

Newsletter



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

June 2018

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Introduction

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (The National Board) has just published its Annual Report for 2017; the report can be accessed by following this link:

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Annual_Reports/NBSCCC%20Annual%20Report%202017%20web.pdf

The report details the work of the National Office across the seven Standards, with particular reference to advice on allegations, the work of the National Case Management Committee (NCMC); developments in Guidance, Training and support; and other initiatives such as work in highlighting issues relating to child dignity in the digital world.

At the same time the National Board has published its first GAP (Guidance, Advice and Practice) paper entitled *Child Safeguarding and Digital Media*. You can access the paper by following this link:

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%201%20Child%20Safeguarding%20and%20Digital%20Media.pdf

This is the first of a series of papers that we will publish this year relating to matters that we believe require further attention; and we hope that the discussions these papers generate will lead to reflection and to the development of improved practice across the Church.

This newsletter provides information on some initiatives in which the National Board has already engaged during 2018, as well as flagging training and other developments planned for the remainder of the year.

GDPR and Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was **approved** by the EU Parliament on **14 April 2016**, with an enforcement date of **25 May 2018**. **The regulations require greater care in the use of sensitive personal data and in the sharing of information.**

The National Board has been engaged in discussions with relevant government departments and Data/Information Commissioners in both ROI and NI to clarify the legality of the exchange of information between Church bodies and the National Board. Existing data processing deeds enable the sharing of information for legitimate purposes, including advice relating to notifications of allegations and to the management of cases, as well as audit/monitoring and review functions of the National Board. In these situations, the National Board acts as a *data processor*. These discussions continue in the context of GDPR and its direct importation into law in both jurisdictions, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, as this matter may result in early changes to our Guidance in this area. This matter is engaging urgent attention.

In situations where the National Board acts as a *data controller*, we have written to all relevant personnel asking them to “opt-in” to allowing the National Board to maintain its contact details for sharing of information, including newsletters, training information etc. The National Board will destroy all details of personnel who have not responded to the e-mails seeking permission to maintain their data, by end July 2018.

Vetting-One Church Approach

At the Spring Bishops’ Conference, the National Board was asked to review how vetting could be streamlined across the Church in Ireland, to ensure consistency and avoid multiple vetting checks of an individual. We therefore consulted with the personnel responsible for vetting in the Archdiocese of Dublin, in the Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service and in the Vetting Office of the Catholic Church Northern dioceses. We also met with Superintendent Featherstone from the Garda National Vetting Bureau, and with representatives of the GAA, which has a streamlined vetting service that allows movement of personnel across club and county boundaries.

In the meeting with the Garda National Vetting Bureau, they asked that the Church consider a centralised vetting office, citing section 12(3A) of the revised legislation (2016) which allows for vetting on behalf of another body.

Among the options for consideration by the Catholic Church in Ireland are to:

- Continue to operate as present.
- Consider setting up 4 metropolitan vetting offices, so that personnel are vetted for work within the relevant metropolitan area and information can be shared across Church boundaries (both diocesan and congregational).
- Consider establishing one vetting office in ROI and continuing the existing arrangements in N.Ireland.
- Seek a legal view on centralising decision making and information sharing.

The National Board will now gather more information relating to numbers of vetting applications and costs to the various Church bodies, and then present a paper to the Bishops and AMRI later in the year

Guidance Updates

Changes and updates to the Guidance are now being grouped so that there will be quarterly updates, instead of the continuous flow of changes since the last newsletter. All Guidance updates can read in full at: <https://www.safeguarding.ie/index.php/guidance> **at the beginning of July 2018.** Whilst some of these have been small amendments, others are new and extra pieces of guidance which have been added are listed below:

- Further clarification on the use of Church property by external groups;
- Guidance on dealing with boundary violations;
- Communications requirements following leave from ministry of a cleric/religious;
- Sharing information following hospitalisation of a cleric or religious who is out of ministry.

The majority of Church bodies have now taken the National Board's guidance as their own procedures, thus removing the need to continually process updates. For those Church bodies that are retaining their own procedures it is important that your procedures are updated in line with the changes referenced above.

If there are pieces of guidance which you think need to be added or clarified, please do not hesitate to contact Niall Moore - niall.moore@safeguarding.ie

Review Methodology

The Draft review methodology has been trialled in one diocese and in one religious congregation that has substantial ministry with children. Following these two full reviews and in consultation with the review methodology working group and in response to feedback, the methodology has been further refined. It was presented to the Sponsoring Bodies (IEC and AMRI) at the AGM of Coimirce on June 11th last. Final sign-off will take place in September 2018, with plans to recruit and train reviewers during the autumn and to roll out the next cycle of reviews beginning early in 2019.

Compassionate Response to Complainants

The National Board is in the process of developing a comprehensive GAP paper on caring for complainants. This paper will provide research, information and suggestions for reference when offering a pastoral care response to complainants. If you have any views on this, or have knowledge of research you would like to share, please contact Peter Kieran - peter.kieran@safeguarding.ie

Caring for Respondents

A third paper in the GAP series has also been drafted, relating to caring for respondents. As with the Digital Media and the complainants' papers, this further paper will set out research and practice examples of effective care and management responses. This paper will be published in the autumn of 2018

Update for Registered Trainers

The training manual has been updated since the last newsletter; changes include a new session, and resources for delivering training to mandated persons. This is now available to download from the Trainers section of the website.

When the manual is updated, an email is sent to each trainer to remind them to go to the site and download the update. It is important that each trainer takes responsibility for ensuring their manual is updated with the changes as they occur. To assist with this, all tutors will now dedicate time during support meetings with trainers to go through the manual and to ensure that everyone is up to date.

