

# Newsletter



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

March 2020

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## Introduction

It is over a year since Pope Francis convened a meeting of Church leaders in Rome to discuss the abuse of children and vulnerable adults in the Church.

### **What has happened in Ireland in the intervening period?**

The Motu Proprio “Vos estis lux mundi” was received in June 2019 and there followed a series of meetings convened by the four Archbishops to consider what further steps the Irish Church needs to take to ensure compliance with the expectations set out in “Vos estis lux mundi”.

For our part in the National Board we critiqued all our guidance against “Vos estis lux mundi” and drafted new guidance. The final aspects of that guidance are detailed below. Child safeguarding however is not just about guidance or procedures; it is also about putting into place, through our actions and our hearts, best practice based on Gospel values, national legislation, canon law and international norms.

The National Board is placing increasing emphasis in translating written policies and procedures into pastoral based ministry with children, complainants of abuse, those accused of abusing; and care for those who are engaged in this ministry. One example of our differing approach is that adopted by us in the child safeguarding formation programme – “Head to Heart” which we have initiated with St. Patrick’s College Maynooth, the Pontifical Irish College in Rome and Redemptoris Mater in Dundalk.

Over time you will also see changes to how we deliver training, as will be evidenced in the revised training manual. For those who seek a Review of Child Safeguarding practice from us, you will notice that our particular interests are in listening to children, complainants and respondents, as well as those who minister in child safeguarding – a shift away from merely examining written procedures.

# Why are we Promoting a Different Approach?

Firstly, we believe that the written policy and procedures are sound and fit for purpose; we will always review and update these as required following changes to civil or canonical requirements.

Secondly because Pope Francis, as leader of the Catholic world asked us in to give concrete witness of faith in Christ:

‘You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden’ (Mt 5:14). Our Lord Jesus Christ calls every believer to be a shining example of virtue, integrity and holiness. All of us, in fact, are called to give concrete witness of faith in Christ in our lives and, in particular, in our relationship with others.’

Thirdly because we believe that the Church in Ireland has matured, in terms of child safeguarding practice, from slavishly following procedures (still important and must be adhered to) to really understanding the importance of acting compassionately with a true heart to safeguard children, those who have been harmed and responding justly to those accused of abuse; and understanding the difference.

This year we will be hosting our bi-annual National Conference, when we will continue with this theme of reflection and where we hope to focus on what it means to be truly pastoral in safeguarding ministry.

This newsletter will provide updates on the following issues:

- Reviews of child safeguarding practice
- Training and Support
- National Board Guidance
- GAP papers
- National Board’s biennial conference
- Charities Code of Governance
- Youth Pilgrimages – Taizé
- Operation Hydrant
- Practice issues- E learning and software imaging

# Reviews of Child Safeguarding Practice

The second phase of Reviews of Child Safeguarding practice is now in process. Five Church bodies are either completed or are in process with a further five in planning.

If you are unclear whether your Church body meets the threshold for review please contact [teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie](mailto:teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie).

The National Board has employed independent reviewers to conduct fieldwork in Church bodies where there is ministry with children and/or where there are allegations of abuse since the last review.

The Review Methodology is available on the National Board's website on Page 46 of the Guidance on Standard 7, at [www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%207.pdf](http://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%207.pdf).

**If you would like to invite the National Board to review your child safeguarding practice, please send a letter of invitation to Teresa Devlin so that a suitable timetable can be developed for 2020.**

## Self Audits

**We would like to remind each Church authority that there is a requirement to annually conduct a self-audit of its child safeguarding practice in line with, Indicator 7.1 of *Safeguarding Children – Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.**

**The National Board suggests that if the self-audit for 2019 has not yet been completed, it should be completed as quickly as possible. A letter to Teresa Devlin CEO, is required to inform her that the self-audit has been conducted, before the end of March, 2020. The National Board will comment on the numbers of self-audits completed in its annual report in May 2020.**

# Training and Support

- 18/03/2020- Annual Update for Trainers (Additional Date) - This training day is compulsory for all registered trainers and those who are currently undergoing their registration process. Copies of the updated manual will be distributed to all in attendance. To book your place, please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/annual-trainers-update-2020-additional-date>.
- 01/04/2020- Child Safeguarding and Youth Pilgrimages- following a number of queries from Church personnel, this training day has been organised specifically for DLPs, youth ministry co-ordinators, directors of youth pilgrimages and other relevant Church personnel. The day will include presentations on the following:
  - The safeguarding requirements for pilgrimages to be facilitated safely
  - The safeguarding risks of pilgrimages
  - The strategies in place to manage those risks
  - Additional guidance that needs to be developedTo book your place please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/child-safeguarding-during-youth-pilgrimages>.
- 18/04/2020, 19/04/2020, 25/04/2020, 26/04/2020, and 13/06/2020- Train the Trainers Course- This course is for those wishing to become registered trainers with the National Board. Attendance at all dates is required. To find out more or apply please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/train-the-trainers-course-2020>.

