



SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

in the Catholic Church in Scotland

June 2022

And so the work begins.

After many months of planning, researching and recruiting, June 2022 has been a significant month in the establishment of the SCSSA, the new independent agency which is charged with assuring compliance with Safeguarding standards across all Church jurisdictions in Scotland.

On 9th & 10th June 2022, Lady Rae was able to meet in person for the first time with all members of the SCSSA Board when they took part in two very full days of Induction Training. She also chaired the very first formal meeting of the Board during these two days. Some further information about the training is provided in this newsletter.

Most significantly for the work of the agency, following a robust recruitment process that was led by SCSSA Board members, Lady Rae made appointments to the agency's key posts: *Director of Safeguarding* and *Head of Safeguarding Training*.

MR PAUL DONALDSON will be *Director of Safeguarding*.



Paul, who was formerly a Detective Superintendent with Police Scotland, currently works with the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO). He will be responsible for the strategic leadership and management of the new agency.

MRS HELENA RAMECKERS will be *Head of Safeguarding Training*.



Helena currently works as Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in the Diocese of Galloway. She will be responsible for developing training resources to enhance the knowledge and skills of all those who are responsible for safeguarding in the Church.

Commenting on the appointments, Lady Rae said, "I am delighted that we have been able to recruit two colleagues of such high calibre who will bring their skills, experience and commitment to the work of our agency. Together with my fellow Directors on the SCSSA Board, I look forward to working with them and with Mary Stein, our Office Administrator, to provide oversight of the Safeguarding policy and practice in all areas of the Catholic Church in Scotland."

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If you wish to offer your views on
how Safeguarding can be improved, please email:
chair@scssa.org.uk

How the SCSSA is starting

listening together

The SCSSA Board Directors have taken a significant step on their journey of listening and learning about Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland - learning from the past, becoming familiar with present arrangements, and looking ahead to future improvements. During their 2-day Induction Training, they learned firstly from those who have been traumatised by the impact of abuse on their lives.

They also met with some of those involved in the 'front line' of Safeguarding. They were helped to reflect on some of the most significant recent developments that have shaped the policies and practices of the Catholic Church in Scotland:

- reports of abuse in Catholic institutions
- the work of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry
- the McLellan Commission
- the Independent Review Group
- the publication of 'In God's Image'
- national safeguarding standards.

Board members found that this initial training helped them to:

- reflect on the scale of the challenge faced by the Church to provide appropriate support for all who have suffered harm
- appreciate the significant safeguarding efforts being made by thousands of volunteers, by professional safeguarding staff, by hundreds of clergy and religious employees across the country
- to focus on the priorities of the new agency in the years ahead.

Some SCSSA Directors offered these reflections on the Induction Training:



Lady Rae
Chair



Pat O'Meara
Vice Chair



Marie Connell



Greg Gallagher



Clare McDade



Pauline McDonald

Pat O'Meara, recently appointed vice-chair of the SCSSA, said: "Our induction training gave us a most helpful insight into the sobering history of abuse within the Church and the safeguards for our children and vulnerable adults that are now in place, including detailed briefings from diocesan safeguarding advisers, parish safeguarding co-ordinators and risk management teams into the good work that is ongoing across the country, especially since 'In God's Image' was published. It was also useful to discuss the relationship that will be in place with the BCOS and the need for the complete independence of the new agency. Meeting with survivors of abuse and hearing their stories was a serious reminder of the vital importance of the work that the agency is about to undertake. Briefings from a Bishop, an IRG member and a respondent to an allegation, gave us all a very sobering start to our first ever time together as an agency. We used the opportunity of being in the same room to hold our first board meeting, and the enthusiasm and determination of all as we start our work was obvious."

Pauline McDonald, Board Director, said: "The Induction Training was both informative and insightful. It gave us the opportunity to meet with survivors of abuse who were able to very selflessly and powerfully share their personal experience and also their views in respect of the recent establishment of the agency and our responsibilities as board members. This, allied with the meetings with other key people, gave us an informed view of safeguarding within the Catholic Church currently and how this will be built upon."

INDEPENDENT DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING AUDITS

Reports on independent safeguarding audits of two further dioceses, carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), have now been published and can be found using these links:

▷ [Archdiocese of Glasgow](#)

▷ [Diocese of Dunkeld.](#)

How the SCSSA plans to develop

working together

At the first formal meeting of the SCSSA Board, Lady Rae established 4 Committees, each led by one Board Director, to focus on the following areas of work:



Survivor Engagement: supporting SCSSA staff to engage with survivors and to ensure that SCSSA policies are informed by survivor perspectives

Safeguarding Training: ensuring the development of safeguarding training to meet the needs of parishes, dioceses, religious congregations and organisations

Audit: monitoring the effectiveness of the audit process, analysis and planning, and facilitating feedback to those who complete audit forms

Policy & Resources: supporting the development of suitable SCSSA policies and monitoring the agency's expenditure and use of resources.

Each Committee Chair will engage with the SCSSA *Director of Safeguarding*, the *Head of Safeguarding Training* and other appropriate personnel in dioceses, parishes, religious congregations and organisations, as well as others with relevant expertise, to address the priorities set for the SCSSA's work over the next three years. It is expected that progress on the work of each committee will be reported on at Board meetings, with specific outcomes being communicated more widely.

learning together

As more continues to be learned about the traumatic impact of abuse on survivors, about the strategies deployed by perpetrators, and about how children and vulnerable adults are still being exploited in various ways, it is clear that the need for Safeguarding learning to be shared is greater than ever. While the SCSSA will spearhead the identification and sharing of best practice in order to promote the highest Safeguarding standards in the Catholic Church in Scotland, it will do so by working closely with practitioners in dioceses, religious congregations and Catholic organisations across Scotland.

In the vital work of **Survivor engagement**, the agency will develop and sustain conversations with individual survivors and groups which support them. It will explore how a 'forum' can be created to enable survivors to share their insights with the agency.

The **Conference of Religious Safeguarding Commission (CRSSC)** will bring to bear its knowledge of the Safeguarding needs of religious congregations on the work of the agency. It will advise on training needs and policy development.

A **Safeguarding Learning Network**, comprising safeguarding professionals led by the *Director of Safeguarding*, will meet regularly to develop resources that can be used to promote consistent practice in dioceses, parishes, religious congregations and organisations. Their work will be informed by researching the best Safeguarding practice that can be found in the UK and internationally, from within faith settings and from other organisations.

A **Safeguarding Training Advisory Group (STAG)**, comprising members from across dioceses, will be led by the *Head of Safeguarding Training* to develop a nationally agreed framework of safeguarding training to meet specific needs identified by various groups – clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers. The agency will promote the importance of regular participation in safeguarding training by volunteers and employees, clergy and religious so that their knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date. The annual National Safeguarding Conference will feature people of significant experience who will provide input on topics that are both stimulating and of direct practical relevance. Providing participants with opportunities for networking with colleagues and for sharing best practice, this event should be a fixture on the calendars of all responsible for Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland.



National Conference: book your place now

*“Every one of the baptised should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need. This change calls for **a personal and communal conversion** that makes us see things as the Lord does. . . This can awaken our conscience and arouse our solidarity and commitment to **a culture of care** that says ‘never again’ to every form of abuse. . . Without **the active participation of all the Church’s members**, everything being done to uproot the culture of abuse in our communities will not be successful in generating the necessary dynamics for sound and realistic change.” (Pope Francis)*



NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE
*for clergy, religious, PSCs, volunteers,
and all responsible for safeguarding in the Catholic Church*

Walking together in Safeguarding

a journey of personal and communal conversion

Saturday 1st October 2022
10am to 4.30pm

University of Strathclyde Technology and Innovation Centre
99 George Street, Glasgow G1 1RD.

Keynote Speakers

Rev. Dr. Hans Zollner SJ
Director of the Institute of Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome; psychologist and psychotherapist; member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.



The Hon. Lady Rae Q.C.
Chair of the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency; lawyer, judge and former Senator of the College of Justice; the first female Rector of the University of Glasgow.



**with SCSSA staff & Board,
DSAs, Religious and others**

EXTENDED EARLY BIRD FEES
(for bookings made by 31st July 2022; thereafter £55 & £25)

£45 for attending in-person
(incl. lunch & refreshments)

£20 for attending via Zoom

For more details and to book,
GO HERE: <https://bit.ly/39dsFPq>



SCOTTISH CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS AGENCY