



A Letter from Bishop Patrick for Parishes and Chaplaincies

Safeguarding Sunday 2025

*To be included in newsletters, and copies also made available
on the weekend of Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th May 2025*

The first Diocesan Safeguarding Audit by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency set against the eight National Standards took place last May. The report's key findings were 'that the Diocese of Nottingham is at the overall grading of *Comprehensive Assurance* at this time' and its Training and Support was graded as *Exemplary*. Good practice was found across all eight of the national safeguarding standards. It also highlighted the diocese's ability to review and develop its practice in response to emerging risks and best practice: 'The diocese has excellent processes for managing its human resources. Safer recruitment processes are robust and have been subject to a comprehensive review and development; processes and policies bring reassurance to the recruitment of the full range of diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers.'

This positive outcome is very much due to the determined efforts of our Diocesan Safeguarding Team, led by Rachael Campion, our Director of Safeguarding, and the very significant support of our clergy and lay people, most particularly the sterling work of our Parish Safeguarding Representatives**. We know, however, that we cannot rest on our laurels, and so we have been making use of the report's recommendations to ensure that we continue to build upon our good practice and address areas that need further development.

We held a Diocesan Safeguarding networking event in Nottingham last November. This was an opportunity for Parish Safeguarding Representatives to gather together, to discuss good practice and to receive some input from the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding, the Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Sub-committee, and some words of gratitude and encouragement from myself. It also provided some very useful feedback on how we can continue to improve our Safeguarding service and the support that is given to parishes. Good communication is always important in helping us to embed good Safeguarding practice across all our parishes and chaplaincies to help ensure that they are safe and welcoming places. The diocesan website has all our Safeguarding information and the support that is offered to parishes and chaplaincies.

From meeting with and listening to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, I do understand that sexual abuse not only heinously violates a child at the time of their abuse but it all too often cruelly robs a child of their future. Victims and survivors of sexual abuse continue to carry throughout their lives the traumatic and life-long consequences of the grave crime of sexual abuse, and I am aware of how it also affects their families and parish communities. Please know that my door, and that of our diocesan Safeguarding department, is always open to anyone affected by abuse.

Please join me in continuing to do everything we each can to learn the lessons from the past and to protect and keep safe the most vulnerable in our communities. As I continue to say, this is surely part and parcel of the DNA of every Christian, an essential characteristic of our identity as Christ's followers, that we respect, protect and treat each other with care. It needs all of us to be engaged in this way of thinking and acting if we are to continue to embed a culture of Safeguarding throughout our diocese. Thank you for all that you each do.

With my prayers and gratitude,

+ Patrick

***Footnote to priests / deacons. If no parish rep is currently in place, please use this opportunity to ask parishioners if anyone would be interested in finding out more about this role. Rachael and the central Safeguarding team offer excellent training.*