

# Newsletter



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

March 2018

## National Office Staff

Chief  
Executive  
Officer

[Teresa Devlin](#)

Director of  
Training and  
Support

[Niall Moore](#)

Part time  
Director of  
Safeguarding

[Peter Kieran](#)

Administrators

[Ann Doyle](#)

[Imelda Ashe](#)

Advice and  
Support

[Sister Colette Stevenson](#)

## Introduction

We are already into the third month of 2018, and indeed the start of Spring. Already this year the National Board has faced loss, through the death of Mary Waddell, an esteemed Board colleague. We would like to acknowledge the gentle, passionate commitment Mary gave to the work of the National Board since her appointment as a Board Member during 2013. Mary was Director of Nursing at the Belfast Trust before her retirement and joining the National Board. She will be remembered by us as someone who was a “lady”, gentle, funny and always positive about the work of the National Board and in child safeguarding practice across the Church in Ireland. The National Board would like again to extend our thanks to Mary’s husband Sam, her son Michael, her daughter in law Carmel and her two grandchildren, Malachy and Maia, for lending her to us and we offer sympathy to them for their loss.

Sr Colette Stevenson became gravely ill before Christmas and after an extended period in the Mater Hospital in Dublin, is thankfully now well on the road to recovery. We wish Colette continued good wishes for a full restoration to good health.

This first Newsletter of 2018 will provide information on requirements of Children First; Updates to Safeguarding Children 2016 Guidance; Review methodology; celebrities; Review of NCMC; Training and the practice feature this month is on website guidance.

# Children First Act 2015

Following the implementation of remaining sections of Children First 2015, in December 2017, there are a number of requirements on Church bodies in the Republic of Ireland. To assist in understanding the obligations placed on Church personnel, the National Board has:

- Updated the training manual and provided trainers with the changes.
- Informed Church authorities of the requirements relating to:
  - Statutory obligations of relevant services.
  - Mandated persons and requirement to maintain a list of these.
  - Child Safeguarding Statements.
  - Requirement around appointing a relevant person for the purposes of Children First Act 2015.
- Facilitated training with new Church authorities.
- Facilitated training with existing DLPs on the proposed changes.

In summary three of the main requirements which need to be acted on by relevant Church bodies are outlined below:

## **Safeguarding Statements (only for Church bodies who have ministry with children in ROI)**

All Church bodies that provide relevant services according to Children First 2015, should have prepared their Child Safeguarding Statement and have made it available on their website, (the deadline set for this by Tusla was the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2018). Relevant services are defined in the legislation and in relation to the Church. There are a number of services which may be captured. For further information on relevant services please refer to Schedule 1, Section 2 of Children First Act 2015.

You can access further guidance on the preparation of the statement here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/roles?task=document.viewdoc&id=333> .

The Child Safeguarding Statement also requires the Church authority to maintain a list of mandated persons (guidance here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/roles?task=document.viewdoc&id=331>) and appoint a relevant person as a contact for any questions relating to the Child Safeguarding Statement (guidance here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/roles?task=document.viewdoc&id=333>).

## **New Reporting Forms (all Church bodies in ROI)**

Tusla have introduced two forms for reporting allegations along with Tusla web portals, specifically designed to receive electronic notifications. The particular form required depends on whether the allegation refers to abuse that is current, or relates to a retrospective allegation. The National Board guidance has been amended to reflect the two types of notification and clarify which form should be completed. You can access the guidance on: <https://www.safeguarding.ie/roles?task=document.viewdoc&id=258> .

## **Tusla contacts (all Church bodies in ROI)**

Tusla have merged a number of their offices for reporting allegations. As a result it is likely that the numbers on your posters and leaflets will need to be changed. The National Board has updated its website to reflect the changes and you can access the new numbers here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Appendix%20D.pdf> .

# Guidance Updates

The National Board strives to maintain its guidance in line with changes to legislation and statutory guidance. Since December 2017 there have been significant changes in the Republic of Ireland which have resulted in amendments to the National Board's Guidance. Some of the changes are minor whilst others include new templates and additional guidance added to each of the standards. A full list of all the changes to the guidance can be found here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/index.php/guidance>. Since the last newsletter some of these changes include:

- Guidance on child safeguarding statement.
- Guidance on mandated persons.
- Guidance relating to the new Tusla forms for reporting allegations of abuse.
- Guidance on allegations against deceased clerics/religious.
- Updated information in relation to storage of vetting records.
- Updated Appendix D with new Tusla contact details.
- Updated Appendix A with new guidance on conflict of roles.
- Added 6 new example template decrees.
- Guidance on support for families of respondents.
- Guidance on Church process for allegations against deceased clerics/religious.

