

THE CHURCH IN MALTA

SAFEGUARDING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

JULY 2017

www.safeguarding.org.mt
www.thechurchinmalta.org

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Foreword

Since its foundation, the Safeguarding Commission has been committed to a Victims-First approach. We are deeply conscious about the harm all forms of abuse inflict on children and vulnerable adults. Victims and survivors of abuse have not only taught us about the physical, emotional and spiritual suffering, but also about resilience and hope they experienced. Our work is dedicated to them. Their courage in coming forward and disclosing their abuse, that same courage, that first step towards healing, is what motivates us in our work.

The ultimate aim of the Safeguarding Commission is to create a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to improving the standard of practice by raising awareness, increasing prevention and providing ongoing training to full time, part time staff and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults. We collaborate with civil authorities on cases where a crime has been committed and where the Law allows us to share information.

We are also responsible for developing Safety Plans for the person accused. These Plans involve specific safeguarding measures to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults in the Church and wider society.

In 2016, the Commission made a number of recommendations to the government to improve the sharing of information in cases of abuse. We are very pleased with the feedback received particularly from the Ministry of Education and Employment. We held a number of meetings to further explore how these processes can be improved and how the information can be more centralised. We look forward to further collaboration and development with the Minister of Education and Employment and his team in this area.

Besides attending the Anglophone Safeguarding Conference held in Rome in June 2016, the Church in Malta and Gozo agreed to co-host the same Conference held in 2017. This was held in collaboration with the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service and the Centre for Child Protection (Rome). The Anglophone Conference takes place every year and Bishops' Conferences from all over the world are invited to attend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Azzopardi', with a horizontal line underneath.

Andrew Azzopardi
Head of Safeguarding

1. Prevention Model

In 2016 the Safeguarding Commission filed Court Applications under the Protection of Minors Act (2012) for a total of 335 people.

In terms of face to face, safeguarding specific training, we reached over 600 Church personnel (teachers, catechists, priests, religious, seminarians and volunteers). Later this year we will be launching a standalone Safeguarding Workshop which will target staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults. The aim is to increase awareness about abuse of children and vulnerable adults, what can be done to prevent it and what one should do when they are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult. The Safeguarding Commission aims to make attendance at the Safeguarding Workshop compulsory for all people working with children and vulnerable adults.

2. Statistics of Referrals

The Safeguarding Commission concluded a total number of 7 assessments concerning minors and 7 assessments concerning vulnerable adults in 2016. The number of ongoing assessments stands at 12 for minors and 10 for vulnerable adults. In all assessments (ongoing and completed) the Commission recommends necessary immediate action to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and strives to conclude in the shortest possible time frame. However, some assessments take longer than others due to the time needed to listen to all parties involved or also due to court proceedings. Further details can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

3. International Anglophone Safeguarding Conference

The Safeguarding Commission, representing Malta and Gozo, co-hosted the conference held in June 2017 with the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service and the Centre for Child Protection (Rome). The Anglophone Conference has been taking place annually for 15 years. This year's event had the largest attendance with 110 delegates from 14 different countries. The theme of the conference was **Celebrating Hope**. The press release of the conference can be found in Appendix 3.

In 2016, the Safeguarding Commission also attended the International Safeguarding Conference in Rome. The theme was Listening. It was a very powerful conference which brought together over 80 delegates from around the globe to discuss ways in which the Catholic Church could improve listening in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

4. Contributing to National Policy and Practice

As stated in last year's report, in August 2015, the Safeguarding Commission gave substantial feedback to the government on the White Paper "*Effective recruitment and selection procedures for people working with minors*". This was prepared in consultation with various secretariats within the Church, in particular the Secretariat for Catholic Education and the Catholic Schools' Association.

The Safeguarding Commission had follow up meetings with the Ministry of Education and Employment. Discussions are underway to see how we can develop a national policy on sharing information and for best practice to improve safeguarding processes on a national level.

The recommendations made in August 2015 remain valid. The Safeguarding Commission remains committed to the creation of a Safeguarding Authority which would be responsible for receiving information on credible concerns from all organisations working with children and vulnerable adults in Malta and Gozo. The aim is to make organisations responsible for sharing safeguarding concerns about individuals following a Disciplinary Hearing or an internal investigation.

The Commission remains committed to changes to the Police Good Conduct certificate. People who work with children and vulnerable adults should be required to present a detailed Certificate which includes the person's full criminal record to their employer.

5. Services provided by the Safeguarding Commission

Many organisations have approached the Safeguarding Commission for advice, guidance and assistance on policy development, training and investigations. The Safeguarding Commission is launching these services to any interested organisation working with children or vulnerable adults outside the Church. We want to promote best practice in the following:

- Protection of Minors Act (POMA) Court Applications
- Policy development
- Ongoing training for staff and volunteers
- Risk assessments on individuals who have an allegation or conviction of abuse
- Any other advice or service related to the prevention of abuse

Once again, the Safeguarding Commission appeals to anyone who has any concern to contact the Police. The Safeguarding Commission can be contacted on info@safeguarding.org.mt or visit www.safeguarding.org.mt.

