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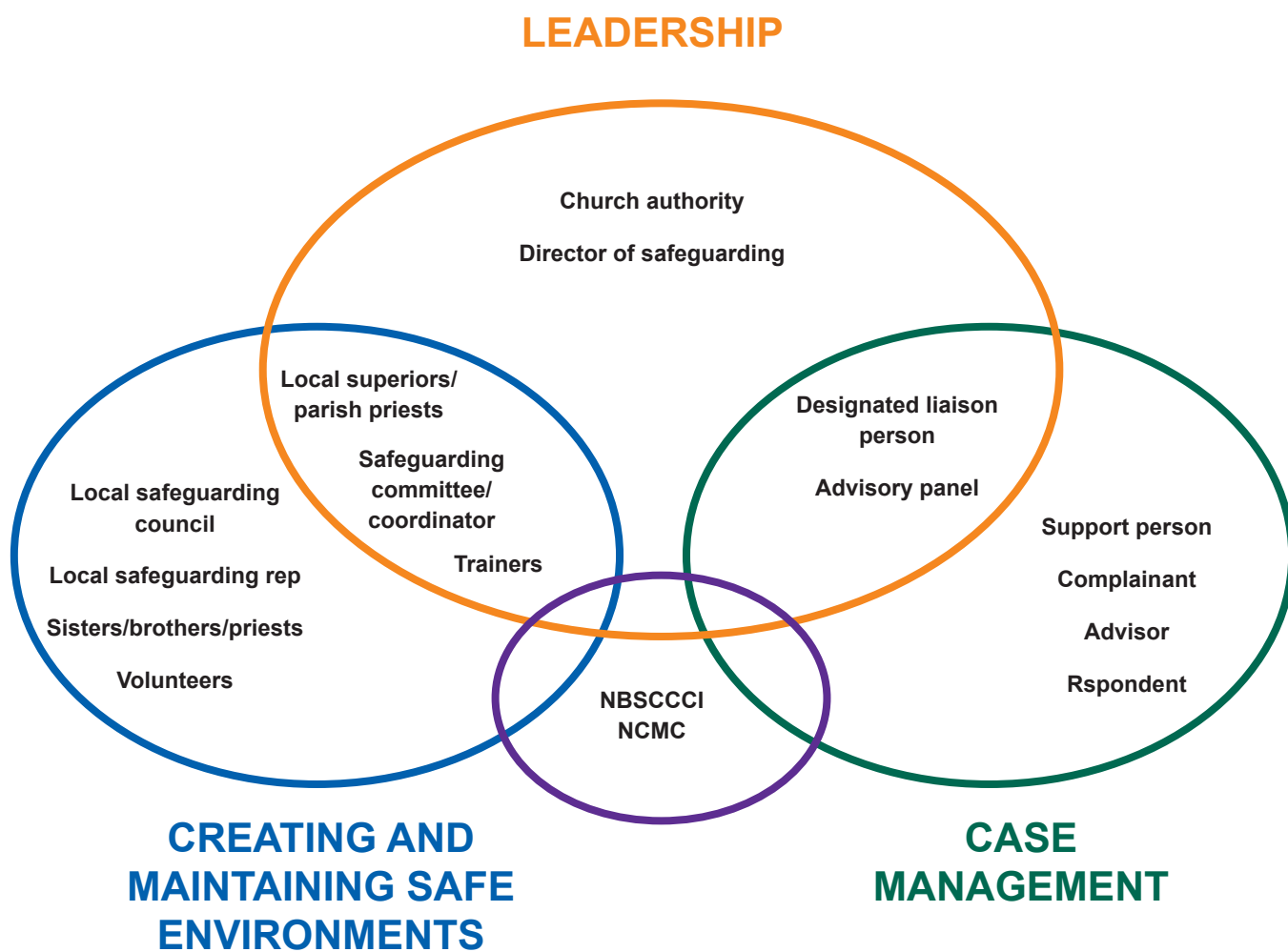
ROLES IN THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE



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Roles in the Child Safeguarding Structure

The diagram below shows the proposed structure for key personnel involved within child safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland. A similar structure is replicated across each Church body in Ireland. Descriptions for each role are displayed in this appendix, while also being referenced and expanded on in each relevant standard.



