



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

## **Newsletter** **April 2012**

Welcome to our third newsletter updating you on the work of the National Board.

### **Briefing on the National Board for Safeguarding Children.**

The work of the National Board has continued to be busy. We welcome the frequent requests for advice which we have received from all parts of the Church which have increased since last year. The Board seeks to be a resource for the whole Church through which help and support can be given to anyone facing a safeguarding issue.

Since our last newsletter, the first tranche of Review Reports have been published by the dioceses involved. Despite some anticipatory anxiety, the actual experience was positive for all involved. Reports to the Board would indicate that people welcomed the commitment to transparency on the part of the bishops whose diocese had been reviewed. Particularly volunteers, who were involved in safeguarding in those dioceses, commented favourably on the experience to us.

In February, a summary report of the findings of the Apostolic Visitation was published. It was gratifying to read the positive comments on the work of the Board to date. The summary also contained recommendations regarding the future work of the Board which we will do our best to fulfil in a prompt manner as requested.

The Board continues to meet monthly under the chairmanship of Mr John Morgan. Our two new directors, Monsignor Eamon Martin and Father Ed Grimes, have settled into their new roles and we welcome their valuable contribution.

In February, Teresa Devlin and Sister Colette Stevenson, attended the Anglophone Conference in Rome. This major conference brought together representatives from all the English speaking territories of the Church for four days of presentation and discussions, sharing experiences and learning drawn from safeguarding practice.

If you want any further information on any of the items contained in this edition or if you simply want to express a comment, please call the National Office or email me at [ian.elliott@safeguarding.ie](mailto:ian.elliott@safeguarding.ie).

## **Policy Update**

### ***(1) Leave from Sacred Ministry and Apostolate for Clergy and Religious.***

This important interim guidance has been issued by all the three Sponsoring Bodies. It has been adopted for a period of one year after which it will be reviewed in the light of experiences gained through its implementation.

Training is planned for all those who will be operating the guidance.

Prior to its adoption advice was sought with regard to its content being compliant with human rights legislation. Our aim was to produce guidance that would be fair and would reflect fully the rights of those involved. It was confirmed to us that the guidance achieved this and we therefore felt confident in recommending its adoption to the Sponsoring Bodies.

A copy of the *Interim Guidance on Leave from Sacred Ministry* can be downloaded from our website [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).

### ***(2) Formal referencing for Visiting Clergy***

The Board is currently reviewing the practice of various authorities within the Church in respect of this policy. Concern has been expressed that policies approved by the Sponsoring Bodies with regard to visiting clergy may not be consistently adhered to. For that reason, the Board intends to make explicit what the expectations are with regard to the formal referencing of visiting clergy. It will publish these on its website in the coming days to remove any confusion as to what should be in place across the Church.

### ***(3) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults***

A working party will be formed to progress work on this draft policy. The issue of the specific remit of the Board not including vulnerable adults remains currently but is under consideration by the Members. However, work is continuing to ensure that the Church is compliant with all the statutory and best practice requirements that apply.

## **National Case Management Reference Group**

This initiative is operating fully with an increasing number of diocese and religious orders/congregations joining. The Group meets once a month and considers all the cases referred to it by any of the constituent members. At its last meeting, eight cases were discussed drawn from four dioceses and two religious orders. The feedback from those using the service has been very positive to date.

### **Review of Safeguarding Practice update**

The second tranche is well underway with a further three dioceses and one religious congregation being started. We plan to engage with a further two religious congregations and also at least one more diocese in this round of Reviews.

I would like to thank all of the Church authorities that we have engaged with to date in respect of the Reviews. Their support for the process has been excellent and has made the job of the reviewers a great deal easier.

The expectation would be that this round of Reviews will conclude by the end of June when it would be hoped that the individual reports would be published by the respective Church authorities.

### **National Board's Annual Report 2011**

We are currently preparing the content of this year's Annual Report. It is scheduled to be issued towards the end of next month. As it did last year, it will provide a commentary on the work of the Board in respect of the objectives that it has set. It will also give an analysis of the work load carried and responded to by the National Office staff.

### **Training Update**

The new training materials have now arrived and have been circulated. They are in use and feedback to date has been positive. Events to support their introduction have been planned and details can be obtained from the National Office.

Training to support the implementation of the *Interim Guidance on Leave from Sacred Ministry* has also been planned. An additional date has been set to accommodate the high level of demand for places.

Due to the limited budget available to us to provide and support training in the Church, we will have to charge both for the production of training materials and the provision of training events. These charges will be kept to a minimum but are necessary as we do not have a Training budget to provide these services.

It is our intention to issue a Newsletter four times a year in an effort to try to keep you updated on our work. To that end, we would plan to issue our next newsletter at the end of June.

Yours sincerely,



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Ian A. Elliott  
Chief Executive Officer