the referral to the statutory agencies and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
- Liaise with the relevant statutory authorities and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people within the Diocese informed about any action taken and any further action required.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of concerns about the abuse and the action taken by the Diocese, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.

Section 9 - Record Keeping and Storage

All records relating to concerns/allegations of suspected or actual abuse of a vulnerable adult/s will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person in the Diocesan office. Copies of records and any other relevant information relating to these records should NEVER be stored at parish level.

Safeguarding records must be kept at least 20 years.

It is the responsibility of the Diocese to ensure that the gathering, storage, usage and sharing of personal information is in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003, 2018 and the Diocesan Data Protection Policy

Section 10 – Confidentiality

It is important that clergy, staff and volunteers understand the importance of confidentiality. All information relating to concerns, suspicions or allegations about a vulnerable adult should be treated as confidential and should only be communicated on a “need to know” basis. This information should NOT be shared with anyone, inside or outside the Diocese, unless they are involved in the case. Only the relevant personnel need to be involved. The Designated Liaison Person will advise on “who needs to know” and who should have access to records.

While information about vulnerable adults is confidential, it may be disclosed to external agencies to ensure the care and safety of an individual or others or where a crime is suspected. This includes the disclosure of information to An Garda Síochána and the relevant HSE Department for such purposes.

In normal circumstances observing the principle of confidentiality will mean that the information is passed on to others with the consent of the person

concerned. However, it should be recognised that in order to safeguard vulnerable adults, it may be necessary, in some circumstances, to share information that might normally be regarded as confidential.

All vulnerable adults, and where appropriate, their carers or representatives need to be made aware that the operation of inter-agency procedures will, on occasion, require the sharing of information in order to safeguard a vulnerable adult or others, or to investigate an alleged or suspected criminal offence.

Section 11 – Code of Conduct for Those who Minister to Vulnerable Adults

Ministry with vulnerable adults is a gift from God. It is critical that boundaries are respected and that relationships are established that always place the needs and well-being of the vulnerable adult as the primary concern. Those carrying out ministries should have clearly defined codes of conduct. A balance needs to be struck between the right to protection and the need to allow appropriate spiritual relationships between an individual and his/her priest, lay minister or volunteer. It is important for all clergy, staff and volunteers to:

- Adhere to the protocols and guidelines of any organization whose premises they are ministering within;
- Treat everyone equally with respect;
- Engage and interact appropriately with vulnerable adults;
- Be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties;
- Respect the dignity of each individual and their right to personal privacy;
- Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you may be discussing sensitive issues with vulnerable adults;
- Avoid situations that might compromise your relationship with vulnerable adults, and which are unacceptable within a relationship of trust. This rule should apply to all such behaviours including those which would constitute an illegal act;
- Respect the religious, cultural, racial and sexual orientation of the vulnerable adult and be open to and aware of diversity in their beliefs and practices and those of their families;
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow;
- Operate within Diocesan Guidelines.

The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours.

Clergy, staff and volunteers must never:

- Physically or emotionally abuse or exploit a vulnerable adult.
- Become involved in either using the vulnerable adult's money on his/her behalf or in giving the vulnerable adult advice in the use of his/her money.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do things of a personal nature for a vulnerable adult that he/she is capable of doing for his/herself or are the responsibility of their family or carer.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Discriminate against the person on the basis of religion, race, culture, gender or sexual orientation.
- Form inappropriate relationships with vulnerable adults.
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and their families.
- Photograph or video a vulnerable adult.

Clergy, staff and volunteers are being made aware of the Code in the expectation that they will act in accordance with it when exercising ministry to the vulnerable.

Section 12 – External Groups

External / independent groups / organisations, seeking to hire or lease Diocesan / parish property to deliver their own service / activity involving adults will be made aware of the Diocesan Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Guidelines, but will also be expected to meet certain requirements before an agreement or lease or rental of property is made. See Form *SG-07- External Groups Using Church Property* which is available to download from www.ossory.ie/safeguarding/forms.