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Church authority

A Church Authority is the person or governing entity with ultimate responsibility for the governance, oversight, decision-making and accountability of a Church body's activities, including safeguarding. The Church Authority is responsible for fostering a culture of safeguarding; ensuring robust safeguarding governance, structures and resources; and providing effective oversight, accountability and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice. This can be achieved by:

- Promoting a safeguarding culture throughout the Church body where the welfare of children is paramount, and safeguarding is recognised as everyone's responsibility.
- Ensuring adequate resources, including personnel, training, supervision, and funding, are available to
implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively.
- Appointing and supporting safeguarding personnel, ensuring they have clearly defined roles, appropriate authority, and access to ongoing supervision and support.
- Ensuring risk assessment and risk management processes are carried out for all ministries, activities, and environments involving children
- Monitoring and reviewing safeguarding arrangements regularly to ensure their effectiveness and support continuous improvement
- Responding promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns and allegations, ensuring that reporting obligations are met and that the safety and welfare of children remain the primary consideration
- Ensuring safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures are followed for clergy, religious, employees and volunteers
- Supporting safeguarding training and formation for all relevant personnel and ensuring participation is maintained.
- Including the voices and experiences of children, families, victims and survivors in the development, implementation and review of safeguarding policies and practices.
- Promoting transparency and accountability through regular reporting on safeguarding activities, compliance, and improvement initiatives
- Co-operating fully with statutory authorities and other relevant agencies in safeguarding matters.
- Ensuring regular audits, self-assessments and independent reviews are undertaken against safeguarding standards and that recommendations are implemented promptly.

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Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Co-Ordinator

The Director's/Co-ordinator's role is to provide strategic and operational safeguarding leadership promoting a culture of safety, accountability and best practice through quality assurance, compliance, training, reporting, and effective safeguarding governance.

The Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Co-ordinator supports the Church body's commitment to being a safe, welcoming and child-centred community by:

- Directing adherence to, and supporting the implementation of the child safeguarding policy A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2024)
- Leading the implementation, monitoring and review of safeguarding policy, procedures and standards across all ministries, activities and services of the Church body
- Supporting the Church Authority in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities through effective governance, accountability and oversight;
- Promoting a culture in which the dignity, rights, participation and wellbeing of children are respected, valued and protected in accordance with Gospel values and the Church's safeguarding commitments;
- Ensuring that safeguarding is embedded within all aspects of Church life and ministry and is understood as a shared responsibility
- Providing professional advice, guidance and support to clergy, religious, employees, volunteers and safeguarding personnel on safeguarding policy, procedures and best practice
- Ensuring that safeguarding personnel receive appropriate training, supervision, support and opportunities for ongoing professional development
- Working collaboratively with the Designated Liaison Person, Safeguarding Committee, Advisory Panel, National Case Management Committee and statutory agencies to maintain effective safeguarding arrangements
- Supporting parishes, communities and ministries in creating and maintaining safe and welcoming environments for children and young people;
- Overseeing safeguarding audits, self-assessments, compliance processes and quality assurance activities and supporting the implementation of recommendations arising from independent reviews

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- Monitoring safeguarding practice across the Church body and identifying areas for improvement and development and organisational learning
- Promoting transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice;
- Preparing reports for the Church Authority on safeguarding activity, compliance with standards, emerging risks and safeguarding developments
- Supporting the Church body's commitment to responding to safeguarding concerns with compassion, respect and justice, and to ensuring that those who have experienced or been affected by abuse are treated with dignity and care.
- Promoting survivor-informed and child-centred approaches to safeguarding policy and practice.
- Ensuring that safeguarding remains central to the mission of the Church and reflects its commitment to being a safe and welcoming place for children and young people.

Designated Liaison Person: DLP

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for receiving, managing and responding to safeguarding concerns in accordance with Church policy and statutory requirements, and for acting as the principal liaison with the relevant civil authorities. The DLP promotes a culture of safeguarding by ensuring that children are welcomed, valued and protected, and that all safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly, compassionately and in accordance with civil and canon law, reflecting the Church's commitment to being a safe and welcoming community for all children.

