

Newsletter

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

January 2016



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Welcome

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2016. All staff in the National Office and Directors of the National Board would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy New Year.

2015 was an extremely busy year for the National Board; alongside reviews of child safeguarding practice, training, and offering case management advice, staff have been engaged in a programme of Listening Meetings as part of the revision of the Catholic Church in Ireland's Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards. There has been tremendous response to the consultation process which was initiated in July 2014 and concluded in November 2015.

The National Board has presented the final draft Policy and Standards to its Sponsoring Bodies who have approved them.

Revision of Policy and Standards for Safeguarding Children

The details of the consultation process to revise the Standards and Guidance was set out in the October 2015 Newsletter. Since then, a final draft (which was legally proofed) was presented to Coimircé and the NBSCCCI at their joint meeting on the 16th of November. The draft was approved and recommended for adoption to the three sponsoring bodies – the Irish Bishops' Conference; the Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union.

At their Meeting in December 2015, the Irish Bishops' Conference approved the adoption of the revised Policy and Standards. Similarly, in December 2015 formal approval from CORI and IMU was received.

Final printed copies of the revised Policy and Standards will be produced, and made available, to all Church Authorities, with a scheduled operational date of the 1st of March 2016.

A full induction process has been planned –see section below.

Induction to the Revised Policy and Standards

National Office staff will spend three days in each ecclesiastical provincial area in the coming months the proposed dates for these are:

- Dublin – 17th, 18th and 19th February 2016
- Tuam - 1st, 2nd and 3rd March 2016
- Armagh - 14th, 15th and 16th March 2016
- Cashel- 21st, 22nd and 23rd March 2016

Church Authorities will be asked to identify which **one** of the three days being facilitated in their ecclesiastical province, are suitable for them based on the table of indicators of the new Standards (see Target Audience section below).

Each Church Authority will be invited to nominate a maximum of six people to attend **one** of the three days, which will be held in their ecclesiastical provincial area. The people nominated by the Church Authority should include, the Church Authority, Designated Liaison Person, Member of the Safeguarding Committee and a Local Safeguarding Representative.

If any Church Authority is unsure which of the three days being held in their ecclesiastical area, are suitable for them, they can contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie for clarification. Charge for each day is 10 euro per person to cover a light lunch.

To confirm your attendance please contact imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie.

Target Audience

Each of the three days is targeted at different Church bodies depending on which of the indicators of the new Standards apply to them, and each Church body is **only required to send representatives to one of the three days in their ecclesiastical provincial area**. The three days being facilitated in each area will be targeted as follows:



Induction to the Revised Policy and Standards Continued

- **First Day- Only for those Church bodies who are required to meet the indicators in Table 1 (32 in total) of the new Standards.**
 - Optional Evening Session - for Church personnel to attend, who cannot make the session during the day. This session will focus on Standard 1, 5, 6 and 7, as it will be targeted at Local Safeguarding Reps and Safeguarding Committees.
- **Second Day - For those who are required to meet the indicators in Table 2 (22 in total) of the new Standards.**
 - Optional Evening Session- for Church personnel to attend, who cannot not make the session during the day. This session will be focused on Standard 1, 5, 6 and 7, as it will be targeted at Local Safeguarding Reps and Safeguarding Committees.
- **Third Day - Only for those who are required to meet the indicators in Table 3 (13 in total) of the new Standards.**

Content of Each Day

Each day will cover the following:

- An examination of each Standard in turn, focusing on what is required to meet indicators relevant to the audience who attend.
- Questions and answers on each Standard and the relevant indicators.
- An exploration of the Guidance associated with indicators relevant to the audience that attend.
- A presentation and discussion about the next steps in implementation of the new Standards for each Church body who are in attendance with particular regard to:
 - Deciding which pieces of practice and guidance will remain in place in each Church body, or which need to be re-evaluated as part of the new Standards. This may mean keeping guidance already in place; using guidance provided by the NBSCCCI or rewriting guidance.
 - What each Church body will be required to send to the NBSCCCI on a yearly basis.

Safeguarding Reviews

Over the course of 2015, 79 reviews of child safeguarding practice were published by Church Authorities, following an examination of their practice by independent reviewers engaged by the National Board:

- 16 review reports were released in February 2015
- 43 review reports were released in September 2015
- 20 review reports were released in December 2015.

During the same period, previous tranches (6 and 7) provided an update on the implementation of the recommendations made during their reviews. For full details, please refer to www.safeguarding.ie.

The final tranche of reviews began in November 2015, with an expected release date of reports early in 2016.

All reviews will be completed in 2016. The Chair of the Board, Mr. John Morgan and the CEO, Ms. Teresa Devlin would like to take the opportunity to thank all Church Authorities for their willingness to engage in the important review process, in exposing their practice to scrutiny and thus ensuring the development of a learning culture which has at its heart the safety and well-being of children.