Section 13 – Access to Advice and Support

Diocese of Ossory Web Page: www.ossory.ie

Designated Liaison Person: See inside back cover

TUSLA Child & Family Agency - Area Phone Numbers

Counties Carlow, **Kilkenny** and South Tipperary:052 617 7302

Counties **Laois**, Longford, **Offaly** and Westmeath..... 090 648 3106

HSE Information Line

Monday to Saturday, 8am-8pm

Call Save: Tel: 1850 24 1850

Email: info@hse.ie

The Regulatory Body for nursing homes and designated centres for children and adults with disabilities. The contact details are:

Northern Regional Office,
Social Services Inspectorate,
Georges Court,
Georges Lane,
Smithfield, Dublin 7.
Phone 01 8147400 Fax 01 8147499

Gardaí Freephone Confidential Helpline: 1800 555 222

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland

www.safeguarding.ie Tel: 01-5053124

The Samaritans Tel: 1850 609090

Towards Healing Freephone Tel: 1800 303416

“Towards Healing” is a private and confidential counselling and support service for survivors of institutional, clerical and religious abuse, funded by the Catholic Church in Ireland. The operational hours of the helpline are: Monday and Wednesday (11.00a.m.–8.00p.m.) and Friday (11.00a.m. – 4.00p.m.). An answering machine service is available at all other times.

Towards Peace

Phone: 01 5053028:

Mobile 086 7701533

“Towards Peace” offers spiritual support to victims/survivors of clerical abuse whose faith in God may have been affected by their experience. Following initial telephone contact, “Towards Peace” offers an opportunity to talk to a trained spiritual companion in a one-to-one setting, to explore questions and concerns about God, and to get in touch with God's presence in their lives.

The Rape Crisis Centre Phone: 1800 778888

“The Rape Crisis Centre” is a national organisation offering a wide range of services to women and men who are affected by rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or childhood sexual abuse.

The services include a national 24-hour helpline, one to one counselling, court accompaniment, outreach services, training, awareness raising and lobbying.

Section 14 – Roles and Responsibilities

A summary of the roles and responsibilities within the diocesan Safeguarding Structure are listed below.

Bishop of the Diocese

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the safeguarding mechanisms for protecting all vulnerable people and groups are firmly established and working across the Diocese.

Director of Safeguarding

Established to oversee the implementation of a safeguarding strategy and to ensure that arrangements are set up within the Diocese and is accountable to the bishop.

Diocesan Safeguarding Office

Diocesan Safeguarding Office, Waterford Road, Kilkenny. Tel: 087 195 3850

Designated Liaison Persons

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for managing and coordinating all allegations, suspicions and concerns of child and vulnerable adult abuse within the Diocese. This involves referral to the statutory services, setting up multi-disciplinary strategy discussion meetings and the internal

management of cases, including preparing information for the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, Diocesan Advisory Panel and Diocesan Professional Conduct Advisory Group, (when it is established).

Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR)

Responsible to the parish priest or local superior promote child safeguarding by:

- Raising awareness of what safeguarding is;
- Disseminating information regarding the standards and guidance, and circulating this information widely;
- Ensuring Church activities are provided in a way that ensures the safety and well-being of the vulnerable adults involved;
- Ensuring that the contact details of the DLP, Gardaí and HSE are widely publicised.

Section 15 – Whistleblowing Policy

Please refer to the Diocesan Safeguarding Website for a copy of this policy – **www.ossory/safeguarding.ie**

Appendix A - Bibliography

Department of Health (2002) Protecting Our Future, Report of the Working Group on Elder Abuse, DoH, (ROI)

Health Information and Quality Authority (July 2014) Draft National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland

Health Information and Quality Authority (2013) National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Children and Adults with Disabilities 2013

Health Information and Quality Authority (2009) National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People

Health Service Executive (2014) December: Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures

Health Service Executive (2014) September: Interim Draft Guidelines National Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse

Health Service Executive (2014) Open Your Eyes: Protect Yourself from Elder Abuse Handbook

Health Service Executive (2012) Joint Elder Abuse HIQA - HSE Protocol

Health Service Executive (2012) Best Practice Guidelines for Voluntary, Not for Profit Organisation & Private Services Providers, HSE

Health Service Executive (2012) Responding to Allegations of Elder Abuse: HSE Staff Elder Abuse Policy

Health Service Executive (2011) Good Faith Reporting Policy (Revision 5)

Health Service Executive (2010) Policy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence

Health Service Executive (2005) Trust in Care: Policy for Health Service Employers Upholding the Dignity and Welfare of Patients/Clients and the Procedure for Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff members

National Centre for the Protection of Older People, MP Treacy et al, (2009) Elder Abuse and Legislation in Ireland –Review 3 November 2009 , UCD
National Centre for the Protection of Older people, C. Naughton et al (2010) Abuse and Neglect of Older People in Ireland – Report on the National Study of Elder Abuse and Neglect.

