



Child Safeguarding & Protection Service

Interim Policy and Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Ukrainian Refugee

Children and Vulnerable Adults

April 2022

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Archdiocese of Dublin

Overview

We welcome Ukrainian refugees, and indeed all refugees to our parishes and communities and will endeavour to do everything we can to support them. The Archdiocese of Dublin has a specific chaplaincy for the Ukrainian community. The number of new parishioners in recent weeks is unprecedented and they are in urgent need of our assistance. We must ensure that, in our efforts to provide support and friendship, we adhere to our core safeguarding standards and protect our new parishioners in the same way we currently work to keep all children and vulnerable adults safe.

Policy

We commend those parishes who are organising initiatives to support the Ukrainian community. The following guidelines have been developed in consultation with the Chaplain for the Ukrainian community in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Parishes should not organise any activities for Ukrainian children unless their parent(s)/guardians are present at all times. The rationale for this is informed by the following factors:

Language

Good child safeguarding practices depend on the ability of those who work with children being able to communicate with them using the child's first language. Failure to understand the needs of children due to communication barriers is poor practice and should be avoided at all times.

Trauma

The children who have fled Ukraine may be suffering significant post-traumatic stress, which may be triggered by something simple like a plane or helicopter flying overhead. Neither parish staff nor volunteers are likely to recognise the triggers, or be equipped to offer the children the comfort and reassurance they need at that point.

Vulnerability

It is well documented that refugee children are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than other children. Sadly, we cannot rule out the risk that those who seek to exploit and abuse children will understand the current crisis as an opportunity. Therefore, greater vigilance is required when it comes to safeguarding these children.

Parental empowerment

The parents who have brought their children to safety in Ireland are capable and resourceful people who have prioritised the safety of their children over other considerations. We should be working with, rather than for, them.

Recruitment requirements for those who work with refugees in our parishes.

All those who will work with or minister to Ukrainian families in their parishes **must**:

- Complete Garda vetting by the parish if they have not been vetted by the parish in the last three years;
- Complete diocesan safeguarding training either online or onsite if they have not done so in the last three years;
- Complete a Confidential Application & Declaration Form;
- Sign up to the Code of Conduct for parish staff & volunteers.

Key Safeguarding Practices

- Follow appropriate recruitment practices (as above).
- Avoid working alone with children or vulnerable adults.
- Obtain consent for participation in parish activities.
- Use interpreters when required.
- Home visits should be prearranged and recorded. There should always be two volunteers present who have been through the proper recruitment process.
- Keep appropriate records.
- Respect boundaries and, in particular, a person's right to refuse offers of help and support.
- Report, without delay any concerns or suspicions you may have that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse.

Reporting Concerns

Child and vulnerable adult protection concerns must be reported to the civil authorities, that is, the local Tusla Office for children or the local HSE office for vulnerable adults. Deirdre Donnelly and Andrew Fagan are available to assist in making such reports (contact details below).

If you consider a child or vulnerable adult to be at immediate risk of harm contact the local Garda station without delay.

Advice and Support

The Diocesan Child Safeguarding & Protection Service (CSPS) is available to offer help and support. The telephone number is 01 8360314.

Contact:

Andrew Fagan, Director, andrew.fagan@dublindiocese.ie, or Deirdre Donnelly, Safeguarding & Support Officer: deirdre.donnelly@dublindiocese.ie **if you have a concern about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult.**

Garry Kehoe, Training and Compliance Manager: garry.kehoe@dublindiocese.ie **if you wish to arrange safeguarding training or have a general safeguarding query.**

Vivienne Knight, Garda Vetting Coordinator, vivienne.knight@dublindiocese.ie **if you need to get someone vetted or have a query about vetting.**