Appendix 1: 2016 Safeguarding Data for Minors

Complaints involving minors

Ongoing complaints as of 1st January 2016	7
New complaints in 2016	12

From the above complaints

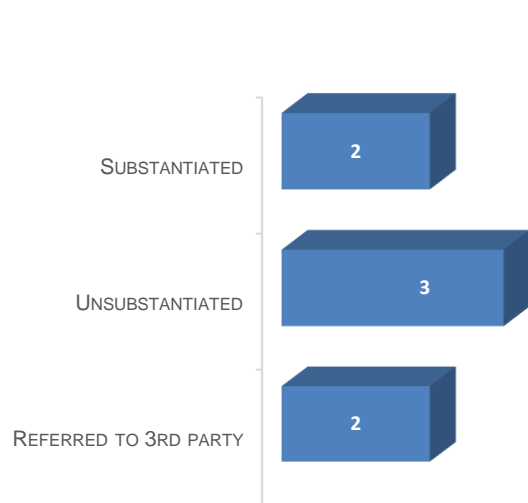
Completed risk assessments in 2016	7
Ongoing risk assessments	12

Restrictions in place for ongoing risk assessments

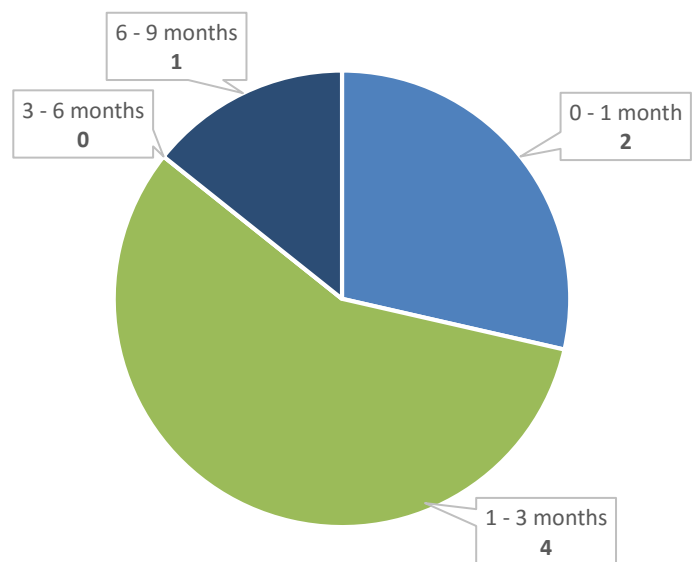
In these cases a non-prejudicial restriction in pastoral activity was imposed while assessment is going.

Diocesan priests (Malta and Gozo)	2
Religious (priests, brothers or nuns)	3
Lay persons	1

Concluded assessments



Length of time to conclude assessments



Persons restricted in pastoral activity after conclusion of the risk assessment

Diocesan priests (Malta and Gozo)	1
Religious (priests, brothers or nuns)	0
Lay persons	1

Appendix 2: 2016 Safeguarding Data for Vulnerable Adults

Complaints involving vulnerable adults

Ongoing complaints as of 1st January 2016	5
New complaints in 2016	12

From the above complaints

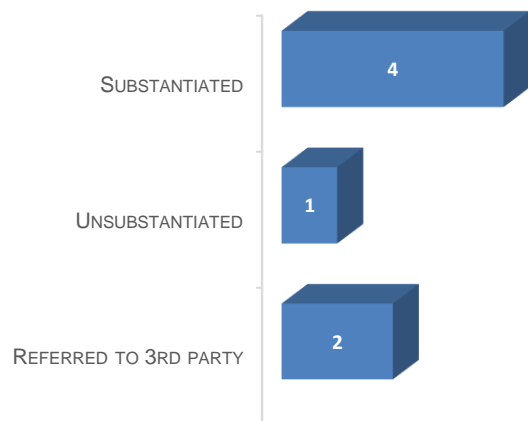
Completed risk assessments in 2016	7
Ongoing risk assessments	10

Restrictions in place for ongoing risk assessments

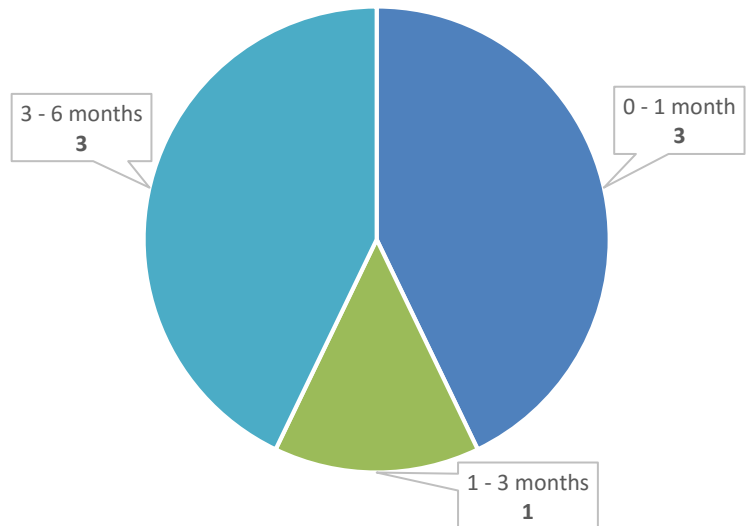
In these cases a non-prejudicial restriction in pastoral activity was imposed while assessment is going.