In addition, **attendance at the annual update day from next year will now be made a mandatory part of registration.** The date for this will be emailed to all trainers in December 2018 to give sufficient notice to ensure attendance, and failure to attend may affect your registration as a trainer.

Training and Support

All training and support is outlined in the Training and Support Strategy which can be downloaded by following this link. Upcoming training for this year is available at this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/index.php/what-we-do/advice-on-effective-practice/training>.

Training Delivered Since the Last Newsletter

Since the last newsletter the following training events have been delivered:

- Role specific training for new DLPs;
- Influencing international missionary practice;
- Annual update to registered trainers;
- Working with respondents.

Upcoming Training

Crisis Management - 01/08/2018

This training day is focused on the practicalities of dealing with a crisis situation when a cleric or religious is stepped aside. The day will include specific inputs on the following:

- Public announcements
- Dealing with the media
- Information sharing
- Supporting complainants
- Managing risk
- Public relations

This day is for Church authorities, DLPs and those involved in the case management structure. To book your place, follow this link: <https://www.safeguarding.ie/component/eventbooking/crisis-management-training>



Training and Support

Governance for Church Authorities - 05/09/2018

This training day is designed for new and existing Church authorities and will cover the following:

- Data protection and information sharing
- Recent policy and legislative changes
- The role of the Church authority and safeguarding
- Auditing and ensuring compliance

To book your place, follow this link: <https://www.safeguarding.ie/component/eventbooking/governance-for-church-authorities>

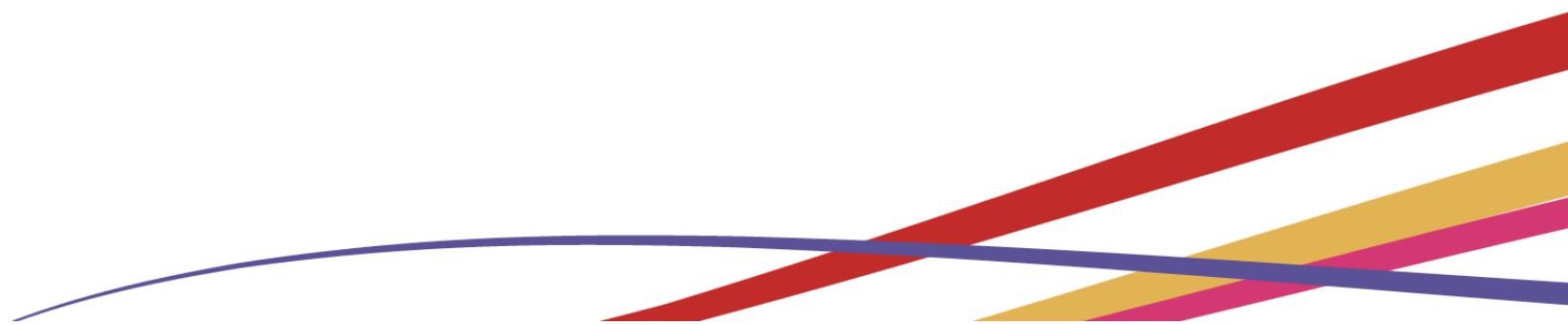
Working Safely with Children - 26/09/2018

This training day is specifically for those involved in youth ministry, or any cleric or religious who wants to ensure that all safeguards are in place to protect children and the adults that work with them. The day will include input on:

- Children's rights and safeguarding;
- Practical examples of youth ministry that works and successful safeguards that are in place;
- Boundaries;
- Critical Incident planning; and
- Resources for encouraging safe youth ministry.

To book your place, follow this link:

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/component/eventbooking/working-safely-with-children>





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

Practice Issue- Physical Abuse

Allegations relating to physical abuse of children have been made against clerics and religious for decades. There have been a number of statutory inquiries in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland which have heard testimony from adults who continue to suffer from the physical assaults inflicted on them as children.

While physical punishment and more serious physical abuse may have been part of the prevailing culture of the time in both institutional care and in families, that does not minimise or negate the suffering it caused to developing children.

The challenge for the Church is how to respond to complainants who come forward now seeking support and redress, and who seek assurances that those who harmed them are not allowed to minister, or to have access to children through ministry.

The physical abuse of a child is not a crime in canon law; and restrictions on the ministry of a cleric or religious is an unlikely response by a Church authority, unless there is a criminal conviction for assault.

However there does need to be a distinction drawn between physical abuse which occurred in the past, and any current physical harm caused to a child. Physical abuse is now a reportable offence under the Children First Act 2015, and under Section 5(1) of the Criminal Law (Northern Ireland) Act (1967).

The following actions should be taken if a complainant makes an allegation of physical abuse:

- The details are taken and reported to the statutory authorities (police and social services);
- An offer of support through pastoral care and counselling is made to the complainant;
- The respondent must be informed of the allegation;
- Advice from the local Advisory Panel / NCMC should be sought to ascertain if any restrictive action should be taken in relation to the respondent;
- Following the conclusion of the statutory agency inquiries, an assessment of the allegation should be made. This will include:
 - Details of alleged abuse
 - Frequency of abuse
 - Severity of abuse
 - Admission or denial by the respondent
 - Does the respondent have issues with anger or aggression; and if so, is she/he prepared to take part in a programme to deal with this?
 - Does the respondent currently constitute a risk to children?
 - Is the respondent prepared to participate in an assessment process to ascertain whether they have an unaddressed problem or condition?
 - Does the Church authority believe that the respondent's ministry should be changed in the light of what is now known about them?
- A reply to the complainant should be made, which includes a written account of the respondent's reaction to the allegation.
- If the respondent admits the abuse, an apology would be appropriate.

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THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
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IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

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