

Scouting Ireland  
National Office  
Larch Hill  
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## **Crisis Team Head Communique no.1 – Safeguarding in Scouting Ireland**

**CMT-OUT-01-2018**

### **Introduction**

This communique is being issued by Martin Burbridge who was appointed by the NMC/Board to head the Crisis Team to try and steer a path through the crisis the NMC/Board and Scouting Ireland is facing. This is in addition to my other roles as chairperson of the Governance Review Group and chairperson of the Audit and Risk Management Committee. I admit to a bias in favour of the governance proposals because I have a deep belief that they offer a viable solution to the problems we are facing at Board level.

For those of you who do not know me here I set out some information about myself.

I was the first Chief Scout of Scouting Ireland, June 2003 to September 2008 and I am currently an Honorary Vice President. I am an experienced leader and people manager with a proven ability to plan, develop and implement strategy, to innovate new initiatives and to manage, direct and motivate others.

I worked for almost 40 years for IDA Ireland. Just before I retired in 2010 I was Secretary to the Board and Head of Corporate Development & Property Division. Previously I held senior roles including Manager Property Division, Chief Accountant, Chief Financial Officer and Head of IT & Communications.

I was Chairperson of the Audit Committee of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement for 6 years.

I am a retired Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (FCMA) with a Diploma (with merit) in Business Studies in Strategy NCEA and undertook the Wharton Business School Executive Development Programme in November 2000 in Penn State University in the USA. I have been an Adult Leader Trainer in Scouting Ireland since the mid 1990's.

Reg. No. 397094  
Charity No. CHY3507

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



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The above is just intended to give you an idea of my suitability to try and find a way through the current crisis.

This communique is the first in a series that I will issue in the coming week or two because I firmly believe that we need to share with you all as much information as possible. Given that there is a desire for more information on a variety of issues please do not then accuse me of scaremongering. I will simply set out the factual situation. The first of these communiques which deals with Safeguarding is set out below.

## **Safeguarding Reporting Procedure**

You will see below that the NMC/Board has agreed that the recruitment of new professionally qualified Safeguarding Manager is a priority for Scouting Ireland.

Until this recruitment process has been completed the NMC/Board has appointed Ian Elliott to undertake this role. Ian is an internationally recognised expert on this field

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Any person who wishes to contact the Safeguarding Manager or team should do so as follows:

1. By person if someone wishes to share a concern that they hold for the welfare of a child, they can call into Larch Hill and speak to an available member of the Team.
2. By telephone to National Office 01 4956300 and ask to speak to a member of the safeguarding team. If no one is available, a call back number can be left, and someone will return the call when free to do so.
3. By email to the Safeguarding Team at National Office <mailto:safeguarding@scouts.ie> giving the information that they hold that gives rise to their concern.

Whichever way the concern is communicated, a record will be kept of when the contact took place, who it was made by, who received it, and when it was acted upon. Ian will oversee all of this as part of his extended duties.

As part of the implementation of the recommendations flowing from the review, it was agreed that separate accommodation would be provided for the safeguarding team. This will be implemented as soon as funds become available. When this is put into effect, we will look at a dedicated telephone line and number for that office.

## The Management of Child Protection and Safeguarding Concerns

In mid-2017 the NMC/Board commissioned a review of the Scouting Ireland Safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices with a view to establishing whether any improvements were needed. The consultant engaged to undertake this review was Ian Elliott an internationally recognised expert on this field.

His initial report was presented to the NMC/Board in November 2017 and it must be admitted that it made for grim reading. The findings of the report showed that our policies, procedures, and practices were incomplete and were not of the required standard.

The NMC/Board unanimously accepted the recommendations made in the report and have developed an action plan and started implementing the recommendations.