To promote safeguarding by:

- Receiving, responding to and recording child safeguarding concerns, allegations, suspicions, disclosures and complaints in accordance with Church and statutory procedures
- Reporting child safeguarding concerns to the relevant statutory authorities without delay and maintaining appropriate communication with those agencies
- Acting as the primary point of contact for those wishing to raise safeguarding concerns within the Church body
- Managing safeguarding cases and maintaining secure, accurate and confidential records relating to all safeguarding matters with legal and policy requirements
- Liaising with the Church Authority, Support Person, Advisor and other safeguarding personnel as required

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- Advising the Church Authority on the appropriate responses and actions arising from safeguarding concerns, disclosures and allegations of child abuse involving Church personnel;
- Liaising with the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) and ensuring that relevant safeguarding information is shared appropriately;
- Conducting internal inquiries and information-gathering processes in accordance with Church safeguarding procedures and without compromising statutory investigations;
- Supporting the implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures and best practice throughout the Church body.
- Contributing to the promotion and maintenance of safeguarding standards through effective case management, monitoring and oversight.
- Providing advice and guidance to clergy, religious, employees and volunteers on safeguarding procedures and reporting obligations
- Preparing and submitting annual safeguarding reports and compliance updates to the Church Authority
- Assisting in the development, implementation and review of safeguarding risk assessments and management plans
- Monitoring respondents who are subject to safeguarding management plans or, in consultation with the Church Authority, ensuring that a suitable person is appointed to fulfil this role
- Supporting independent safeguarding reviews, internal audits and quality assurance processes and ensuring that recommendations are implemented where appropriate
- Promoting a culture of safeguarding, accountability, transparency and continuous improvement throughout the Church body

Safeguarding Committee

A Safeguarding Committee is typically made up of individuals appointed by the Church Authority who can provide governance, safeguarding expertise, pastoral insight and independent oversight. The Safeguarding Committee supports the development and review of safeguarding policy and practice, monitors compliance with safeguarding standards, and promotes continuous improvement in safeguarding across the Church body. The Safeguarding Committee has a governance and oversight role rather than a case management role. Responsibility for the management of individual safeguarding cases remains with the Church Authority and the DLP. The functions of the Safeguarding committee include:

- Promoting a culture in which children are welcomed, valued, respected and protected throughout the life and ministry of the Church body.

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- Assisting in the development, implementation and review of the Church body's Strategic Safeguarding Plan.
- Monitoring compliance with safeguarding policies, procedures and standards across all ministries, locations and activities.
- Receiving regular reports from the Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Co-ordinator on safeguarding activity, trends, training and compliance.
- Reviewing the findings of audits, self-assessments and external safeguarding reviews and advising on actions required for continuous improvement.
- Overseeing safeguarding training and awareness programmes to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood throughout the Church body.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding structures, personnel and resources and advising the Church Authority accordingly.
- Supporting effective communication on safeguarding and promoting transparency and accountability.
- Identifying emerging safeguarding risks and recommending measures to strengthen safeguarding practice and governance.
- Promoting learning from audits, reviews, complaints, safeguarding concerns and developments in best practice.

Advisory Panel

Many Church bodies now avail of the National Case Management Committee (see NCMC section) rather than maintaining their own Advisory Panel.

An Advisory Panel is an independent multidisciplinary body that supports the Church Authority by providing expert advice on the management of individual safeguarding cases taking account of civil and canon law considerations, risk assessment and case management, ensuring that safeguarding decisions are informed, accountable and centred on the safety, dignity and rights of children.

Advice provided by the Advisory Panel is not binding on the Church Authority and should be considered alongside advice from the DLP, the Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the NCMC (where this has been sought), and where appropriate statutory agencies or other relevant agencies.

The panel should comprise of individuals with a range of relevant expertise and experience. It should be independent in the advice it provides and capable of offering informed guidance on safeguarding, risk assessment, survivor's experience, civil law obligations, canonical requirements and good governance through:

- Advising the Church Authority at all stages of the management of child safeguarding concerns, allegations and cases.

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- Providing independent, multidisciplinary advice on safeguarding, risk assessment, case management and child protection matters.
- Advising on the assessment and management of risk where concerns have been raised.
- Assisting the Church Authority in reaching informed decisions that prioritise the safety, welfare and best interests of children.
- Providing advice on compliance with relevant civil legislation, statutory guidance and safeguarding obligations in the jurisdiction in which the Church body operates.
- Providing advice on the implications of canon law and canonical processes relating to safeguarding concerns and allegations.
- Advising on the development, implementation and review of safeguarding management plans, safety plans and proportionate protective measures where required.
- Supporting the Church Authority in ensuring that safeguarding decisions are transparent, proportionate, accountable and informed by best practice.
- Keeping accurate records of discussions, recommendations and advice offered to the Church Authority
- Identifying emerging safeguarding risks and advising on measures to strengthen safeguarding practice and governance.
- Contributing to the continuous development of a culture in which children are welcomed, valued, respected and protected.
- Supporting learning from external safeguarding reviews, internal audits and case experience to improve safeguarding arrangements across the Church body.

