

Update #5 – 21st December 2018



Thank you for taking the time to keep up to date with the work of the Board of Scouting Ireland. We will endeavour to inform you about the decisions and actions of the Board in so far as possible. Certain matters must remain confidential or can only be discussed in outline and we ask for your understanding.

Scouting Ireland faces a serious challenge. We need your help and support. If you have suggestions or ideas about how to help build a stronger Scouting Ireland please email: board@scouts.ie

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Ongoing Historic Case Review

Scouting Ireland met with An Garda Síochána and Tusla to provide an interim update on the organisation's investigation into historical abuse within its legacy organisations - the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland (CBSI) / Scouting Ireland CSI and the Scout Association of Ireland (SAI) / Scouting Ireland SAI. We also provided Minister Zappone with updated information on 28th November 2018 in person and by letter dated 7th December 2018.

In November 2018 Scouting Ireland opened a helpline for victims of Child Sexual Abuse in Scouting in Ireland. We received in excess of 160 calls in a 4 week period, these calls related to new and known victims and to Persons Subject to Abuse Allegations (PSAA). Along with this information and the information in our files, it demonstrated a very shocking and distressing narrative. We now know of 212 known PSAA's and of 317 alleged victims, over the last 70 years.

All of the calls received to date relate to cases predating the establishment of Scouting Ireland in 2004. The majority of the alleged abuse reported appears to have taken place in the period between the 1960s and the 1990s.

The PSAA's were at all levels within the organisations and there is evidence of some alleged PSAA's moving between Scout Groups.

We are deeply sorry that any Young Person was subjected to any abuse in Scouting in Ireland. We want to assure those who have come forward that we are taking all allegations seriously and are following up on every piece of information shared with us.

We recognise the personal traumas suffered by the victims and we are providing counselling support to these victims who wish to receive it and we want to assure all victims that we will support them.

Scouting Ireland inherited this situation and is now dealing with its consequences. We are observing all our statutory reporting requirements and we are working closely with all statutory authorities to ensure all complaints against PSAA's are investigated thoroughly and appropriate action is taken as necessary. Clear pathways for reporting have been established and the Gardaí / PSNI and Tusla and the Gateway Services Team in Northern Ireland have full access to all information held by Scouting Ireland.

Detective Chief Superintendent Declan Daly of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau has expressed his confidence in the level of co-operation being provided. We have also had contact with the statutory agencies in Northern Ireland and have confirmed that we will provide them with all relevant information.

Emergency financial measures are being considered to provide resources and support and will be finalised in January 2019. An initial update has been issued to Scout Counties. In particular we need to set up a fund to support the victims. These are our brother and sister Scouts who have been abused in the past by members of our own legacy organisations. It is time to turn our face towards them and look after them. They should never have been treated this way.

We hope that those who are coming forward, and all our members, are reassured by the actions we are taking. We also hope that they are reassured by the safeguarding protocols in place in our organisation today. We are compliant with Children First Legislation and have had a policy of recording and reporting all complaints of alleged abuse made to us to the statutory authorities.

2012 Review

In 2012 Scouting Ireland completed a review of all 'confidential' files held in respect Scouting Ireland's legacy organisations – the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland (CBSI/CSI) and the Scout Association of Ireland (SAI) These records were of varying ages and of variable quality. Some were very limited in terms of content.

This review was prompted by concerns held by the Professional Child Protection Team within Scouting Ireland on foot of conversations had with other Scout Associations; Scouts Canada and the Scout Association in the UK. Additional staff were taken on to assist in the administrative process. The review of documentation then followed.

The purpose of the review was two-fold:

1. To read the documentation to confirm that no individual who had been removed from a legacy organisation was a member of Scouting Ireland. Any such instances were to be flagged as a 'red' issue which required immediate action.
2. To confirm that all matters that should have been reported to the statutory authorities had indeed been reported – any such instances were to be flagged as an 'amber' issue to be reported.

The methodology was a straight read through of all documentation.

