

Newsletter

Latest News from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in
the Catholic Church in Ireland

June 2014



National Office Staff

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Welcome

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2014. It has been a busy few months for all staff at the National Board. We produced our 2013 Annual Report on 1st May and supported the launch of Safeguarding Review reports on 12th May. All reports are available on the Safeguarding website www.safeguarding.ie. The Annual General Meeting of Coimirce took place on 26th May where all current Directors were re-elected to their role on the National Board.



CEO's Report

A word from Teresa Devlin

As we look forward to the work of the next few months, reviews into safeguarding practice in 6 Religious Congregations and 12 small female Congregations have started and it is hoped that these will be complete for publication in September 2014.

If any Religious Congregation has not yet applied to be reviewed please do so by submitting a request in writing to me at the National Office.

Developments in practice and in legislation are focussing our minds in the lead up to our planned revision of "Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland". Thank-you to those of you who have volunteered to participate in working groups and for anyone still interested please contact Niall Moore (niall.moore@safeguarding.ie)

To assist with this major piece of work, the Board has appointed a Project Manager – Grace Kelly (Pictured) who took up post on the 1st June.



Grace is a registered psychologist with 26 years experience of child protection, welfare service delivery and project management in the voluntary, church and private sectors. Grace has worked on behalf of children since 1986 and has a deep commitment to Human Rights, Child protection & Safeguarding. She has gained extensive knowledge and skills whilst working with the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children as "Director of Services" and more recently as a child protection and welfare independent consultant. Key projects undertaken to date by Grace include the design and implementation of child protection in

religious and voluntary organisations, face to face and on line training of professional and volunteer groups on child protection and safeguarding, service and staff evaluation, auditing, research and direct work with young people who are living within the care of the State. Grace also sits on the safeguarding advisory board of a religious congregation and has worked with Misesan Cara supporting them in developing safeguarding systems since 2009

Training

Following a number of additional requests for training and development, the Training Strategy has been updated and will continue to be revised as requests for new types of training come in. The Strategy can be accessed by following this link <http://bit.ly/1g4e5Bf>. The following training courses are now available to book online:

1. **30/06/2014- First point of contact training for those who are administrators or secretaries to the Bishop/Provincial/Superior based in diocesan/provincial offices or bishop's houses.** - Practical workshop on receiving and signposting safeguarding concerns and understanding the roles and functions of key personnel in safeguarding. Book online using the following link <http://www.safeguarding.ie/events/training-for-administrators/>.
2. **23/07/2014- Training for Advisory Panels-** This training will be delivered locally at a time and date that suits the members of each advisory panel. If you would like to avail of this training please send an email to the Training Manager (niall.moore@safeguarding.ie) and outline:
 - The training needs you have identified for your advisory panel
 - The length of time you need training for
 - The professional background of your panel members
 - Dates that you wish the training to be delivered
3. **Training for Safeguarding Committees/Co-coordinators-** This training will also be delivered locally at a time and date that suits the members of each safeguarding committee. If you would like to avail of this training please send an email to the Training Manager (niall.moore@safeguarding.ie)
4. **Training for Advisers-** This training is for those who are in the role of adviser. The training will cover the key functions of the role and will involve presentations from current advisers to highlight best practice. To book a place please follow this link <http://www.safeguarding.ie/events/role-specific-training-for-advisers/>

Training – Minimum Standards

Following recent meetings with tutors and trainers from across Ireland a number of questions have been raised around the delivery of training and the level of safeguarding training required by roles within the Church safeguarding structure. To help clarify the issue the Training Manager has produced guidance for all trainers to establish what the minimum standard is with regards to awareness raising training across Ireland. You can access this guidance by following this link <http://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance-for-the-delivery-of-awareness-raising-training/>



Legislative Update ROI

Within the Republic of Ireland there are significant changes to legislation in process which affect child safeguarding policy and practice. It is too early to be definitive about the impact of the legislation as ensuing guidance is required from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs which will clarify a number of relevant matters. This briefing is simply to provide an overview based on what is already available in the public domain, but we would urge some caution as changes may still be made by the guidance which will accompany the legislation.