Support Person

The role of the Support Person is to provide information, practical assistance and emotional support to the complainant throughout the safeguarding process, ensuring that their views, needs and wellbeing are respected and communicated appropriately.

The Support Person promotes safeguarding best practice by:

- Keeping the complainant informed, to the extent agreed with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), about the progress of their case.
- Assisting the complainant in accessing appropriate support services, including counselling, pastoral support and advocacy services
- Maintaining appropriate contact with the complainant and keeping a record of meetings, discussions and support provided, reporting relevant information to the DLP as appropriate

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- Communicating the complainant's views, concerns and wishes to the DLP and Church Authority
- Supporting the complainant to understand the safeguarding process and the role of those involved
- Promoting a compassionate, respectful trauma informed and survivor-centred approach throughout the management of the case

The Support Person does not have an investigative or decision-making role. Responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns remains with the Church Authority and the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Advisor

The role of the Advisor is to provide information, practical assistance and support to the respondent throughout the safeguarding process, ensuring that they understand the process and have an opportunity to communicate their views and concerns.

The Advisor promotes safeguarding best practice by:

- Keeping the respondent informed, to the extent agreed with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), about the progress of their case
- Assisting the respondent in accessing appropriate support services, including counselling, pastoral support and other relevant sources of assistance
- Maintaining appropriate contact with the respondent and keeping a record of meetings, discussions and support provided, reporting relevant information to the DLP as appropriate
- Communicating the respondent's views, concerns and wishes to the DLP and Church Authority
- Supporting the respondent to understand the safeguarding process and the roles and responsibilities of those involved
- Promoting a fair, respectful and transparent process throughout the management of the case

The Advisor does not have an investigative or decision-making role. Responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns remains with the Church Authority and the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Safeguarding trainers

The role of Safeguarding Trainers is to support the development of a culture of safeguarding by providing high-quality safeguarding training, promoting awareness of safeguarding responsibilities therein contributing to the implementation of the

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safeguarding standards from A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic church in Ireland 2024 across the Church body.

Safeguarding Trainers promote safeguarding best practice by:

- Working with the Safeguarding Committee and Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Director of Safeguarding to identify training and development needs within the Church body.
- Delivering approved safeguarding training programmes and awareness sessions to those identified by the safeguarding committee in the Church body;
- Promoting understanding of safeguarding policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities.
- Maintaining accurate records of all training delivered, including attendance
- Supporting the Church body in embedding safeguarding standards and best practice in its culture, ministry and activities.
- Contributing to the implementation and promotion of safeguarding standards through their practice and behaviour.
- Participating in continuing professional development, refresher training, supervision and assessments as required by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) or other relevant safeguarding bodies.
- Providing feedback on emerging training needs, trends and areas for improvement in safeguarding practice.

Local safeguarding council

The role of the Local Safeguarding Council is to support the implementation and promotion of safeguarding policy and practice at local level, fostering a culture of safeguarding, awareness and accountability throughout the Church body.

The Local Safeguarding Council promotes safeguarding best practice by:

- Supporting the implementation and monitoring of safeguarding policies, procedures and standards across the Church body
- Assisting with safeguarding audits and self-assessment processes and monitoring compliance with safeguarding requirements
- Supporting safe recruitment and selection practices for staff and volunteers, in accordance with Church safeguarding procedures
- Ensuring that safeguarding information, including reporting contacts and relevant guidance, is displayed prominently, accessible, relevant and up to date in Church properties and ministries.

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- Providing safeguarding information, guidance and support to clergy, staff and volunteers, as required.
- Promoting safeguarding awareness and encouraging active communication and engagement with Church personnel, volunteers and the wider faith community.
- Identifying local safeguarding issues and bringing these to the attention of the Safeguarding Committee, Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Co-ordinator DLP or Church Authority, as appropriate
- Supporting the promotion and implementation of safeguarding standards through its practice and behaviour
- Encouraging continuous improvement in safeguarding arrangements and helping to create safe environments for children

Local safeguarding representative (LSR)

The role of the Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR) is to support the Parish Priest, Prior or local Superior, in promoting a culture of safeguarding at local level and ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively within the parish or community.

