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**BOD-OUT-24-2018**

**Ref: Statement to Members**

**11th December 2018**

Dear Member,

The following statement has been issue to media outlets today and is likely to appear in the papers tomorrow.

**Statement:**

Today, Scouting Ireland met with the statutory authorities (An Garda Síochána and Túsla) to provide an interim update on the organisation's investigation into historical abuse within its legacy organisations - the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland (CBSI) and the Scouting Association of Ireland (SAI). We also provided Minister Zappone with updated information.

The current investigation is being conducted by Mr Ian Elliott, which commenced in the Summer, has yielded new information to us which is deeply shocking and distressing for everyone involved in Scouting. Young people in the care of these organisations were abused, sexually and physically. The alleged perpetrators were at all levels within the organisations. There is evidence of alleged perpetrators being moved within scout groups.

The stories emerging are difficult for those telling them. We are deeply sorry that anyone who would have expected to be safe in these organisations were not. We want to assure those who have come forward that we are taking all allegations seriously and are following up on every piece of information shared with us.

Ian Elliott and the executive team in Scouting Ireland have undertaken extensive work to date. As of today we now know of 212 known and alleged perpetrators and of 317 alleged victims, over the last 70 years. All of the calls received to date relate to cases predating Scouting Ireland. The majority of the abuse appears to have taken place in the period between the 1960's and the 1990's.

Scouting Ireland, which was founded in 2004, inherited this situation and is now dealing with its consequences. We are observing all our statutory reporting requirements and we are working closely with An Garda Síochána and Túsla, the Child and Family Agency to ensure all complaints against alleged perpetrators still living are investigated thoroughly and appropriate action taken as necessary. Clear pathways for reporting have been established and the Gardai have full access to all information held by Scouting Ireland. As has always been Scouting Ireland's policy, the organisation is co-operating fully with An Garda Síochána and Túsla in any further investigations.

Reg. No. 397094  
Charity No. CHY3507

**PATRON Michael D. Higgins PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**



Member of World Organisation of the Scout Movement

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The Garda have expressed their confidence, in the level of co-operation being provided and in the reporting, approach taken by Scouting Ireland. We have also had contact with statutory agencies in Northern Ireland and have confirmed that we will inform them of any cases relevant to that jurisdiction.

We recognise the personal traumas suffered by the alleged victims and we are providing counselling support to victims who wish to receive it and we want to assure all victims that we will support them. Emergency financial measures are being considered by Scouting Ireland to provide resources and support.

What is encouraging for those of us who love Scouting Ireland and who have benefited from being a member of the organisation both as children and adults, is that while wanting their story to be heard, and justice to be sought against the alleged perpetrators, victims do not wish to see scouting cease.

We hope that those who are coming forward, and all our members, are reassured by the actions we are taking in relation to historic cases of sexual abuse. We also hope that they are reassured by the safeguarding protocols in place in our organisation today. We are compliant with Children First Legislation and have had a policy of recording and reporting all complaints of alleged abuse made to us to the statutory authorities.

On the advice of Ian Elliott, we have revised our policies and procedures in the past number of months to strengthen safeguarding in our organisation. This includes a revised dispute and grievances policy, a revised disciplinary policy, a victims policy and support programme, procedures for escalating complaints of alleged abuse to the Board and the appointment of an interim Disciplinary Officer. We will be advertising for a fulltime Disciplinary Officer and are in the process of recruiting a full time Safeguarding Manager.

The safeguarding of children and adults is the number one priority of the board and the executive team. We thank those who have come forward and shared information with us. It means we can take action and become a stronger and safer organisation as a result.

Scouting Ireland's helpline number is 1 800 221199 and it remains open Monday - Sunday 9am - 6pm.

**ENDS.**

Yours in Scouting,

*Board of Directors of Scouting Ireland*

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