## National Board's Biennial Conference

We are delighted to confirm that National Board's child safeguarding conference for 2020 will take place in the **Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan** commencing with Mass in St. Macartan's Cathedral (a three to four minute walk from the hotel) and followed by the opening address/dinner on Friday evening, **16<sup>th</sup> October 2020**.

A full day's conference will take place the following day, **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2020**.

The theme of the Conference is *Theology of Child Safeguarding*.

Further details of the Conference (Agenda, Key Note Speakers, fees to attend (a) both dinner on the 16<sup>th</sup> and Conference (17<sup>th</sup>) or (b) Just the Conference (17<sup>th</sup>), along with details of how to book your place to attend, will be sent to you in due course.

In the meantime, on your behalf, we have reserved an allocation of bedrooms for the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 at special rates of:

- 110 Euro for a single room b/b
- 140 Euro for a twin room b/b (with 2 people sharing).

These rooms are available for you to book *on a first come – first served basis*.

If you wish to book/pay for a room and to avail of the special rates above, please contact the Hillgrove Hotel directly and state you are attending the Conference. There is also a range of Bed and Breakfasts close by and the hotel can give you details of these. The National Board is not in a position to reserve any rooms on your behalf.

<https://www.hillgrovehotel.com>

Tel: [+353 \(47\) 81 288](tel:+3534781288) E-mail: [hello@hillgrovehotel.com](mailto:hello@hillgrovehotel.com)



## Training Manual

The Training Manual has been updated and all trainers will be retrained in the new manual on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. The changes include:

- New sessions for young leaders
- New refresher session for those who have attended full day training
- Shorter day training including new videos and audio clips to use during the sessions
- New activities and resources to help make the training more effective.

## Training Returns

All training returns need to be sent to the Director of Training and Support by the end of March 2020. A template for the form is available here on Page 20 of this link

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%205.pdf>.

## GAP Papers

During 2019 the National Board produced three GAP papers. The purpose of these papers is to offer research, guidance and application of the topic in child safeguarding ministry. To read the papers follow the links below:

GAP Paper 4 - ***Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message***

[https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP\\_Papers/GAP%20Paper%204%20Communicating%20the%20Church%20Safeguarding%20Message.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%204%20Communicating%20the%20Church%20Safeguarding%20Message.pdf).

GAP Paper 5 - ***Enabling a Child Safe Church***

[https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP\\_Papers/GAP%20Paper%205-%20Enabling%20a%20Child%20Safe%20Church.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%205-%20Enabling%20a%20Child%20Safe%20Church.pdf).

GAP Paper 6 - ***Shedding Light on Vos estis lux mundi***

[https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP\\_Papers/GAP%20Paper%206-%20Shedding%20Light%20on%20Vos%20estis%20lux%20mundi.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%206-%20Shedding%20Light%20on%20Vos%20estis%20lux%20mundi.pdf).

To read these and the other GAP papers produced to date follow this link [www.safeguarding.ie/publications](http://www.safeguarding.ie/publications).

## Guidance Updates

Since the last newsletter there have been several changes to National Board Guidance. These include:

- Managing allegations against Church leaders who are not Bishops or equivalent
- New Training Returns Template

For a full page-by-page list of all of the changes to the Guidance and to access the new Guidance, please follow this link [www.safeguarding.ie/guidance](http://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance).

It is important to remember that those Church bodies who have not taken the National Board's Guidance as their child safeguarding procedures, should incorporate the changes outlined above, where applicable into the procedures that are in place within that Church body.

## Data Destruction

Over the past number of months the National Board has been going through a process of data destruction. All allegation data is being returned to each Church body. Letters have been sent to all Church Authorities in Ireland where we hold allegation data. We would urge all Church leaders who have received a letter from us to arrange a date to pick up the data as soon as possible.

If you have not received a letter and would like to find out if there is data which you need to collect please contact [acunningham@safeguarding.ie](mailto:acunningham@safeguarding.ie) or [imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie](mailto:imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie).

Once this data has been collected the process of destruction of the data provided to the National Board since 2008 will conclude. In future, after the publication of each annual report from 2019/2020 onwards, allegation data provided to the National Board will be destroyed without returning it to each Church body. If you wish to view the data for 2019/2020 please contact the National Board by the end of June 2020.

## Charities Governance Code

In line with requirement of the Charities Regulations, the National Board has been reviewing its governance arrangements. We are in the process of putting in place, systems and processes to ensure that the National Board achieves its charitable objectives and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way. This has involved developing: A code of governance, which will be reviewed for compliance annually; a strategic plan; a communications strategy and a training strategy.

