



# St John Ambulance

## St John Ambulance apologises to victims and survivors of abuse Report on handling of past complaints of abuse published following Independent Review

- Board issues apology acknowledging hurt caused by past failures
- Organisation committed to implementing expert's recommendations

St John Ambulance Ireland (SJAI) has today apologised for its failures to all victims and survivors of sexual abuse at the organisation.

The apology, issued by the Board of SJAI, follows the conclusion of an Independent Review of the handling of past complaints of abuse at the organisation, for which a detailed report was published today.

Conducted by leading child protection expert, Dr Geoffrey Shannon, the Independent Review also evaluated the current safeguarding practices within SJAI, resulting in a number of recommendations for the organisation to implement.

*"On behalf of the Board of St John Ambulance Ireland, I wish to unreservedly apologise to the victims and survivors of sexual abuse at the organisation," said **David Strahan, Chairman of the Board of St John Ambulance Ireland.** "We are sincerely sorry for the hurt that was caused to you, your families, and your friends, by the failings of our organisation. Please be assured that you have been listened to and are believed. We are committed to supporting you in any way possible and working to ensure that past failings in our duty of care to our members are never repeated," he said.*

*"Separately, I would like to express our gratitude to Dr Geoffrey Shannon for his professionalism, dedication, and hard work in conducting this thorough Independent Review," **Mr Strahan** continued. "As an organisation, we fully accept the findings of Dr Shannon's report and are both determined and committed to implementing his recommendations for improvements to our current procedures. We are now working with key stakeholders, including Tusla, to ensure our governance and child protection practices meet the highest standards," he concluded.*

The report on the Independent Review, which was commissioned by the Board of SJAI, is available **here**. The SJAI's response to the Independent Review findings, which includes an update on progress regarding the implementation of recommendations and future commitments, is available **here**.

*"I would like to echo the comments of our Chairman David Strahan in apologising to the victims and survivors of sexual abuse at St John Ambulance Ireland," said **John Hughes, Commissioner of St John Ambulance Ireland.** "I would also like to reiterate our commitment to continuously improving our policies and procedures to ensure that past failings at the organisation are never repeated. The victims who have spoken out about their abuse either publicly or through the Independent Review process are to be both commended and admired for their bravery. We thank them sincerely for helping to uncover these issues," he said.*

*"As Commissioner, I can assure our members and the broader public that the culture that allowed failings of this nature to occur in the past is no longer present within our organisation," **Mr Hughes** continued. "For years, we have adhered to best practice safeguarding guidelines and principles. The Independent Review process has served to strengthen our ability to provide a safe environment for all children, including our volunteers and recipients of our voluntary aid services," he concluded.*

**Ends**