



DIOCESE OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES BISHOP'S ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT 2022

To be read during all Weekend Masses 15th & 16th October 2022

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

During this year our diocese was independently audited to verify how well we had implemented the recommendations of the McLellan Report.

All eight Scottish dioceses have now been independently reviewed. Along with the other bishops I voted that these Independent Reviews take place. I have always believed that the Church must do the right thing in Safeguarding precisely because it is the right thing to do. However, due to past errors and the subsequent harm caused, the Church must also be seen to do right thing. Only then can the Church offer some healing for survivors and restore credibility and confidence among clergy and parishioners as well as in wider society.

People have been deeply hurt by past failings in the Church, including among its leadership. The Church has lost moral authority and is dismissed by many in society. This has grievously harmed our ability to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. And that Good News of Jesus Christ is so needed today.

Before the Audit I was nervous. Although I was confident in the progress our diocese had made, I was aware that a negative report would be hurtful for survivors, hurtful for you as well as impede our divinely bestowed mission of spreading the Good News. As bishop I felt a high level of personal responsibility to be able to demonstrate that we comply with our national Safeguarding Standards.

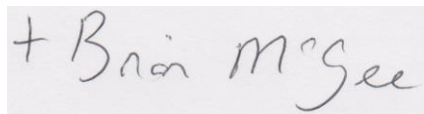
However, the Audit process was a positive experience. Every diocese studied each other's reports and so learnt from both the strengths and challenges of others. Our own diocese self-evaluated as we strove for improvement. The

auditors were satisfied that, although we still had room for progress, the evidence demonstrated that Safeguarding was taken extremely seriously in Argyll and the Isles.

Afterwards while reflecting on the audit report I concluded that in Safeguarding we had formed a strong team. Across our scattered diocese priests, deacons, diocesan Groups, parish and diocesan volunteers, staff and myself all worked together for the one aim: keeping people safe.

Keeping vulnerable people safe is a core Gospel value. It is a success that we are growing in our understanding that safeguarding is natural for Christians. I thank you for all you are doing to develop our diocesan culture of safeguarding and I look forward to continue working with you as a team to address the recommendations from the independent audit.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature reads "+ Brian McGee". The plus sign is at the beginning, followed by the name "Brian McGee" in a cursive script.

Right Reverend Brian McGee
Bishop of Argyll and the Isles

Charity Registration No. SC002876