

Newsletter

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

October 2015



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Welcome

Welcome to our Autumn 2015 Newsletter. Staff from the NBSCCCI have been very busy over the summer months listening to your feedback and incorporating these views into the draft Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards.

Details of all the consultation that we have engaged in are listed below.

This important work has been undertaken in conjunction with reviews, training and the advice services offered by the NBSCCCI.

For more information on our activities please go to our website

www.safeguarding.ie

Revision of Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards-Consultation Process

Since the introduction of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* in 2009 there have been a number of developments in legislation, policy and practice including;

- Proposed changes to Children First and the Criminal Justice Legislation in the Republic of Ireland; proposed changes to Co-operating to Safeguard Children in Northern Ireland.
- Learning from child safeguarding reviews which have taken place in dioceses and religious orders/congregations/societies.
- Requests for guidance from NBSCCCI.
- Feedback from training (local and national level).

The revision to the Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards began in June 2014 and involved:

- **Establishment of eight working groups (one for each Standard and one for the Policy)**- These working groups were made up of 57 people representing (24 dioceses, 13 religious orders, CORI, Marriage Tribunal Service, Towards Healing and Towards Peace).
- **Production of a first draft for consultation both within the Church and with a wide range of external experts.** The external groups consulted were:
 - Children and young people
 - Survivors of abuse
 - Clerics and religious accused of child abuse
 - Organisations working with accused clerics and religious
 - Towards Healing
 - Towards Peace
 - National Youth Council of Ireland
 - TUSLA (Children and Family Agency)
 - DHSSPSNI
 - An Garda Síochána
- **The consultation responses were collated and incorporated into a second draft of the Policy and Standards.** As part of draft two, examples of good practice received from 12 dioceses and two religious orders as well as one statutory organisation were incorporated into the accompanying Guidance document.



Revision of Policy and Standards Consultation Process Continued

- The second draft was sent to the Irish Bishops' Conference, CORI and IMU for their response.
- At the suggestion of the Irish Bishops' Conference and CORI four listening meetings were held in each of the ecclesiastical provinces of Ireland.
- A third draft incorporated the responses from the Irish Bishops' Conference, CORI, IMU and those that attended the first listening meeting in Tuam.
- The third draft was circulated to all Church Authorities and placed on the website in advance of the final three listening meetings in Drumcree, Dublin and Thurles. Over 150 people attended all four of these meetings and contributed in a very positive way to the revision of the Policy and Standards.
- A fourth version of the Policy, Standards and Guidance was placed on the website and another invitation was issued to all Church Authorities, advising them of the closing of the consultation period on the 22nd of September 2015 and inviting further comments. Five comments were received as part of this process.
- At the request of the Irish Bishops' Conference a panel of experts was appointed by the Bishops and CORI and the group met for a full day on the 22nd of September 2015 to review the fourth draft of the Policy and Standards document.
- Amendments suggested by the expert group and the final consultation process were incorporated into the final draft.
- The final draft Policy and Standards was presented to the Directors of the NBSCCCI on the 14th of October 2015.
- On the 14th of October 2015, the NBSCCCI approved that the draft be forwarded to the Episcopal Secretary of the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Secretary of CORI and the Secretary of IMU.

One of the many benefits of the consultation process has been the opportunity for NBSCCCI staff to meet a large number of safeguarding personnel across the Church. We were very pleased at the significant numbers who attended Listening Meetings in Tuam, Thurles, Drumcree and Dublin. We would like to thank you for the efforts that you made to attend and offer your views.

The NBSCCCI has now endorsed the final draft of the Policy and Standards which will be presented to the Irish Bishops' Conference, The Conference of Religious (CORI) in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union (IMU) before the end of 2015. The Guidance document (which is not mandatory) will be presented to the Board members of the NBSCCCI for adoption in November 2015. If approved, the National Board will develop a detailed induction programme early in 2016.

Update on Child Safeguarding Reviews

The final tranches of child safeguarding reviews are in process. In September 2015, there were 43 review reports placed in the public domain. The NBSCCCI hopes to finalise Tranches nine – large order/congregations and Tranche five – small, mostly female congregations by the end of November for publication in December 2015. The final tranches will have fieldwork complete by the end of December 2015, with publication early in 2016.

There has been significant learning during the undertaking of reviews. Much of the learning has been incorporated in the revised Standards and in the associated Guidance material which will be available in 2016. One of the aspects of child safeguarding ministry which requires further development is that of providing a pastoral response to complainants. The NBSCCCI has come together with Towards Peace and Towards Healing to develop our thinking on what are the key elements of a good pastoral response. The NBSCCCI has already taken some soundings from survivors and will continue to consult with them on this.