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The key recommendations made to improve Safeguarding in Scouting Ireland and the resultant action points are:

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action Points</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1.	An action plan should be created which indicates how these recommendations will be achieved, by whom and by when.	<p>The Action plan has been prepared and comprises 20 specific action points.</p> <p>Safeguarding Budget Total Cost to include capital &amp; annual operational costs</p> <p>Secure Office &amp; Filing Cabinets in Larch Hill &amp; SFNI</p>	<p>This plan is being updated and progress or problems are reported on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Budget developed but rollout dependent on funds being available.</p> <p>In progress.</p>
2.	The Child Protection Management Team was stood down and a new safeguarding structure is to be developed including the recruitment of new professionally qualified Safeguarding Manager in National Office and additional staff in the Provinces. Some of these new staff will be hired on a part time sessional basis	<p>Reviewing current practice. Compare to similar organisations, adherence to legislation.</p>	<p>In progress. Ian Elliott is currently in the role of Safeguarding Manager on a temporary basis, until a suitably qualified person is recruited.</p> <p>Proposed new structure has been shared with NMC. Staff allocation to include sessional experts, i.e. qualified people in various locations throughout the country hired on</p>

		<p>Prepare revised structure. Approval and sign off.</p> <p>Ensure that training modules are updated to reflect change and to include all SI materials.</p> <p>Ensure we Provide the same level of care, support, information and advice across the island</p>	<p>a contract and available when needed.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p>Agreed and in progress.</p> <p>This is now the stated aim for the Safeguarding Manager and Team.</p>
3.	<p>The gaps that exist in the policy framework must be addressed by the NMC/Board making clear statements as to what behaviours are unacceptable within Scouting Ireland</p>	<p>Policy to ensure that an annual audit of safeguarding polices, framework and compliance is conducted by an external professional.</p> <p>Update and continuous review of recruitment process, vetting process, appropriate training modules developed</p>	<p>Allocated to Safeguarding Manager and in progress.</p> <p>Commenced.</p>

		and delivered in a manner compliant with jurisdictions. Ensure that training modules are updated to reflect change.  Introduce Suspension without prejudice	Under consideration by the Board.
4.	A disciplinary policy to be applied to volunteers should be created by the NMC/Board. This will include any sanctions that may be applied where people have acted or behaved in an unacceptable manner. This will include a suspension without prejudice approach to be adopted to replace the current voluntary abstention approach	Prepare sanctions framework to support safeguarding policies, compliance and monitoring In line with Constitution & Rules of SI and adhering to legislation.  Ensure that training modules are updated to reflect change and to include all SI materials	In progress  In progress.
5.	Confidentiality is an enforceable requirement for anyone who occupies a safeguarding role in Scouting Ireland	Dedicated Website for Safeguarding.  Standard templates for the recording of meetings, memo's and monthly reports to be developed and USED by all involved in Safeguarding	Commenced but completion subject to funding being available.
6.	The Safe Guarding Manager is the responsible officer for the response made to all child protection and safeguarding	Set out the process for concerns to be reported to SI	Communique issued.  Further work ongoing.

	concerns that arise. Resources must be made available to ensure that this happens	Develop a series of publications for safeguarding.  Process for supporting ALL involved in safe guarding issues to be drafted, approved and reviewed on an annual basis in line with annual external audit  Standard templates for the recording of meetings, memo's and monthly reports to be developed and USED by all involved in Safeguarding	In progress.  Process review and development to commence shortly.  In progress
7.	Safeguarding to be adopted as a standing agenda item for NMC/Board meetings.	Agreed.  Develop a standardised annual review of all staff – role specific SG policy frame work to include training and ongoing education of ALL involved in safeguarding	Implemented.  Commenced.
8.	Anyone appointed as a liaison for the subject of any complaint, will not be allowed to act as an advocate for them	Terms of reference for liaison volunteers to be updated and amended.  Performance of the	In Progress.  Being implemented.

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		role to be monitored by the Safeguarding Team.	
9.	All historic case files should be critically examined to confirm that they do not include any information that would indicate the mismanagement of past or current risk where the victim or alleged offender, are alive today	All historic cases to be reviewed by the Safeguarding manager.	Commenced due for completion before the end of this year.

**Martin Burbridge**

**Head of Crisis Management Team**

**15<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

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