

Newsletter

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

December 2020

ALERT BOX

This part of the Newsletter is designed to draw the attention of Church authorities to important developments outlined below:

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National Office Staff

Click on any of the links below to send an email directly to any member of staff

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Introduction

As we take time to review our achievements and failings of 2020, we also reflect on the major challenges that we have all had to face during the Coronavirus health pandemic. We firstly acknowledge the loss of family, friends and colleagues that many of us have suffered; we note that illness has affected our emotional, physical and spiritual well-being and we also recognise the financial impact on many who have lost their livelihoods over the last year. None of us have escaped pain, and in the midst of our pain, we may have taken time to contemplate what is important in our lives. For us in the National Board we have been worried about children who, invisible during “lockdown”, may have suffered sexual abuse, domestic violence, and damage to their mental well-being. After Churches have closed their doors, the return of children to public Masses has been notably absent, so we therefore must include spiritual well-being in our worries about children. The National Board has already shared information on the safeguarding procedures we have drafted if any of you are considering developing on-line ministry for children.

We have been clear that the procedures must be accompanied with training, so that you get an opportunity to reflect, within your Church body on the opportunities, risks and mitigations when considering meeting with children in the digital world. For more details on this see section on Training below.

In spite of reduced working hours, staff in the National Board note a significant increase in requests for its services, particularly in the area of advice, both on case management matters and on general safeguarding practice and policy issues. There has also been an increase in the numbers of training sessions delivered. Unfortunately we have not been able to proceed with planned reviews of safeguarding practice, as government restrictions have limited travel. We are looking creatively about how we can undertake more review work “on-line” as we anticipate that face to face meetings will continue to be curtailed by risks associated with Coronavirus.

This Newsletter will highlight work of the National Board since our last Newsletter in October 2020; we shall share with you our plans for training; guidance updates; a new Motu Proprio – “Authenticum Charismatis” on the establishment of institutes of consecrated life, and the impacts for members in relation to adherence to best safeguarding practice. We will also provide an overview of all Guidance and Practice papers (GAP) published by the National Board, including two newly released papers.

We finally want to take the opportunity to wish you all good health as we enter the Advent season. We hope you have a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Work of the National Board

Notification of Allegations and Advice offered since October 2020.

In line with information shared in the October Newsletter, we have inserted comparative information on allegations notified to the National Board in October and November 2020, with those notified in the same period in 2019 as follows:

Allegations Comparison

	Oct	Nov
2019	3	8
2020	4	28 (up to 24 Nov 20)

We have also provided statistical details on advice offered, again with a comparison between 2020 and 2019:

Advice Comparison

	Oct	Nov
2019	13	32
2020	28	36 (1-24 Nov 20)

Reviews of Child Safeguarding Practice

The National Board took a decision at the October Board meeting to suspend all Reviews (in process and planned) until at least January 2021, based on government guidance around Covid 19 and travel restrictions. We hope to resume some planning in January 2021 and where possible conduct as much of the fieldwork “on-line” with researchers only attending in person to read case files. For Dioceses and Religious who are undertaking “on-line” ministry with children, we will include this as part of the “Review” and will discuss with Church authorities how to assess the safeguards in place for this ministry.

Please contact Teresa Devlin if you wish to plan a Child Safeguarding Review for 2021.

Annual Self Audits

As already advised in October’s newsletter there is no requirement for Church authorities to notify the National Board whether self-audits in parishes and communities have been undertaken, or whether the DLP has provided an annual report to the Church Authority for 2020.



Training and Support

Training Returns

It is a requirement to maintain registration that trainers registered with the National Board deliver a set number of training sessions each year, and send through annual training returns to the National Office. Given the current situation regarding the Covid 19 pandemic and its associated restrictions, training has not been taking place; therefore trainers have been unable to deliver the required training to maintain registration. Until the time comes when we can begin to deliver training again we are suspending the requirement to complete training to maintain registration. There is therefore no requirement to submit training returns for 2019/2020. If any trainer has managed to deliver training during the year, please do send in returns as normal.

Update to the Training Manual

The videos to accompany the training slides are now complete and all resources for the updated training is available through the trainers log in section. All trainers should log on and download that new materials to ensure consistency across the Church. If any trainer has forgotten their log in details please contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie.

Training Delivered

Since the last newsletter in October 2020 the following training has been delivered.

- Ministering with Children Online- Since the last newsletter this has been delivered to a further 6 Church bodies (5 dioceses and a religious order)
- Training for Support People (2 dates)
- Training for new DLPs
- Head to Heart Module for seminarians on Spiritual Healing
- Training on the Vademecum – guidance from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on processes required following receipt of an allegation of sexual abuse against a cleric; delivered to the National Case Management Committee (NCMC)
- Two Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meetings (Tuam and Cashel and Emly).