Zero (0) red issues were identified.

Five (5) amber issues were identified. – These case related to potential anomalies and were reported to the Gardaí and the HSE

An Garda Síochána and the HSE were informed of the outcomes of the 2012 review at the time.

Victim Support & Funding

The Board is united in the belief that we must leave no stone unturned to support victims and to put in place all resources required. The Board is considering a range of emergency financial measures in order to fund a victim support programme. This will affect us all – and the Board completely understands this.

At the Board meeting on 15th December 2018 it was unanimously agreed to cancel the rebates to the Scout Counties for the year 2019.

An increase in membership fees or a Group contribution is imminent and a dedicated communication will be issued as soon as possible in relation to this.



Safeguarding

We have revised our policies, procedures and structures to strengthen safeguarding in our organisation. This includes:

- A revised Dispute and Grievances Policy
- A revised Disciplinary Policy
- A Victims Policy and Support Programme
- Procedures for escalating complaints of alleged abuse to the Board
- Progressing the appointment of an Interim Disciplinary Officer
- Statement to membership
- Updates issued to DCYA

We will be advertising shortly for a Disciplinary Officer (voluntary role reporting to the Board) and are in the process of recruiting a Safeguarding Manager (professional staff and member of executive team reporting to the Board).

We are also seeking additional temporary staff to supplement our existing staff. Our existing staff have been working long hours to provide the fullest possible support to anyone calling the helpline. All staff taking calls are experienced and are appropriately trained for this demanding and difficult role.

The safeguarding of children and adults is the number one priority of the board and the executive team. We thank those who have come forward and shared information with us. It means we can take action and become a stronger and safer organisation as a result.

Vetting & Safeguarding Refresher Training

Some issues with regards to vetting and safeguarding have been raised with the Board. The Board unanimously re-affirmed that all adults in Scouting Ireland **must** be vetted by An Garda Síochána/Access NI prior to taking up any role whatsoever in the organisation.

The Board will authorise the immediate removal of any adult who has not completed the vetting process or has not completed their Safeguarding training. All County Commissioners are authorised to immediately remove an adult from the Scout Group who has not been vetted or has completed their Safeguarding training. All adults must be re-vetted and complete a refresher Safeguarding training every 3 years.

In addition the following must be adhered to;

- Scouters must also complete 'Being a Scouter' training.
- Each adult is responsible for their own compliance.
- Group Leaders are responsible for compliance within their Scout Group.

We are working on an automatic reminder via the online Membership Management System to assist with compliance.



Scout County & Provincial Commissioners

A meeting was held on Monday 10th December 2018 to discuss the current situation with safeguarding. The update given was a very difficult one for us all – the feedback was largely constructive and it was a very necessary and productive engagement.

Youth Representatives Meeting with the Board

The Board is fully committed to youth empowerment in Scouting Ireland and are keen to understand and address the concerns which our youth representatives expressed at the EGM in October 2018. The Board met with the National Youth Representatives on the 25th of November 2018 in the Aughrim Street Scout Group (ASSG) scout den. It was a very productive session for the Board. We were enthused by the passion and capabilities of our youth members. Suggestions and requests for change were received for consideration and we agreed to meet again to progress them.

The Board plans to meet the Youth Reps once a quarter with the next meeting pencilled in for February 2019.

Group Leader & County Commissioner Appointments

Nomination forms are to be sent to the Manager Support Functions in National Office until the relevant departments are up and running. A process of regular updates and escalation has been put in place to keep the Board informed.

Group Charters

Work is progressing on issuing each Scout Group with their Charter.

Disciplinary Officer FAQ

Why do we need this role?

The overwhelming majority of volunteer Scouters are dedicated, competent people who undertake their commitments to young members with passion and do so to a consistently high standard. Very occasionally, an individual Scouter may breach our collective high standards of conduct and in doing so may pose a risk to the safety of our youth members or, through their actions, threaten the reputation of Scouting and by extension all our reputations. By doing so they place themselves in a position where they will need to account for their actions.