Children First Bill 2014

The purpose of this Bill is to 'make further and better provision for the care and protection of children including raising awareness of child abuse and neglect, providing for reporting and management of child protection concerns and improving child protection arrangements in organisations providing services to children'. [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011](#) (under review) will operate side by side with this Bill.

Staff from the National Office have been meeting with key representative of both TUSLA and other key stakeholders to clarify key proposals in the legislation, and will develop training and resources once the legislation comes into force.

The Bill sets out that:

Specified individuals have a legal duty to report child protection concerns to the Child and Family Agency. Mandated individuals are listed in Schedule 2 of the Bill and include doctors, nurses, social care and social workers, teachers, foster carers, managers of domestic violence shelters, homeless hostels and asylum seeker accommodation, child protection officers of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, and educational organisations and specified pre-school and youth workers. Under Section 11(1&2), individuals are mandated to report if he or she "knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect" or where a child has disclosed to him or her "that a child (a) has been harmed, (b) is being harmed, or (c) is at risk of being harmed". Section 11(3) addresses the duty to report in relation to concerns regarding children engaged in sexual activity. In addition, provisions will be put in place to avoid the duplication of reports by mandated individuals.

Mandated individuals have a legal duty, if requested, to assist the Child and Family Agency in the child protection assessment under Section 13. This provision also provides that the Child and Family Agency may share information about the assessment with the mandated individual who is assisting them.

Specified organisations have a legal duty to carry out a risk assessment and prepare an organisational-specific Child Safeguarding Statement. Mandated organisations are listed in Schedule 1 of the Bill. Section 10(3) details procedures which need to be addressed in the Statement and under Section 10(5) the organisation is required to make its Statement public on request.

The existing inter-departmental committee on the implementation of Children First is to be put on a statutory footing under Part 4 to promote compliance and implementation by government departments of the [Children First Guidance](#).



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National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 (not yet commenced)

This act applies to all persons working in a 'relevant work or activity' relating to children or vulnerable persons including:

- Pre-schools/schools/centre of education/Home Tutors
- Hospitals/Special Care Units
- Any work/activity as a minister or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious bodies
- Any work which consists of treatment, therapy or counselling
- Any work that consists of care/supervision of children
- Any work that consists of the provision of advice, guidance or developmental services (including by electronic communication)

The Act defines a child as someone under 18 years.

A vulnerable person is defined as someone suffering from a disorder of the mind, an intellectual disability, a physical impairment or has a physical disability.

Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

A person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act if:

- (a) he or she knows or believes that an arrestable offence as listed in the schedule of the Act, has been committed by another person against a child or a vulnerable person and
- (b) he or she has information which he or she knows or believes might be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of that other person for that offence, and fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information as soon as practicable to do so to a member of the Garda Síochána.

Practice Issue

The safeguarding of children within the Irish Catholic Church is of major importance. All steps must be taken to ensure a safe and nurturing environment within the Church for children. For that reason, it is important that all those who engage in public ministry should be confirmed as being fit for that sacred task. The Bishop/Congregational Leader has a responsibility to take measures to ensure the safety and welfare of children. It is important therefore, that certain checks are carried out to ensure that all clergy are in good standing prior to permission being given for participation in any form of sacred ministry.

When clergy from another diocese or religious congregation either within or outside Ireland visit with the intention of being involved in short term ministry (for example celebrating or con-celebrating at a wedding or funeral), then evidence should be provided which confirms that they are priests in good standing, and that they are fit for ministry.

Bishops/Provincials and parish priests must request that the visiting priest produces a celebret and/or a dated and signed letter from his Ordinary which includes a clear statement that he is a priest in good standing. When possible Garda Vetting /Access NI checks should be conducted. Clergy who come from parts of the world where police vetting arrangements are not in place may seek to minister here. As a consequence, the statutory route is not available; in such a situation the Bishop must make a decision about whether to give permission for public ministry.



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

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