Upcoming Training

- Online Ministry with Children- This course is specifically designed to assist Church authorities and relevant Church personnel to minister with children online. If you wish to book your place, you can find out more information here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/news/19-%20joomla/284-training-forthose-ministering-with-children-online>
- Train-the-Trainers Course - A number of Church authorities have requested dates for a new Train-the-Trainers course. At present we are looking at the possibility of facilitating this in early 2021. However, this is entirely dependent on Government advice to ensure that it is safe, both for participants and facilitators. Should a Church authority need to train new trainers please contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie and we can ensure that you are contacted once we finalise the dates and process for training to take place
- Training for new Church authorities- Our Annual training for new Church authorities on the governance requirements of safeguarding is taking place on the 20th of January 2021. If you would like to register to attend click on the following link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/training-for-new-church-authorities-4>.
- Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meeting Armagh- 19th January 2021- The National Board endeavours to meet representatives of dioceses and religious congregations on an annual basis through Ecclesiastical Provincial Area meetings, to share information on developments in child safeguarding and to receive comments on issues and practices, which may require further guidance. While this year is extraordinary, as we are dealing with a health pandemic, we would still like to conduct this meeting for the Armagh ecclesiastical provincial area through the electronic platform Zoom. To book your place please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/armagh-ecclesiastical-provincial-area>. Ecclesiastical Provincial Area meetings have already taken place in Tuam and Cashel and Emly, a date will be agreed for a final meeting in Dublin in the coming weeks.

Guidance Updates

Since the last newsletters a number of changes have been made to the guidance following the publication of the Vademecum. A full list of these changes can be found here <https://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance>. Key changes include the following:

- New guidance on dealing with allegations against Irish clerics or religious who are ministering in another jurisdiction
- New reporting flowchart incorporating changes from the Vademecum
- New guidance on the penal process followed by the CDF.



Guidance, Advice and Practice Papers (GAP)

Child Safeguarding and Digital Media – May 2018 –

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%201%20Child%20Safeguarding%20and%20Digital%20Media.pdf

This paper intends to inform good child safeguarding practice in the Catholic Church in Ireland. It begins by providing a definition of what is meant by Digital Media, then sets out important references relevant to this topic including policy, legislation, international treaties and EU directives which reference aspects of children's rights that have informed policy development. The paper also provides research references and evidence based information on the harmful effects of child pornography, online grooming and other forms of abuse that use electronic media. The paper concludes by providing practice guidance on how ministry with children can incorporate the use of electronic and digital media in ways that are safe, for both the child and the adult user.

Compassionate Response to Complainants – November 2018 –

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%202%20Compassionate%20Response%20to%20Complainants.pdf

The Catholic Church in Ireland has been criticised for not placing the needs of complainants of clerical child sexual abuse at the heart of its corrective work. The central concern of complainants has never been simply about money; it has also been about compassion, justice and healing. The Compassionate Response GAP paper suggests ways in which the Catholic Church in Ireland *can* become a healing community - one that does not wait for people to turn up, but actively seeks and finds them.

Caring Pastorally and Managing Respondents – November 2018 -

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%203%20Caring%20Pastorally%20and%20Managing%20Respondents.pdf

This paper highlights historical failures in managing allegations of abuse; the dynamics of sexual abuse, and what we know about clerics and religious who abuse. The paper offers evidence from research and practice guidance on assessment, canonical processes, restorative justice, and monitoring pastoral care for those who have harmed children in the Church and how to offer support to families of respondent priests and religious.

Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message – January 2020 –

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%204%20Communicating%20the%20Church%20Safeguarding%20Message.pdf

Pope Francis has encouraged everyone to engage in constructive forms of communication that reject prejudice towards others and foster a culture of encounter, helping all of us to view the world around us with realism and trust. We know that the only people who are able to adequately communicate how the Church is safeguarding children are those involved in safeguarding. This GAP paper looks at the elements of communication, the audience and the messages.

Enabling a Child Safe Church– January 2020-

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%205%20Enabling%20a%20Child%20Safe%20Church.pdf

This paper seeks to assist the reader in understanding the elements of how to ensure that children are safe in the Catholic Church. It sets out the principles and approaches to creating a child safe Church, develops an understanding of situations of potential risk, and how these can be assessed and managed. There is now significant international evidence from inquiries that show that the abuse of children went unchecked for years. Lessons have been learned along the way, but in order to safeguard children, the adults in the Church need to proactively promote children's well-being through clear standards of practice which recognise that children have rights – to be protected from harm, and to participate in matters that affect them.