Medical Protection Society (2011) Consent to Medical Treatment in Ireland: An MPS Guide for Clinicians

Policy and Procedures for Diocesan Clergy, Staff and Volunteers in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Safe Practice–Best Practice - Diocese of Down and Connor (NI)

Protecting Our Future, Report of the Working Group on Elder Abuse, DoH, 2002

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: A Shared Responsibility - Volunteer Now, October 2010 (NI)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Regional Adult Protection and Procedural Guidance September 2006 (NI)

The Law Reform Commission (2006) Vulnerable Adults and the Law
www.lawreform.ie

Appendix B - Role of Minister of the Eucharist to the Housebound

Job Title: Parish Minister of the Eucharist to the Housebound

Responsible to: Parish Priest

Role: To bring the Eucharist to people who are housebound.

Those undertaking this very important role are responsible to the Parish Priest. Their main responsibilities include:

- Bringing the Eucharist from the parish church to people in the community who are housebound due to health problems, age or disability;
- Following the instructions given by the Diocese for the reverent conveying of the Eucharist and following the appropriate format for the administration of the Eucharist;
- When visiting people either in hospital or in a residential home, to respect the boundaries and regulations of the organisation, particularly by notifying someone in a supervisory position, of your presence in the home;
- Being respectful of the homes of people in the community;
- Being willing to administer the Eucharist prayerfully;
- Being aware of difficulties for some people with swallowing the Eucharist and therefore accommodating the size of the portion of the Host to enable comfortable reception of the Sacrament. It is essential to adhere to guidance from medical staff in relation to health issues e.g. people who are peg fed cannot receive the Eucharist;
- Being sensitive to the fact that doctors, nurses or social services may call just before or whilst the Sacrament is being administered and that medical care should take precedence;
- Being willing to talk with people to whom the Sacrament is being brought, recognising them as part of the Body of Christ;
- Being familiar with and adhering to the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Person Specification

- To be a person of integrity and good character;
- To have reverence for the Eucharist;
- To have a clear understanding of the Eucharist as a Sacrament of unity, reconciliation and healing;
- To fully accept the Church's teaching on the Eucharist and the Mass;

- To be available to bring the Eucharist on a regular basis to those in need;
- To recognise that Jesus is present in the Eucharist and in the people to whom the Eucharist is being given;
- To be able to maintain confidentiality in relation to people's personal details and information.

Note: We recognise in the case of close relatives who live at the same address as the housebound or close family members e.g. children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren or siblings, there is an exception from the normal vetting requirements as no additional access is created in such cases.

Appendix C - Forms

All Forms required for those who provide ministry to Vulnerable Adults are available to download from www.ossory.ie/safeguarding/foms.

Garda Vetting Form	NVB-1
Application Form	SG-01
Declaration Form	SG-02
When an appointment is being considered the following forms may be used	
Character & Personal Reference Request Form	SG-12
Letter of Appointment	SG-13
The forms below should always be used when appointing an individual to minister to Vulnerable Adults	
Safeguarding Agreement Form	SG-03
Code of Conduct for Ministry with Vulnerable Adults	SG-14
If there are concerns, or a disclosure or allegation is made use:	
Vulnerable Adult Allegation/Concern Form	SG-11
Any group wishing to use Church Property for activities involving Vulnerable Adults will be required to complete the following form	
External Groups Using Church Property	SG-07



Safeguarding – Diocese of Ossory

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER TO VULNERABLE ADULTS

SG-14

Ministry with vulnerable adults is a gift from God. It is critical that boundaries are respected and that relationships are established that always place the needs and well-being of the vulnerable adult as the primary concern. Those carrying out ministries should have clearly defined codes of conduct. A balance needs to be struck between the right to protection and the need to allow appropriate spiritual relationships between an individual and his/her priest, lay minister or volunteer. It is important for all clergy, staff and volunteers to:

