

FOREWORD

For many years the Catholic Church in Scotland has been working on issues in relation to the development of good practice with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Much of what has been achieved so far has to be attributed to the extensive work put in by the clergy, religious, paid and voluntary members who work in our dioceses and associated organisations. Their dedication and commitment to working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Church to safeguard them deserves our highest praise and thanks.

The protection of children and all those who are vulnerable is everyone's responsibility. In the Church this shared responsibility is taken very seriously.

The Bishops' Conference of Scotland established the National Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NOPCVA) in 2005 to ensure the development, co-ordination and review of safeguarding policy and practice across the Church.

NOPCVA has updated the policies and procedures and produced this new manual **'Awareness and Safety in Our Catholic Communities'** in collaboration with key personnel across the Dioceses, to inform and support those individuals who have been tasked with the responsibility to minimise the risk of abuse; respond appropriately when children, young people or a vulnerable adult have been harmed or may be at risk of being harmed; and promote their welfare and well-being.

These policies and procedures are evidence of the enduring commitment of the Bishops in Scotland to develop and maintain high quality safeguarding practice for all those who are involved in the life of the Church. The importance of support, guidance, procedures and training and development opportunities for people working with children and those who are vulnerable is recognised and this document should be used to provide a comprehensive and unified approach to the safeguarding programme.

The policy and procedures are clearly and directly linked to the standards set out by the Government in *Protecting Children and Young People 2004: Framework for Standards*.

It is essential that these policies and procedures are adhered to.

In doing so we can be confident that our individual and collective efforts will be increasingly effective in safeguarding all vulnerable people in the Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Keith Patrick O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

His Eminence Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien
Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh

On behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland