

Special Edition Newsletter

June 2015



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Welcome

Welcome to this special edition newsletter. The focus of which is the revision of, *Safeguarding Children, Standards and Guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*.

You are all aware that the policy, standards and guidance have been with you for consultation since March 2015. Thank you to all of you who have already sent in comments.

National Office staff are in the process of reviewing the comments and amending the documents to take into consideration your views. Views have also been sought from civil authority agencies, survivors of abuse, respondents against whom allegations have been made, and young people.

For more information on our activities please log onto our website www.safeguarding.ie

Structure of the New Standards

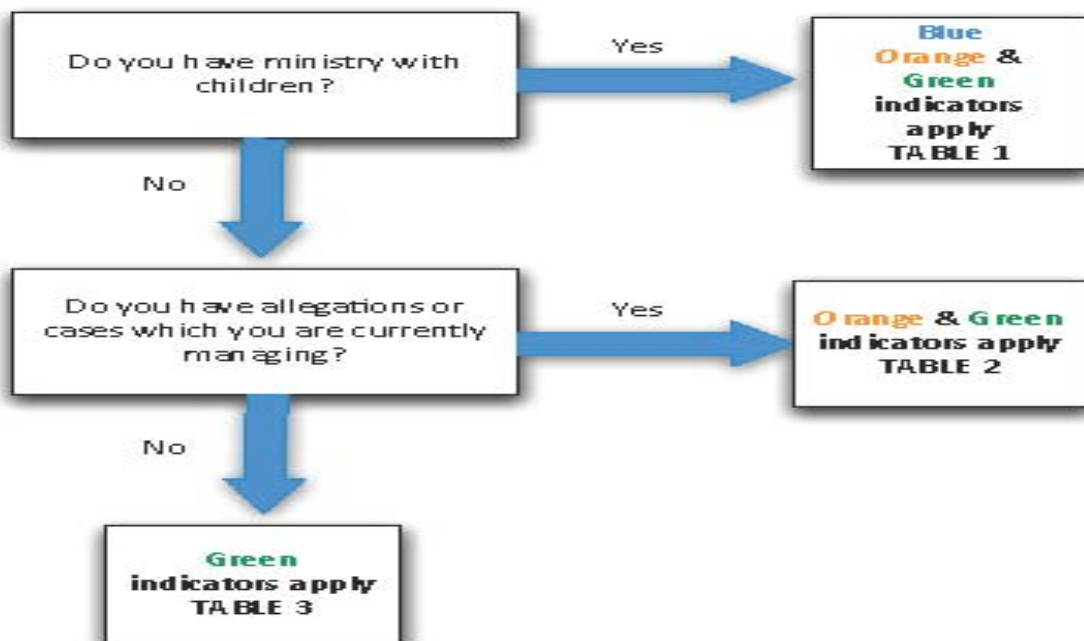
The revised Standards and Guidance document will be comprised of:

Overarching Policy – to be adopted across all dioceses and religious orders, congregations and missionary societies. This sets the commitment to safeguarding children; responding to and reporting allegations, caring for the complainant and supporting and managing the respondent. It is based on Gospel values, civil and international legislation and lessons from the past.

Local implementation of this policy will be carried out through the 7 safeguarding standards which are:

1. **Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments**
2. **Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Allegations, Suspicions and Concerns**
3. **Care and Support for the Complainant**
4. **Care and Management of the Respondent**
5. **Training and Support**
6. **Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message**
7. **Implementing and Monitoring the Standards**

Each of these standards will be made up of a number of **indicators** to help assess the practice of each diocese/order in relation to child safeguarding. Unlike the previous standards, these indicators will vary depending on the ministry of each diocese/order. To help explain this process the following flowchart will be used



Structure of the New Standards Continued

In general, this approach will mean that if you have no ministry with children and are not managing cases or allegations, there will be significantly fewer indicators to fulfil than those who have ministry or are managing cases or allegations.

In this way it is hoped that the new standards will be much more user friendly and applicable to the whole Church in Ireland and its different ministries.

Guidance

The National Board has produced a set of guidance to assist you with implementing the standards. We wanted to provide you with all the necessary templates and example policies to assist with the implementation of the standards. However these pieces of guidance are resources which can be used directly, or they can be adapted to suit your ministry, or you can develop your own guidance instead of using the Board's. Any pieces of guidance which will be used as part of any future review by the National Board will be referenced in the indicators of each standard.

Further Consultation Period

At the request of the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, we have decided to hold four meetings across Ireland to provide an opportunity for further consultation on the draft standards, and also to answer any questions or queries you have in relation to the implementation of the standards. We plan to hold these meetings in the following locations

Ecclesiastical Province Area	When	Time	Venue
Tuam	18 th of June 2015	10:00-12:30	Ard Ri House Hotel, Tuam
Armagh	2 nd of September 2015	11:00-13:00	Drumcree Pastoral Centre, Portadown
Dublin	15 th of September 2015	11:00-13:00	Clonliffe College, Dublin
Cashel	16 th of September 2015	11:00-13:00	Anner Hotel, Thurles

Anyone involved in child safeguarding within the Church will be more than welcome to attend these meetings, and we hope it will provide an opportunity to further refine the draft standards before they are formally adopted and the induction stage begins.

Induction



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The formal induction in the new standards will begin in October and will conclude in January 2016, the purpose of which is to allow people the opportunity to become familiar with the final versions of the standards and guidance and to understand their responsibilities in terms of meeting the standards.

To do this we will hold a series of meetings across the country, these meetings will vary to suit your ministry and the indicators that apply to you.

We want as many people who are involved in child safeguarding to attend these meetings as possible and if required, we will hold meetings in the evenings as well as during the day ,to accommodate those staff and volunteers who have other commitments during the day.

Final dates, venues and times will be confirmed in the coming months.

Adoption and Implementation

Following this extended period of consultation, the final draft policy and standards will be presented to the National Board and then to the sponsoring bodies.

After the period of induction all those who hold a memorandum of understanding with the National Board will be asked to adopt the standards in January 2016.