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.

## Review Methodology

The last draft of the Review Methodology, following extensive consultation over a two year period was circulated to all Bishops and to AMRI in December 2017. Five responses were received offering further comment. Trialling the methodology in two Church bodies is in process, one in a Diocese and one in a Religious Order where there is ministry with children.

Following completion of the trial, the methodology will be reviewed and the comments received from Bishops will be further considered. A final draft methodology will be presented to the National Board in May next and thereafter it is planned to address the matter with a Liaison Committee meeting before the IEC meeting in June.

## Celebrets/Letters of Good Standing

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 require confirmation that they are fit for that sacred task. The safeguarding of children within the Irish Catholic Church is of critical importance. All clerics who wish to minister in a Church which is not their own Church must show their celebret or letter of good standing; if this is not available, the cleric cannot be allowed to minister in public.

# 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>.

## Annual Training Returns

In order to maintain registration with the National Board, all trainers are required to complete a training return for each training event delivered between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2018. The training returns form can be found here: [www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/StandardsDocs/5.3B%20Template%203-%20Training%20Returns%20Form.doc](http://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/StandardsDocs/5.3B%20Template%203-%20Training%20Returns%20Form.doc).

The information from the returns is used to evaluate and update the content of the Training Manual. The statistics of training sessions delivered are reported on in the Annual Report of the National Board.

**All trainers should send returns to the Director of Training and Support, as soon as possible.**

## Upcoming Training Events

Details of all training events for 2018 can be found on the National Board's website here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/index.php/what-we-do/advice-on-effective-practice/training>

- **21/03/2018-Role Specific Training for new DLPs-** This training is designed for people who have recently taken on the role of Designated Liaison Person (DLP), or who have not been able to attend role specific training before. It will cover the following areas:
  - Clarifying the role of DLP.
  - Hearing safeguarding concerns and record keeping.
  - Communication and supervision.
  - Conducting an internal report on cases for the Church authority.

This training is an annual fixture in our training calendar; it was previously facilitated on the 8th of June 2016 and 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017. If you have already attended these dates you do not need to attend again.

- **2/05/2018- Compassionate Response Training-** This training is designed for people who are involved in working directly with complainants including Support People, DLPs and the Church authorities. The aim of the day is to highlight current good practice in this area.
- **26<sup>th</sup> May 2018- Update for all Registered Trainers-** This training is to update all trainers on recent changes to the training manual and also provide them with a newly designed short programme for delivery to mandated persons.
- **30<sup>th</sup> of May 2018- influencing International Missionary Safeguarding Practice-** This day is for members of religious orders who have ministry with children in other countries. The aim is to provide advice and support about translating the good practice of the Irish Church in other contexts, to keep children safe.

To book any of these events please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/index.php/what-we-do/advice-on-effective-practice/training>





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# Practice Issue- Website Guidance

It is the responsibility of each Church authority and their safeguarding committee to develop a communications plan, a key part of which is assessing how effective the various methods of communication are at delivering key messages to their target audience.

A major communications tool in this plan is through the Church body's website. There are a number of important documents which must be on the website including:

- The policy statement (Page 8 of the policy document).
- A copy of Safeguarding Children 2016: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement (only required for Church bodies in the Republic of Ireland).
- Procedures to implement the policy- here there are two options:
  1. If you have developed your own procedures for implementing the policy (not the National Board's guidance). Copies of these procedures should be available on your website.

OR

2. If you take the National Board's guidance as your procedures this statement (or the equivalent) should be on your website  
'For the procedures to implement the child safeguarding policy, the [INSERT NAME OF CHURCH BODY] follows the guidance of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland available here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/index.php/guidance> .

An indicator of effectiveness of a website is to test it with a number of people to see how easy it is for them to find the information they need. The National Board suggests that child safeguarding committees should examine their website with the above in mind to ensure it is an efficient and effective tool for communicating the Church's child safeguarding message.

## Contact Details

National Office for  
Safeguarding Children  
New House  
St. Patrick's College  
Maynooth  
Co. Kildare

**T** : 00 353 (01)5053124  
**F** : 00 353 (01) 5053026



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