



## RC DIOCESE OF ARGYLL & THE ISLES

### GUIDANCE ON RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OUTWITH THE CHURCH

The Church welcomes people who have suffered distress and trauma and we are keen to offer support to anyone who needs it. Priests are often consulted by people in difficulty who sometimes reveal past abuse. This is some brief guidance on how to respond to this.

If a person comes to you with an allegation of abuse which is nothing to do with a Church activity or Church personnel, an Initial Referral Form should be completed and it should be referred to the DSA, even if the person wishes to remain anonymous. The DSA will then log the allegation for potential future reference. This is important because in the future a criminal enquiry may rely on the disclosure of this abuse, especially if it is the first time the abuse has been disclosed to anyone. The police consider the first disclosure as “best admissible evidence”.

It is equally important that the person making the allegation is dealt with sympathetically. Pastoral care should be offered. The person should be encouraged, but not pressurised, to report the allegation to the police and they should be signposted to organisations which could help them.

Below is a list of relevant organisations based within our diocese:

#### Western Isles Rape Crisis Centre

Helpline/Support: 01851 709 965

Office: 01851 709 965, [info@wircc.org.uk](mailto:info@wircc.org.uk), [www.wircc.co.uk](http://www.wircc.co.uk)

#### Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland (RASASH)

Helpline/Support: 03330 066 909, Text: 07451 288 080, [support@rasash.org.uk](mailto:support@rasash.org.uk)

Office: 01463 257 657, [info@rasash.org.uk](mailto:info@rasash.org.uk), [www.rasash.org.uk](http://www.rasash.org.uk)

#### Argyll & Bute Rape Crisis Centre

Helpline/Support: 0800 121 4685; [support@ab-rs.org.uk](mailto:support@ab-rs.org.uk)

Office: 01369 700 800, [info@ab-rc.org.uk](mailto:info@ab-rc.org.uk), [www.ab-rc.org.uk](http://www.ab-rc.org.uk)

*Obviously, if the allegation involves a Church activity or Church personnel, IGI must be followed: it must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA), an Initial Referral Form completed, a DRAMT meeting called and the situation reported to the police by the DSA.*