



2.3A GUIDANCE ON THE ROLE OF THE ADVISOR

Each respondent who is a member of church personnel should be offered access to an Advisor as part of the case management process. The role of the Advisor is to ensure the respondent has access to support throughout the process of the disclosure and potentially after.

The role of the Advisor is to:

- Keep the respondent informed of the process of the case; (in the case of a criminal investigation this responsibility will be fulfilled by the PSNI/Gardaí, and if the Gateway Team/Tusla are involved they may also fulfil this role).
- Ensure that pastoral care and support is provided to the respondent and their family if they wish.
- Help direct the respondent to counselling and support, should they wish to avail of it.
- Keep a record of any meetings or contact they have with the respondent, and pass on relevant information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel, as appropriate.

Please note:

- The Advisor is not a counsellor for the respondent and should not act in that role.
- The Advisor is not an advocate for the respondent.
- The Advisor should not provide any character references for the respondent.
- The Advisor does not manage the case file and will not have access to it.

Records should be retained and stored in the diocesan office as part of the case file. The following should be used as a guide to information that must be recorded:

- The date and time the meetings took place.
- Any relevant child safeguarding issues that have arisen.
- If the respondent is suffering from a mental health condition or is suicidal. If the person is at risk of harming themselves this should be dealt with as an emergency requiring immediate action.
- Any requests for support or representations that the respondent wishes to make to the Bishop.

It is the prerogative of the respondent whether they wish to accept the assistance of an Advisor. If the respondent chooses not to accept an Advisor that is offered by the diocese, the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel should consider how the support needs and communication with the respondent are met.

Regular meetings between the Advisor and the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel should be held to enable the Panel to keep up to date with the needs and requests of the respondent, and to advise the Bishop of any requests for support. These meetings should incorporate any requests for supervision, to allow the Advisor to receive feedback on their role.

Training for Advisors will be provided by the RCB Safeguarding Team and should form part of the training strategy written by the Diocesan Support Team (**Guidance 1.5C**).