

**Statement on the obligation to report suspected sexual abuse to civil authorities:**

**1. Following recent press coverage the following statement was issued by Cardinal O'Malley**

From Vatican Radio – 15 February 2016

**Statement from the President of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors**

Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM Cap., president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, together with all the Commission Members, issued today the following statement on the obligation to report suspected sexual abuse to civil authorities:

“As Pope Francis has so clearly stated: ‘The crimes and sins of the sexual abuse of children must not be kept secret for any longer. I pledge the zealous vigilance of the Church to protect children and the promise of accountability for all’. We, the President and the Members of the Commission, wish to affirm that our obligations under civil law must certainly be followed, but even beyond these civil requirements, we all have a moral and ethical responsibility to report suspected abuse to the civil authorities who are charged with protecting our society”.

Cardinal O'Malley's statement continued, “In the United States, our Bishops' Charter clearly states the obligation that all dioceses/eparchies and personnel report suspected abuse to the public authorities. Every year at our November meeting, at a training session for new bishops, this obligation is reaffirmed, and every other February the Conference runs a second training program for new bishops which also clearly and explicitly includes this obligation. As the Holy Father's advisory commission for the protection of minors, we recently shared with Pope Francis an overview of the Commission's extensive education efforts in local Churches over the past two years and reiterated the Members' willingness to provide this material at courses offered in Rome, including to the annual training program for new bishops and to the offices of the Roman Curia for their use in their own child protection efforts”.

[http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/02/15/card\\_omalley\\_reiterates\\_responsibility\\_to\\_report\\_sex\\_abuse/1208856](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/02/15/card_omalley_reiterates_responsibility_to_report_sex_abuse/1208856)

## **2. The Catholic Church in England and Wales**

All allegations of abuse in the Catholic Church in England and Wales which are reported to a Bishop/Diocese/Religious Congregation must be reported to the Police and Safeguarding Authorities. This has been a mandatory requirement for sometime and it has not changed.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales also has a real focus on ensuring best practice. There are a number of initiatives and training resources developed and supported by the Bishops and Religious Congregation Leaders which centre upon ensuring victims and survivors are at the heart of what we do.

### **Safeguarding and the Catholic Church in England and Wales**

<http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/Safeguarding>

Chris Pearson

17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Chair, NCSC

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