



A Message to the Diocese for the weekend of 22/23 October 2022 following the publication of the Final Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

On Thursday 20th October, the Panel of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published its final report after seven years of work. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Catholic Council welcome this report and thank the Inquiry for its work and will carefully study its contents and recommendations.

It has been painful and shaming for us to read the *Report*, and I know that whatever we experience, is but a shadow of the agony and pain caused to the victims and survivors of abuse within our Church. Their voices must continue to be fully heard. To anyone who carries this burden or who has been hurt in any way, I say how sorry I am on behalf of the Catholic Church. I can assure you that we will not stop in our journey of dedicated effort in making the life and work of the Church safe for all.

Before the publication of the case study report into the Roman Catholic Church in November 2020, the Church commissioned an independent review into its safeguarding work and structures, which is now in the process of being implemented. A new national safeguarding body, the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), was created and began operational work in April 2021. The Agency provides a regulatory function to organisations within the Church in England and Wales ensuring that standards are upheld, and all safeguarding processes adhered to. These changes were fully aligned with the Inquiry's recommendations in the case study report.

Key to this progress is the voice of victims and survivors of abuse which has been an integral element in the development of this new agency. The Church remains committed to listening with humility to those who have been hurt by the actions of Church members so that their experiences will inform our work.

Clearly, the IICSA Report will be key in informing our ongoing work of Safeguarding in our diocese, and I can confirm that the work of our diocesan Safeguarding Office is already aligned to the new agency, the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA). I would like to thank all those generous people, Catholic and non-Catholic, who are an important part of our Safeguarding processes. Another message setting out in greater detail how our diocese is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the recommendations arising from the Independent Inquiry will follow in the next few weeks.

It is important for us to again offer an unreserved apology to all those who have been hurt by abuse in the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales and to reaffirm our commitment to the continued refinement and improvement of our safeguarding work to protect all children and the vulnerable. Please keep all those engaged in this work in your prayers, but above all, those who have suffered abuse in their lives. I attach some contact details of our diocesan Safeguarding Office.

With my prayer,

Canon Paul Cummins
Diocesan Administrator

(a) The IICSA Report can be downloaded at:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/inquiry/final-report>

(b) Contact details of our diocesan Safeguarding Office:

Telephone: 01364 645430

E-mail: safeguarding@prcdtr.org.uk

Address: Safeguarding Office
St Boniface House
Ashburton
Newton Abbot
TQ13 7JL

The Office is open Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm

(c) Information regarding the Catholic Council:

The Catholic Council for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse was created in 2015, at the commencement of the Inquiry's work. It has assisted IICSA under its Chair, Baroness Nuala O'Loan, and has representatives from both the Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious. It has supported the numerous organisations that make up the Catholic Church in England and Wales in their engagement with IICSA and ensured that the evidence required by the Inquiry was collated appropriately.