A revised methodology for future reviews based on the revised Standards is being addressed and is expected that this will be approved in the first half of 2016.

New Review Methodology

The small group of Church personnel who agreed to work with the NBSCCCI on developing a new methodology for future reviews, have met and provided advice and guidance to Peter Kieran from the National Office who is leading on this initiative. A proposal will be considered by the National Board in January 2016, followed by consultation across the Catholic Church in Ireland.

If you have ideas that you would like the group to consider please contact Peter Kieran on peter.kieran@safeguarding.ie who is leading this work on behalf of the NBSCCCI.

Training

Since the last newsletter the final national training events for 2015 have taken place. These included:

- Mandatory Update for all Trainers- a small number of trainers were unable to attend either of the dates for this training (19th of September and the 4th of November). An additional date will be facilitated early in the year to ensure that all trainers are up to date. Please contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie for further information
- Governance Issues for Safeguarding Committees- this training was held on the 11th of November and evaluations completed by participants confirm that they found it extremely helpful. The event was oversubscribed and the day will be facilitated again early in the year for those participants who were unable to attend.

In addition to national training- since the last newsletter in October a further four Safeguarding Committees have now been trained locally by National Office staff. This brings the total number of Committees trained to 37 (15 dioceses, 21 religious orders and 1 seminary). Alongside the committee, training one Advisory Panel has also been trained in their local setting by National Office staff.

Dates for national training in 2016 will be confirmed in the coming weeks and for more information please check the following link <http://www.safeguarding.ie/training-strategy-2013-2015/>

Advice offered by

The National Board

During 2015, the advice aspect of the National Board's role was subdivided into:

- Individual case management
- Policy related advice
- Advice offered by the National Case Management Committee (NCMC)

December marks the end of the first year in role of the Chair, Justice Iarfhlaith O'Neill in the National Case Management Committee. Full statistics for advice, by National Office staff and the NCMC will be available in the Board's annual report in May 2016.

Preliminary

Investigations

A review was undertaken of all cases presented to the National Case Management Committee in 2015. Experience gathered by the Committee and a critique of the cases presented during 2015 has led to consideration of developing a small group of personnel who could be trained in conducting preliminary investigations. The aim is to ensure consistency and good standards of practice. Discussions have also taken place with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), who are supportive of this initiative. This will be further developed through a detailed proposal to members of the NCMC in 2016.

Pastoral Care

for Survivors

At the request of the Sponsoring Bodies, the Irish Bishops' Conference, CORI and IMU, the National Board, Towards Healing and Towards Peace have met to develop a more consistent approach to caring for complainants and survivors of abuse. A paper is being developed by the three organisations, setting out what is meant by a pastoral approach, which will be considered by the Sponsoring Bodies in 2016.

Consultation with the Statutory Authorities

As part of our collective commitment to ensuring best standards of practice in Child Safeguarding, the National Board has held regular meetings with representatives of Government in the Republic of Ireland and statutory agencies in both the Republic of Ireland and the North of Ireland. Meetings were held with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to discuss reviews, information sharing and vetting. Discussions also took place with officials of the Department of Justice in the Republic of Ireland which resulted in an amendment to the National Vetting Bureau Bill, which clarifies the position in relation to 'anyone working in the advancement of religious beliefs'. The amendment clarifies that vetting is required for those whose involvement consists mainly of work with children or vulnerable adults. Regular liaison meetings were held with TUSLA and officials in Department of Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland. Staff from the National Office also attended two meetings with the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

New Website

We are currently in the process of tendering for a redesign of our website, which has been in existence since 2007. We have taken on board feedback that has been provided to staff and we will include your suggestions in the redesign.

If you have any comments or feedback you would like to tell us about, to assist us with this redevelopment please contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie.



Legislation and Guidance Updates

Contact Details

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Vetting – Republic of Ireland

Following consultation with the NBSCCCI, the Department of Justice is proposing an amendment to the Criminal Justice Act 2012 in relation to vetting. The amendment will state that “Anyone in the advancement of religious beliefs would only require vetting where they are engaged in activities which consist mainly of working with children or vulnerable persons. Persons engaged in general religious activities in the community will not require vetting”.

Those personnel who are not eligible for vetting under the Vetting Bureau legislation should complete a declaration form and have no unsupervised contact with children.

Children First – Republic of Ireland

The Children First Bill was passed into legislation on 19th November 2015. There is no commencement date and it is expected that actual operation of the Act will be undertaken on a staged basis during this year. The National Board will advise on developments once agreed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

The Guidance which will accompany the legislation is still being drafted.

Co-Operating to Safeguard Children – Northern Ireland

The DHSSPSNI have recently closed their consultation on the revision of “Co-Operating to Safeguard Children”. The NBSCCCI staff met officials who informed them that following amendments a further draft will be issued in 2016.