Diocesan priests (Malta and Gozo)	1
Religious (priests, brothers or nuns)	0
Lay persons	0

Concluded assessments



Length of time to conclude assessments



Persons restricted in pastoral activity after conclusion of the risk assessment

Diocesan priests (Malta and Gozo)	0
Religious (priests, brothers or nuns)	0
Lay persons	1

Appendix 3: Anglophone Safeguarding Conference Press Release

Celebrating HOPE

Scotland | Centre for Child Protection | Malta

ANGLOPHONE **SAFEGUARDING**
CONFERENCE 2017 ROME
PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA JUNE 19 | 22

Rome, 22nd June 2017

Celebrating Hope

Hope exists for survivors and offenders. Professional lay people, members of Episcopal Conferences and Religious met to discuss hope for the future of safeguarding within the Catholic Church, with the central premise of re-affirming the a victims-based approach.

This year's Anglophone Safeguarding Conference was jointly organised by the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service, the Safeguarding Commission of Malta and the Centre for Child Protection (CCP) of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome from **19-22 June**. The 2017 theme, **Celebrating Hope**, was explored from different perspectives.

In a powerful keynote presentation, the 111 delegates at the Conference listened to the experience of five survivors of intrafamilial abuse which allowed them to reflect on best practice in responding to abuse disclosures.

At the Conference, that reaffirmed the importance of a victims-first approach, Fr David Songy OFM Cap, President of St Luke's Institute (Maryland, USA) explored the question, "*Is there hope for offenders within the Church?*", and detailed the options for risk assessment and treatment for offenders.

Mgr Charles J. Scicluna, Archbishop of Malta, addressed the delegates' questions regarding the diocesan safeguarding role. "*The Church needs to keep progressing beyond an amateur approach in safeguarding and take advice from experts in the field*", he said. The former Promoter of Justice at the CDF insisted the Church should not adopt a "*one size fits all method*" when it comes to safeguarding. Archbishop Luis Ladaria SJ, Secretary of the CDF, reflected on the theological "settings of hope" within the context of abuse.

Fr Hans Zollner SJ, the President of the CCP, when presenting the new Guidelines of the Church for the formation of seminarians and priests, pointed out that experience and data show that "*prevention works and formation works. Investing time, energy and personnel pays off.*"

Prof Karlijn Demasure, executive director of the CCP, and Dr Katharina Fuchs (CCP) highlighted the need to cope with secondary victimisation, i.e. families and communities who are harmed and hurt because of abuse that happened in their midst.

When addressing the pastoral response to abuse, Br Brendan Geary, the Provincial of the Marist Brothers of West-Central Europe, noted the priority is meeting the needs of the victims. However, to be able to do so, it is necessary to give attention also to the carers: those who work in safeguarding.

Mrs Tina Campbell and Mr Andrew Azzopardi, safeguarding leads of Scotland and Malta respectively, thanked the speakers for offering the Conference delegates different opportunities to celebrate hope. “*I am confident that those present were inspired by the speakers and will work to translate the insights gained into reality in their respective countries*”, said Mr Azzopardi. Mrs Tina Campbell expressed her gratitude to the generous response of the Major Religious Superiors to the invitation to join the Anglophone for the first time this year. She added, “*good collaborative relationships where expertise is shared are at the heart of what we do in the context of the Anglophone and during the intervening time, from one year to the next.*”

The Annual Safeguarding Conference of safeguarding professionals aims at increasing the opportunity for sharing and networking. The objective of the event is to improve safeguarding practices throughout the Catholic Church.

The Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service is an agency of the Episcopal Conference of Scotland. Tina Campbell, as the National Safeguarding Coordinator, is responsible for the development of safeguarding policies and training resources. She offers support and advice in relation to survivors of abuse and the management of offenders.

The Safeguarding Commission of Malta is an entity founded by the Archdiocese of Malta, the Diocese of Gozo and the Conference of Religious Major Superiors. The Commission works to develop a culture where children and vulnerable adults are at the centre of the Church’s pastoral work. It does this by completing risk assessments when an allegation is made and by promoting the prevention of all types of abuse through increased awareness and positive action.

The Centre for Child Protection (CCP) of the Institute of Psychology of the Pontifical Gregorian University is part of a global initiative of the Catholic Church for the prevention of sexual abuse of minors. It offers training programme for the prevention of sexual abuse.



www.scottishcatholicsafeguarding.org.uk
tcampbell@scottishcatholicsafeguarding.org.uk



www.safeguarding.org.mt
andrew@safeguarding.org.mt



www.childprotection.unigre.it
childprotection@unigre.it