GAP Papers Continued

Shedding a light on Vos estis lux mundi– February 2020 -

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%206%20Shedding%20Light%20on%20Vos%20estis%20lux%20mundi.pdf

Pope Francis’ motu proprio “Vos estis lux mundi” published in 2018 was a major step by him in addressing the abuse of children and vulnerable people by clerics and religious, and those who live a consecrated life. The National Board in the GAP paper offers a detailed critique of the motu proprio and its applicability for practice in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Of particular importance are the procedures relating to allegations of negligence and cover up by Church Leaders.

Information Sharing to Safeguard Children – October 2020 -

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%207%20Information%20Sharing%20to%20Safeguard%20Children.pdf

This GAP paper seeks to bring clarity to the complexities of data sharing. The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as enshrined in domestic legislation in both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (2018) have made it very clear the need to respect an individual’s right to privacy, whilst still ensuring that information that is needed to safeguarded children is shared. The paper addresses children’s rights, constitutional rights to privacy, and privacy impact assessment.

Children’s Rights, Child Safeguarding and the Catholic Church in Ireland - November 2020 -

https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%208%20%20Children's%20Rights,%20Child%20Safeguarding%20and%20the%20Catholic%20Church.pdf

This GAP paper begins by exploring the definition of Children’s Rights, and the role of the Holy See in the realisation of these rights. Consideration is then given to specific rights relevant to Child Safeguarding mentioned within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as they apply to safeguarding children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Finally, the paper examines what constitutes a children’s rights approach, and the contribution that Church child safeguarding personnel can make towards upholding rights in practice.

National Conference- Theology of Safeguarding

In preparation for the postponed National Conference, the National Board has invited a number of theologians from across the world to prepare and present short (10 minute) video addressing particular questions which will assist us in developing our conversation around “A Theology of Safeguarding”. The videos will be placed on the National Board’s website starting in January 2021, with a new video being uploaded every month thereafter until September 2021. Presenters include: Fr Hans Zollner; Dr Ethna Regan; Dr Marcia Bunge; Sr Nuala Kenny; Fr Paddy Boyle; Dr Jesse Rogers and Alan Kearns.

Motu Proprio- Authenticum Charismatic

On 1st November 2020, the Holy Father issued an apostolic letter amending Canon 579, in the Code of Canon law, concerning the establishment of Diocesan Institutes. This relates to a requirement that any new Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Lay Apostolates must be officially recognised by the Apostolic See. While this in itself is not a child safeguarding matter it does have relevance for such bodies having strong safeguarding measures in place.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales (IICSA)

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales (IICSA) was established to consider the extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation; to consider the extent to which those failings have since been addressed; to identify further action needed to address any failings identified; to consider the steps which it is necessary for State and non-State institutions to take in order to protect children from such abuse in future; and to publish a report with recommendations.

On 10th November IICSA published its report on the Catholic Church. The 150-page report examined the situation in the period 1970 to 2015, when the Catholic Church received more than 900 complaints involving over 3,000 instances of child sexual abuse against more than 900 individuals connected to the Church, including priests, monks and volunteers. In the same period, there were 177 prosecutions resulting in 133 convictions. Civil claims against dioceses and religious institutes have resulted in millions of pounds being paid in compensation. The Report notes that since 2016, there have been more than 100 reported allegations each year. Across the entire period of nearly 50 years covered by this Inquiry, the true scale of sexual abuse of children is likely to have been much higher.

The information contained in the report was assembled from a series of public hearings conducted over the course of three years, and written submissions were requested and received from a large number of relevant parties. The report earmarked for significant criticism, poor leadership and poor management of child safeguarding in a number of Benedictine boarding schools, the Archdiocese of Birmingham, and Cardinal Nichols.

The Church is severely criticised for affording the welfare of respondent clerics much greater priority than that of complainants; and for investing more effort in protecting its own reputation than in protecting children.

Despite all of the good work that has been done in the Vatican over the last 10 years to address the problem of clerical child sexual abuse, the Inquiry report notes with great surprise the refusal of the Vatican to cooperate with its investigations, describing that decision as ‘passing understanding’.

The report points up a number of decisions that have been made within the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, and within the agencies established by the Church to manage the challenges of abuse within the Church, but it notes that progress in implementing these decisions has been extremely slow. It criticises the protocols and guidance developed by the Child Safeguarding Advisory Service as being very hard to follow; and it highlighted a lack of consistency in the provision of safeguarding training across the Church.

The Primate of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols of the Archdiocese of Westminster, comes in for significant personal criticism in the report; he had previously served as Archbishop of Birmingham, so his leadership in these positions came under close scrutiny. He also appeared as a witness in the public hearings of the Inquiry. He is criticised for a failure of leadership, for not accepting personal responsibility, and for lacking compassion in responding to complainants.