- Adhere to the protocols and guidelines of any organization whose premises they are ministering within;
- Treat everyone equally with respect;
- Engage and interact appropriately with vulnerable adults;
- Be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties;
- Respect the dignity of each individual and their right to personal privacy;
- Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you may be discussing sensitive issues with vulnerable adults;
- Avoid situations that might compromise your relationship with vulnerable adults, and which are unacceptable within a relationship of trust. This rule should apply to all such behaviours including those which would constitute an illegal act;
- Respect the religious, cultural, racial and sexual orientation of the vulnerable adult and be open to and aware of diversity in their beliefs and practices and those of their families;
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow;
- Operate within Diocesan Guidelines.

The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours. Clergy, staff and volunteers must **never**:

- Physically or emotionally abuse or exploit a vulnerable adult;
- Become involved in either using the vulnerable adult's money on his/her behalf or in giving the vulnerable adult advice in the use of his/her money;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Do things of a personal nature for a vulnerable adult that he/she is capable of doing for his/herself or are the responsibility of their family or carer;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade,
- Discriminate against the person on the basis of religion, race, culture, gender or sexual orientation;
- Form inappropriate relationships with vulnerable adults;
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and their families;
- Inappropriately photograph or video a vulnerable adult;
- Audio or visual recordings may not be taken of vulnerable adults without their permission. The use of such recordings on any website (social networking sites etc.) or any other medium, either as recorded or digitally altered, is expressly forbidden.

I _____(print name) agree to comply with this **Code of Conduct** when ministering to Vulnerable Adults.

Signed: _____ Dated _____

Clergy, staff and volunteers are being made aware of the Code in the expectation that they will act in accordance with it when exercising ministry to the vulnerable.



Safeguarding – Diocese of Ossory

Vulnerable Adult Allegation/Concern report Form

SG-11

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of Parish/Organisation _____

Vulnerable Person's Details: _____ DOB: _____ Gender _____

Home Address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Name of Carer (if known) _____

Does anyone live with the Vulnerable Adult? _____ If Yes, Who? _____

Please complete sections below that are relevant

1. Disclosure by a Vulnerable Adult:

When was the disclosure made? Date: _____ Time _____

To whom did the Vulnerable Person make the disclosure? _____

What did the Vulnerable Adult actually say? _____

2. Indicators:

Describe the signs or indicators of abuse (with times and dates): _____

Has the Vulnerable Adult alleged that any particular person is the abuse? If so, please record details and the relationship, if any, to the Vulnerable Adult below). _____

3. Concerns expressed by another person about a Vulnerable Adult

Record the concerns that were passed to you (with dates and times) and if possible ask the person who expressed the concerns that the details as written are correct.

4. Details of any immediate action taken e.g. first aid, etc?

5. Has the Vulnerable Adult expressed any reservations about you talking to the designated Liaison Person about the matter?

6. Does the Vulnerable Adult have any particular needs e.g. Communications etc?

6. Does the Vulnerable Adult have any particular needs e.g. Communications etc?

Signatures:

To be signed by the person reporting the concern

Name: _____ Role in Parish _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date received and actioned by the Designated Liaison Person:

Name of DLP: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Action taken by Designated Liaison Person:

Appendix D - Key Relevant Legislation within the Republic of Ireland

- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information of Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2012)
- Assisted Decision Making Capacity Bill 2013
- Lunacy Regulation (Ireland) Act 1871
- The Constitution – Bunreacht na hÉireann 1937
- Domestic Violence Act 1996 & Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2002
- Powers Of Attorney Act 1996
- Family Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997
- Data Protection Act 1998, 2003
- Human Rights Commission Act 2000 and 2001 (this applies to both NI and ROI)
- Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004
- Mental Health Act 2001
- European Commission on Human Rights Act 2003
- Equality Act 2004
- Disability Act 2005
- Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005
- Health Act 2007
- Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2009 & (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults with Disabilities)) Regulations 2013
- Medical Practitioners Act 2007
- Pharmacy Act 2007
- Consumer Protection Act 2007
- The Protected Disclosures Act 2014

Designated Liaison Person for Diocese of Ossory

Mr Cathal Cullen

Contact Details:

Mobile: 087 100 0232

Email: dlp@ossory.ie