The Local Safeguarding Representative promotes safeguarding best practice by:

- Raising awareness of safeguarding and the Church body's safeguarding responsibilities within the parish or community
- Disseminating safeguarding policies, standards, procedures and guidance, and circulating this information widely
- Supporting the Parish Priest, Prior or Local Superior in ensuring that Church activities involving children are planned and delivered in a manner that promotes their safety, welfare and wellbeing
- Ensuring that contact details for the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Tusla/Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT), and An Garda Síochána/PSNI are clearly displayed and widely available
- Acting as a liaison between the parish or community and diocesan, congregational safeguarding structures
- Promoting safeguarding awareness, safer environments and good safeguarding practice throughout the parish or community
- Supporting local safeguarding audits, monitoring and the implementation of safeguarding standards

The Local Safeguarding Representative does not have responsibility for investigating,

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managing or making decisions in relation to individual safeguarding cases. Responsibility for case management and reporting remains with the Church Authority and the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) supports and promotes child safeguarding across the Catholic Church in Ireland by developing standards, providing guidance and training, and independently monitoring safeguarding practice within Church bodies.

The NBSCCCI performs its child safeguarding role by:

- Assisting in the development, review and implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures, standards and guidance across the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- Providing advice and support on safeguarding best practice, including governance, training, case management, quality assurance and compliance with safeguarding standards.
- Developing safeguarding resources, guidance documents and training programmes to support Church bodies in their safeguarding responsibilities
- Promoting consistency and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice throughout the Catholic Church in Ireland
- Monitoring safeguarding arrangements through independent reviews and audits of Church bodies, including dioceses, religious congregations and lay associations
- Publishing review findings and recommendations to strengthen safeguarding practice and accountability
- Supporting Church bodies in implementing recommendations arising from reviews, audits and safeguarding assessments.
- Contributing to the ongoing development of safeguarding culture, leadership and accountability throughout the Church.

The NBSCCCI has an advisory, standards-setting and monitoring role. Responsibility for the governance and management of safeguarding within a Church body remains with the Church Authority

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National Case Management Committee (NCMC)

The National Case Management Committee (NCMC) is a specialist independent advisory body within the structures of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI). It provides expert advice and guidance to Church Authorities on the management of safeguarding cases, supporting informed, consistent and accountable decision-making in relation to allegations and concerns of abuse.

The NCMC contributes to child safeguarding by:

- Operating as a functional component of the NBSCCCI while maintaining independence through an independent Chair and established governance arrangements.
- Providing expert advice to Church Authorities on all aspects of safeguarding case management and investigative processes relating to allegations and concerns of abuse.
- Supporting Church Authorities in the assessment and management of risk, safeguarding planning and the implementation of appropriate protective measures.
- Advising on matters relating to civil and canon law, safeguarding practice, risk assessment, trauma-informed and survivor-centred approaches and case management.
- Promoting opportunities for consistency, transparency and accountability in safeguarding decision-making across Church bodies throughout Ireland.
- Assisting Church Authorities in ensuring that safeguarding responses reflect current standards, guidance and best practice.
- Operating on an all-island basis, providing advice to dioceses, religious congregations and other Church bodies in both jurisdictions.
- Receiving and considering relevant case information in accordance with agreed information-sharing protocols and data processing arrangements that comply with applicable data protection legislation.

The advice provided by the NCMC is advisory in nature and is not binding on the Church Authority. Responsibility for safeguarding decisions and case management remains with the Church Authority, supported by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Co-ordinator, as appropriate.

To find out more about the current composition of the group, please log on to: <http://www.safeguarding.ie>.

Other key roles:

Relevant person: is a term defined within the Children First Act 2015. It refers to a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's child safeguarding statement.

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Mandated persons: are people who have contact with children and/or families who, by virtue of their qualifications, training and experience, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Mandated persons include key professionals working with children in the education,

health, justice, youth and childcare sectors. Certain professionals who may not work directly with children, such as those in adult counselling or psychiatry, are also mandated persons. The list also includes registered foster carers and members of the clergy or pastoral care workers of a church or other religious community. The Children First Act 2015, Schedule 2, provides a full list of people who are classified as mandated persons.

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