The Disciplinary Officer will be a volunteer who will undertake the process of investigating breaches in standards (as appropriate to the situation) and where such breaches are proven, recommend appropriate and proportionate sanctions.

Who will they report to and be accountable to?

The Disciplinary Officer will report to and be accountable to the Board of Directors of Scouting Ireland. The Board in turn is accountable to the members of Scouting Ireland for any decisions made on their behalf.

What powers will they have?

The Disciplinary Officer will be empowered to investigate breaches of standards as reported to him/her and to take appropriate actions.

Should I be worried about this development?

We need to welcome this role and process because it helps to ensure that any person who puts our wider reputation, or far more importantly the safety of young people, at risk are promptly investigated and where needed held to account. The individual in the role, with oversight from the Board, will be expected to carry out this function with fairness, integrity and with regard to individual's rights. This is a critically important step in the long process ahead to rebuild Scouting's reputation and re-earn the trust of all our stakeholders.

Disciplinary Officer - interim appointment & open call

Apart from the interim appointment this is to be a volunteer appointment for a term of 3 years charged with ensuring that all matters of conduct and discipline are managed correctly within the organisation. The appointed person may seek the appointment of assistants to help in carrying out the function of the role - to be agreed by the Board. The open call for this important position will go out in early 2019. Candidates will ideally have relevant experience and competence, such as, but not restricted to, human resources at a senior grade, legal services or personnel management.

An Interim Disciplinary Officer, Denis Kirby, has been appointed until such time as the open call & selection process can be completed. Contact details will issue in the next board update. Denis is a Senior Industrial Advisor at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development with a long & distinguished career in Human Resources, including a 25 year stint in Bank of Ireland. For the past 18 years he has consulted for companies around the world in implementing best management practice in business.

Communications

The Board recognises that members were being caught unaware by information being released to the Oireachtas Committee and to the Minister in advance and that members were unprepared to answer questions from friends, family, colleagues, parents, etc.

The Board has agreed that our own membership should receive information as soon as possible to provide reassurance. The Communications Team is led by Eoghan Calnan. There is a need for energetic, innovative people with competencies in this area who wish to help, so that we can take a fresh look at our communications needs and strategy of our organisation. Any interested candidates please contact board@scouts.ie

The board@scouts.ie email address has been set up for members to contact the Board with concerns, ideas and suggestions. In many cases support staff based locally at Scout County and/or Scout Province level will be best placed to assist with any issues. Emails to the Board will be directed to the relevant person/level if and as appropriate.

Safety Section on Website

There is a safety section on our website which can be accessed from the home page and provides useful information for our youth members, their parents and our volunteers. The page covers:

- What to do if you have a concern
- Information and FAQ as to how we keep our young people safe
- Details of our victims policy
- Other recent and additional information



Independent Barrister Led Investigation

The Board continues to await the report of the Independent Barrister led investigation. We expect to receive the report in draft form prior to the end of the calendar year 2018 and the final form in early January 2019.

Finances

Our national finances are under scrutiny and are being discussed in detail in light of recent revelations and the need to support victims. The Board expects legal and safeguarding costs to be very high in 2018/19. Some of these costs will be related to the current crisis whilst other increases will be structural in nature such as increased costs for additional safeguarding staff and increased insurance costs. The Board is very aware of the impact that increased costs have on all Scout Groups, but these are exceptional times.

The Board is considering a range of emergency financial measures in order to fund victim support services and to meet the needs of effective governance, safeguarding and services.

- Scout County rebates are cancelled for the year 2019.
- Membership fees for the January 2019 Census will remain as per advisor letter issued in July 2018 and a further Scout Group contribution is imminent, the details around this will be communicated to Scout Groups in early January 2019.
- The Den Development Grant Scheme has been suspended.

Social Media Commentary

A statement was emailed to members in relation to social media commentary on 10th December 2018. Click [here](#) to read.



