

Scouting Ireland
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Statement from Scouting Ireland

Re: Scouting Ireland has learned from past mistakes.

All of us involved in Scouting have been deeply saddened by the information which has come to light in recent days. 108 alleged victims have shared information with us concerning 71 alleged perpetrators who were active in our legacy organisations. It is important that we acknowledge the terrible wrongs of the past - the majority of these cases occurred between the 1960s and the 1980s and that we support those who are now speaking for the first time, some having lived with this heavy burden for many years. We have informed the relevant statutory authorities of alleged perpetrators still alive and will co-operate fully with any criminal investigations. It is important to reiterate that none of the alleged perpetrators are active in Scouting Ireland today.

It is extremely important to me as Chair of Scouting Ireland, as someone who has been a proud member of Scouting Ireland for more than 20 years, but primarily as a mother, to know that Scouting Ireland is prioritising safeguarding. I want to say that Scouting is a safe organisation and I intend to put my own two children into it when they reach the age of 6.

I want to reassure all parents and all members of Scouting Ireland that this organisation is very different from the legacy organisations that merged to form Scouting Ireland in 2004. Those organisations operated in different times, where mandatory reporting was not in place, and where society's understanding and approach to safeguarding was not as we now understand it should be. Like many organisations which operated in Ireland in the past, we have learnt from these mistakes.

Safeguarding is the broad term we use for the measures we put in place to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people especially children, young people and vulnerable adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Scouting Ireland as a youth organisation has always been committed to safeguarding all our members and volunteers. Parents and members can be reassured that Scouting Ireland is fully compliant with the Children First Legislation and was one of the first youth organisations in the country to implement policies which met the requirements of the legislation.

Every adult volunteer and staff member is Garda vetted when they join the organisation and every 3 years thereafter. All adult volunteers receive training in safeguarding and this training is updated as we continuously expand our understanding of the social and other pressures that children face today.

Our safeguarding policies have been reviewed by independent statutory authorities including Tusla, the Charities Regulator and the Gardai. We have also developed a new 'Victim's Policy'

Reg. No. 397094
Charity No. CHY3507

PATRON Michael D. Higgins PRESIDENT OF IRELAND



Member of World Organisation of the Scout Movement

Directors: A list of names and personal details of every director of the company is available for inspection to the public at the company's registered office for a nominal fee. Scouting Ireland is a company limited by guarantee exempt from using the word "limited". Registered Office: Scouting Ireland National Office, Larch Hill, Dublin 16

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which sets out how Scouting Ireland will respond to victims of any wrongdoing in our organisation.

We are advertising in the national and international media for a fulltime safeguarding manager. They will play an important role in ensuring that all our policies are implemented without fear or favour and we are strengthening governance to make sure this is the case.

The professional safeguarding team has been doing very diligent work in creating an environment where complaints are responded to professionally and with compassion. Every person coming forward with a complaint relating to sexual abuse is encouraged and supported in bringing their complaint to the relevant statutory authorities. This is not easy work and the team have been busy, but not overwhelmed, responding to contacts in the past few days.

Anyone who wishes to speak to one of our team, in confidence, may call our dedicated helpline 1 800 221199 (Freephone) or email safeguarding@scouts.ie.

As an organisation, safeguarding of children and adults is our number one priority. Ian Elliott, Ireland's foremost safeguarding expert has fully endorsed the commitment of the board and the professional team to safeguarding all our members. We have an outstanding youth membership of over 40,000 people who vote with their feet every week by joining activities in Scout dens all over the island of Ireland. They, the young people, have trust and confidence in their organisation.

We cannot change the past, but you can be reassured that Scouting Ireland has safeguarding procedures in place and the new board is continuously reviewing our processes. We are a safe environment for all our members.

Yours in scouting

Aisling Kelly
Chair of Board Directors
Scouting Ireland

23rd November 2018

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