A small group of Church personnel have agreed to work with the NBSCCCI on developing a new methodology for future reviews. These personnel have experience in conducting inspections, audits, working within the statutory sector, with children including those with specific needs. They bring a wealth of expertise to the table which will assist greatly in developing a more 'practice focused' methodology for future reviews of child safeguarding practice. 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 Update

Mandatory Update for Trainers

An annual update training for Trainers event was held on the 19th of September 2015, where new session plans and resources for the full day training and information session were presented. These presentations have incorporated the new draft Standards and cannot be used until the Standards have been adopted by the Bishops' Conference, CORI and IMU. At this day Trainers were also updated on the process for reregistration as a Trainer with the NBSCCCI. This re-registration process will begin early in 2016.

As the annual training days are mandatory for all Trainers to maintain their registration, those who were unable to attend are invited to attend on the 4th of November 2015. Please register by following this link <http://www.safeguarding.ie/events/train-the-trainers-update-additional-date/> .

If you cannot attend please contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie directly to discuss an alternative.



Training Update Continued

Governance Issues for Child Safeguarding Committees

As a result of delivering of a large number of training sessions for child safeguarding committees, themes have emerged which the NBSCCCI have drawn together. These issues have been structured into a one day national training event for members of child safeguarding committees which will take place on the 11th of November 2015 in Maynooth. To book your place please follow this link <http://www.safeguarding.ie/events/3148/>. Topics to be covered on the day include:

- The new draft safeguarding Standards and how these relate to the work of the committee.
- Transparency of the committee and its links with local areas.
- Local Safeguarding audits- new templates, best practice on how to carry out audits and how to analyse the responses.
- Three year safeguarding plan- templates and advice on how to produce this.
- Training and Communications plans- understanding how to produce these and how they link to the three year safeguarding plan.

Faith Based Approach to Safeguarding

On the 14th of October 2015, a working group was established to explore a faith based approach to child safeguarding. This included an excellent input by Fr. Paddy Boyle (Dublin Archdiocese). A very helpful discussion took place on how to take complex theological concepts on child safeguarding and explain these in training. The outcome of this working group is to create a training session on a faith based approach to child safeguarding which will be delivered nationally.

Legislation and Guidance Updates

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 clarify the position in relation to priests, religious and people working with children in the Church and the requirements on them to be vetted. Once the wording of the proposed changes is agreed these will be incorporated into the NBSCCCI's Guidance on vetting. The legislation will be presented to the Dáil and Seanad by the end of November 2015 and will likely commence in 2016.

Children First – Republic of Ireland

Changes are being made to the proposed legislation, particularly around compliance with *Children First*, and follow through by the Children and Family Agency (Tusla) on non-compliant organisations. The legislation is due to commenced in sections starting in 2016.

The Guidance which will accompany the legislation is still being redrafted. No date for issue has been agreed.

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.

Practice Issues

External Groups Using Church Property

As part of the revision of the Standards, the NBSCCCI staff met with representatives from Allianz, the insurance company providing the overwhelming proportion of insurance protection for the dioceses and religious congregations. They have amended their advice in relation to external organisations who rent Church property. The updated advice is as follows:

It is a requirement that all groups working with children in the Church body and/or using facilities owned by Church body, are insured and have a Child Safeguarding Policy in place.

The general principle is that the obligation to comply with requirements relating to insurance and child safeguarding rests with the group using Church property, and not with the diocese, religious order or Church body.

1. It is the responsibility of any group using Church property to run activities involving children to ensure that they comply with all applicable child safeguarding and protection legislation and guidelines.
2. The group should have a Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The group is also responsible for liaising with Tusla / HSCT (as appropriate), to ensure that the policy and procedures meet the statutory requirements.
3. The group should also have appropriate insurance for the activity they are running.
4. The Church body should, at no stage, assist any outside group in developing a Child Safeguarding Policy.
5. The Church body should have confirmation in writing from the group that they have a Child Safeguarding Policy in place. It is not the role of the Church body to validate the adequacy of the policy; that is the responsibility of Tusla / HSCT.
6. The Church body should receive confirmation in writing from the group that they have appropriate insurance in place, which includes the following:
 - The name of their insurers
 - The policy number
 - The period of cover of the policy
 - Limit of Indemnity

It is not the role the Church body to validate the adequacy of this insurance policy.

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