Transition

The Transition Department has been established to implement the new structures of Scouting Ireland. In addition, the Board has established a Sub Committee to oversee this work. The team is reporting to the Board regularly on its progress.

The Board has signed off on the work to date and plans to address open calls in January 2019 for the recruitment of some of the new Heads of Department.

The Scope of Authority for each Department and the job specification for the respective Head of Department will be drafted and published as part of the open call to outline the competencies required in each case. If you have ideas or suggestions please contact James O'Toole: jotoole@scouts.ie

Activities Governance Committee

The function of the Activity Governance Committee is to provide for the overall oversight of National Activities, Conferences and Large-Scale Events, and to make key decisions, including the commitment of resources (in conjunction with the operations manager on behalf of the Board), whether professional, volunteer, material and financial, taking into account the collective project workload undertaken by SI, as far as is reasonably practicable.

An Interim Activities Governance Committee has been reformed as follows until the departments are set up: Jimmy Cunningham, Michael Devins, Stephen Synnott & the Operations Manager. The committee's terms of reference are under review but the interim committee has already started work and is reporting to the Board.

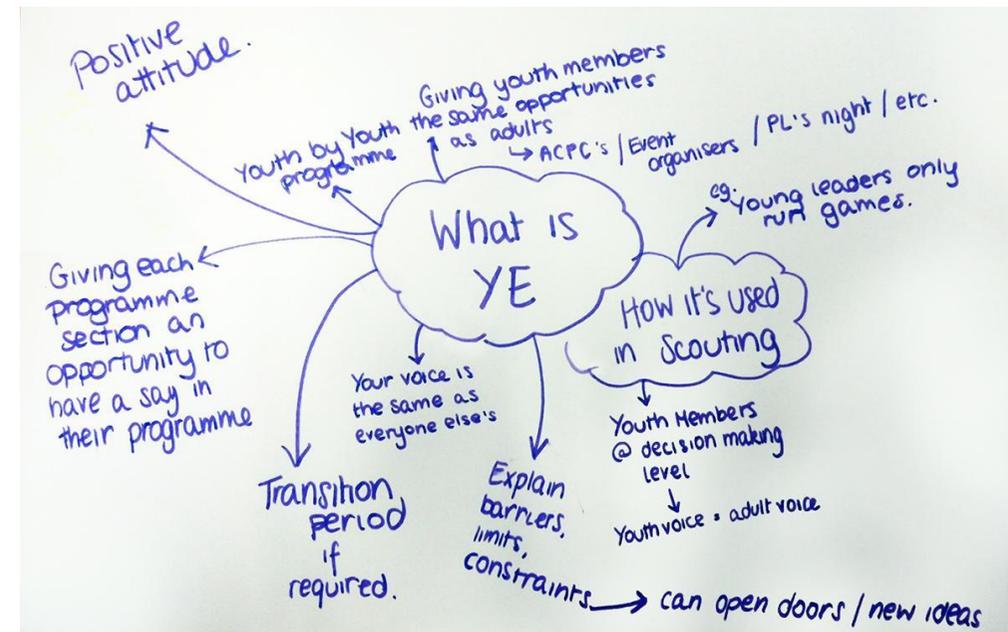
Strategic Renewal

The Board agreed to establish a team to advise and support the Board and to begin work on developing a new strategy. This work will commence in the new year and will involve the Board, youth representatives, volunteers and staff. If you would like to get involved in this please email board@scouts.ie with the words 'Strategic Renewal' in the subject line.

We had hoped to work with an expert external agency in the roll-out of this project, but due to the needs of the victims in the safeguarding crisis the Board has re-allocated the necessary budget to the Victim Support Programme.

*Certain matters discussed by the Board are confidential. We will always endeavour to give you as much information as possible as soon as we can do so.

*Any member who has a query, a comment or a positive idea they would like considered please feel free to contact us at: board@scouts.ie



Board of directors of Scouting Ireland

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