There are seven recommendations, covering leadership and oversight on safeguarding matters, a framework for dealing with cases of non-compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures, re-framing canonical crimes relating to child sexual abuse, reviewing policies and procedures, and also a complaints policy for safeguarding cases. These recommendations are made in order to ensure that the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales has consistent and accessible policies and procedures for dealing with cases concerning child sexual abuse.

The full report can be accessed at, or downloaded from <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/roman-catholic-church>



Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick (1930 to 2017)

The investigation that led to this report was initiated by direction of Pope Francis in October 2018. It had become clear that a credible allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor had been established by the Archdiocese of New York in 2017, and thereafter McCarrick had been dismissed from the clerical state through an administrative penal process. The report was published by the Vatican's Secretariat of State on November 10th, 2020. It is an extremely long and detailed document, running to over 450 pages, so it cannot really be read in one sitting. However, there is an accessible and informative Executive Summary near the beginning of the report.

Cardinal Archbishop Theodore McCarrick was dismissed from the clerical state by Pope Francis in 2019. He had requested and received McCarrick's resignation from the College of Cardinals in July 2018. It soon became apparent that there had been widespread knowledge in the Catholic Church in the USA of allegations against Theodore McCarrick for a number of years; and it has been alleged that a lot of this information had been shared with the Vatican, and in particular with Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict VI and Pope Francis.

Monsignor McCarrick had been appointed an Auxiliary Bishop for New York Archdiocese by Pope Paul VI in 1977, at a time when it seems that little was known about his sexualised behaviour towards boys and young men. He had a good reputation and his appointment received support from within the American Church. He was further appointed by Pope John Paul II as full Bishop of Metuchen (1981) and as Archbishop of Newark (1986); and the report states that - "During the appointment process, McCarrick was widely lauded as a pastoral, intelligent and zealous bishop, and no credible information emerged suggesting that he had engaged in any misconduct".

Over the years, McCarrick became a trusted friend of Pope John Paul II, and he energetically raised money from within the Church in the USA for the support of the Church internationally. When the Archdiocese of Washington became vacant, Pope John Paul II sought advice about appointing McCarrick as Archbishop, but by this stage there were rumours and allegations in circulation about him, and Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, advised against McCarrick's appointment, citing a number of allegations that existed about him. Despite this advice, Pope John Paul II decided to designate McCarrick as Archbishop of Washington in November 2000; and he elevated him to the Cardinalate in 2001. Pope John Paul II had overlooked McCarrick for more senior appointments on three earlier occasions, on the basis of advice; but he changed his mind following a written inquiry into the allegations against McCarrick conducted by Archbishop Montalvo, the Nuncio to the USA, at the Pope's request in May and June 2000. The Report now states that three American bishops provided 'inaccurate and incomplete' information to this inquiry. McCarrick himself also wrote to Pope John Paul II stating that he had never abused anyone. He lied!

Pope Benedict XVI extended McCarrick's tenure in 2005 by two years, based on advice that he received. However, as the evidence against him increased, McCarrick was asked by Pope Benedict to retire after Easter 2006. Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, who worked in the Secretariat of State in the Vatican, wrote two memoranda, in 2006 and in 2008 advising that a canonical investigation of the allegations against McCarrick be initiated, but this did not happen. The report states that:

A number of factors appear to have played a role in Pope Benedict XVI's declination to initiate a formal canonical proceeding: there were no credible allegations of child abuse; McCarrick swore on his "oath as a bishop" that the allegations were false; the allegations of misconduct with adults related to events in the 1980s; and there was no indication of any recent misconduct.



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McCarrick was instead requested to keep a low profile; however, he continued to work as a Cardinal, attended meetings of various dicasteries in Rome, travelled internationally and maintained his role as an active member of the US Episcopal Conference. Pope Benedict XVI apparently sanctioned McCarrick in 2009 or 2010 to a lifetime of penance and prayer, although details of exactly when and how this was done remain sketchy.

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò was the Papal Nuncio to the USA from October 2011 to April 2016. In 2012, he wrote to Cardinal Ouellet, the new Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops about another allegation concerning McCarrick, and Cardinal Ouellet asked Viganò to conduct an initial inquiry to establish whether the new allegation had credibility; but Viganò did not do so. He has however maintained that Pope Francis was aware of McCarrick's continued active role within the American and international Church, despite his providing the Pope with evidence of McCarrick's wrongdoing. This is disputed.

The report is based on extensive interviews and a thorough review of written documentation in the Vatican and in the US. It is the first investigation of its type, but its reception clearly points up very significant differences in opinion about its objectivity and transparency. It contains no recommendations, and while there is a section at the end headed 'Conclusion', this simply tells the reader that the foregoing account *has detailed the Holy See's knowledge and decision-making regarding McCarrick from his first episcopal appointment through 2017.*



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