## Operation Hydrant

**This article is relevant to any Church Body with ministries in England and Wales.**

The National Police Chiefs' Council in England formed "Operation Hydrant" to coordinate police investigations into non-recent child sexual abuse. "Operation Hydrant" receives referrals from a range of organisations, including the "Independent Inquiry into sexual Abuse" taking place in England. Upon receipt of an allegation, staff from "Operation Hydrant" pass the information onto the relevant police force for investigation.

It operates in a similar way to the Sexual Crimes Management Unit of An Garda Síochána in Dublin.

"Operation Hydrant" has asked the National Board to inform relevant Church leaders of its existence. Should you wish to engage with "Operation Hydrant" you will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding. If you wish to access more information the National Board can provide you with a fact sheet supplied by "Operation Hydrant" please contact [imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie](mailto:imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie).

# Youth Pilgrimages- Including Taizé

The National Board has been alerted to concerns about the management of child safeguarding in Taizé. While Taizé is not a Catholic religious congregation, it has Catholic Brothers within its community, and it attracts thousands of young Catholic pilgrims annually. Throughout the year, meetings for young adults between 17 and 30 years old (and, within certain limits, for adults and families with children) take place in Taizé France. In October 2019, a 48 year-old Brother who had joined the Taizé Community in 1989 was imprisoned in France for rape and sexual assault. It is not clear from the report seen whether this man committed his crimes within Taizé; if so, when and whether he was still a Community member at the time of his arrest.

## **The role of the National Board**

As the provider of information, advice and guidance to the Catholic Church on the island of Ireland, we believe that it is prudent to bring these details to your attention. In doing so, we would like to remind all Church authorities and Church bodies of the Guidance under Standard 1:

1.2A – Code of Behaviour;

1.4G Guidance on Trips Away with Young People;

1.8A Hazard Assessments.

All these guidance notes will provide sufficient safeguards for all trips away with young people so that any Church authority or Church body planning to bring children and young people on any foreign trip would:

- (a) Provide orientation and specific briefing to under-age participants on how to keep safe;
- (b) Establish that the receiving body or organisation is Child Safeguarding-aware and has robust Child Safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

The National Board also suggests that Church bodies that have taken children and young people abroad would share information with other Church bodies considering a similar trip; on risk and hazard assessment, overall safeguarding preparation, and experience of the location / organisation visited. Similarly, the sharing of information on near misses, unanticipated risks and untoward happenings is also encouraged.



## Practice Issue- E-Learning

In recent months two Church bodies have contacted the National Board to enquire as to whether the Tusla e-learning programme is sufficient to meet the training indicators outlined in Standard 5 of the Church's safeguarding policy.

For the avoidance of doubt, as set out in Guidance 5.3A (go to Page 12 of this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%205.pdf>) in order to meet the requirements of the indicators of standard 5, training must be delivered by a National Board accredited trainer (or in terms of information sessions and training for young leaders, those that accredited trainers have trained).

Tusla's e-learning programme is neither Church specific nor based on the Church's policy and therefore while some may choose to do the programme, they would also have to complete the Church training programme.

The National Board recognises that online training has its advantages particularly for those who find it difficult to meet geographically. The Director of Training and Support will continue to explore options around online training and its effectiveness.

There are great benefits to be gained from participating in direct, interactive training. In order to ensure that the Church's training programme is relevant, effective and up to date, the National Board has revised the training manual based on feedback from trainers and participants. The new manual, which will be multi-media, includes new sessions for young leaders and refresher sessions for those that have already attended a full day programme.

## Practice Issue- Software Imaging

Child Safeguarding has to try and stay up to speed on developments in the IT – Social Media area in order to try and combat ways in which children and young people can be abused. One such concern which we want to bring to your attention is that of software imaging. This new software innovation that has many potential comedic applications – *deepfake* – can also be used for much darker purposes, including inserting images of children and young people into photographs and videos in ways that make them appear to be original representations.

This process is described in an article on *Science Alert* in which it says that 'So-called "deepfake" technology has caught the public's imagination, using AI software to analyse someone's face and then map it onto a video of someone else'. In another article, this time on *Metro News*, the following warning is given: 'If you're not worried about the fact that someone can make porn of you doing literally anything, without your consent, then you really should be...Deepfakes are not you. They are fakes made in your image. So they're not currently covered under the revenge porn law'. A variety of apps can be easily downloaded to assist in the making of fake photographic and video images of real people; all that is needed to start is a clear photographic image of the subject.

The National Board has produced within Standard 1.9, guidance on the use of Technology, on the use of the Internet, on the use of Texting and Email, on the use of Photography and on the use of CCTV and Webcams. You are encouraged to refresh your knowledge and awareness of these protective measures in the light of software developments. If you wish to access more information on "deepfake" please contact [peter.kieran@safeguarding.ie](mailto:peter.kieran@safeguarding.ie).



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND



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