

	Gasóga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland			
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	Category: Safeguarding			
Responding to Victims of Abuse within Scouting Ireland				

Scouting Ireland – Responding to Victims of Abuse within Scouting Ireland

Aim of the Policy:

To set down the steps that should be taken to respond to those who have been subject to abuse whilst involved in Scouting.

Context:

Scouting Ireland has a deep concern for the welfare of all its members both past and present. It recognises and accepts that not every child who participates in Scouting has been treated with respect and kept safe. This policy seeks to ensure that every survivor of abuse in Scouting, is listened to, supported, and helped to overcome the effects of their abuse, in all ways that lie within the means of Scouting Ireland to provide.

Scouting Ireland has issued a sincere and deeply felt apology to all those people who have been subjected to abuse, through their involvement with Scouting Ireland or the organisations that preceded its creation in 2003. It is understood that the effects of abuse suffered as a child or young person, can be long-lasting. The impact on a victim can be life-changing and extremely damaging. It is for these reasons that this policy has been adopted and will remain within our policy framework.

Our commitment to all our present members is to try to provide for you an opportunity to grow and develop through a range of positive experiences. Our desire is to ensure your safety and your wellbeing, but we recognise that we have failed to do this on occasions in the past. For those whom we have failed previously, we once again apologise. For our present and future members, be assured that we will remain vigilant and attentive to your needs for safety.

Responsibility for Victims of Abuse:

The lead officer within Scouting Ireland for responding to victims of abuse is the Safeguarding Manager, who is supported by a team of committed professionals. When a victim of abuse within Scouting makes themselves known, this information should be shared directly with the Relevant Person as defined in Children First 2015 legislation. The Safeguarding Manager will be briefed on all

cases. He / she will in turn brief the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors. The legal adviser for the organisation should also be notified.

The engagement with the victim should be directed by the Safeguarding Manager who will seek to gather from them what their current needs are.

Where the victim is disclosing abuse that involves a living alleged offender, this information should be passed to the appropriate statutory child protection agency in whatever jurisdiction applies. The existence of current risk must be assessed and shape the responses made within Scouting or in the wider community, if the alleged offender is no longer involved.

Where the alleged offender is deceased, the details of the information shared by the victim should be recorded and placed within a case file.

Supporting Victims of Abuse within Scouting:

Scouting Ireland is driven by a strong desire to help and support those that have been abused through contact with Scouting. It seeks to go beyond a situation where its actions are compelled by legal necessity. Rather, it will be guided by its sense of acting in line with the values upon which the organisation is based.

When someone identifies themselves as having been subject to abuse within Scouting, a comprehensive assessment must be undertaken from within the Safeguarding Team, which seeks to identify the ways in which a victim can be supported and helped to overcome any difficulties that they may be experiencing in life. This assessment will attempt to identify the impact of the abuse and how the trauma suffered by the individual has caused them harm. This will guide the decision making as to what are the ways in which a victim may be helped and supported.

It is important to state that any engagement with a victim does not preclude them making use of other available avenues open to them to seek redress. Also, the response that is made to the victim will be guided by the stated needs of the individual. It is recognised that for some they may wish to be afforded the dignity of being listened to and apologised to personally for what happened to them. Their confidentiality must be respected. It may also be the case that due to the high emotional content involved in disclosing past abuse, a victim may need time to build up the trust to speak about their experiences.

Scouting Ireland recognises that it holds a responsibility to be sensitive to and open to the needs of those people who have been hurt through previous involvement with Scouting. It will hold itself accountable against these standards in its present and future practice.

Scouting Ireland, when working with victims will:

- endeavour to treat each victim with the utmost compassion and empathy
- conduct a comprehensive assessment that must be undertaken from within the Safeguarding Team, which seeks to identify the ways in which a victim can be supported and helped to overcome any difficulties that they may be experiencing in life.
- aim to identify the impact of the abuse and how the trauma suffered by the individual has caused them harm
- develop help and support specific to each victim
- ensure that confidentiality for the victim is paramount

Contact details:

Safeguarding Manager:

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- Email safeguarding@scouts.ie

Relevant Person: Jill Lacey

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- E-mail safeguarding@scouts.ie