

# INFORMATION FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE



Diocese of  
Argyll and the  
Isles

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Charity registration number:  
SC002876

**MAKING CONTACT**

The Diocese of Argyll and the Isles does not underestimate your courage in coming forward to disclose your experience. You will be treated with the utmost respect and compassion at all times. We want to offer you the opportunity to be listened to, to be taken seriously, and to be supported. Once you have made contact with someone within the Church, they will immediately contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) who will become your primary contact throughout the process.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN?**

The DSA will contact you and you will be invited to choose how, when and where you wish to meet. The location and the people present will be your choice. You may, for example, wish to bring a friend to a place where you feel safe, or you may wish to have another representative of the Church in attendance with the DSA. This representative may be male or female, a priest, or a member of a religious order, or not. We understand that you are not to blame for what happened. We understand that the prospect of speaking out about abuse is frightening and overwhelming, and we want help and support you.

**MANDATORY REPORTING**

The Diocese of Argyll and the Isles must report all allegations of abuse to the Police. This will happen whether the accused person is alive or deceased. You may choose to contact the Police yourself as well, if you have not already done so.

*“Looking back on the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated.”*

Pope Francis, Letter to People 2, quoted in In God's Image, v 2

**DURING THE FIRST MEETING**

The purpose of the first meeting is for the DSA to listen to you. You will be encouraged to share as much information as you feel comfortable with. You will also be encouraged to express what, if anything, you are seeking from the Church. The DSA will take notes; however, everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence and you will be listened to with respect.

**AFTER THE FIRST MEETING**

At the end of the first meeting, the DSA will agree with you a summary of decisions and/or actions that will be taken. This may include:

- Referral to Raphael Counselling Service. This service is provided independently of the Catholic Church. An initial 12 sessions will be funded by the Diocese, with an option to extend if required.
- Assistance accessing further support.
- Follow-up meetings.

These will only go ahead if this is what you would like to happen.

The DSA will continue to be your primary contact after the first meeting and will keep you informed of the progress of any actions you have agreed on.

**CONTACT US**

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