



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**  
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

**Annual Report 2017**



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in the Catholic Church in Ireland  
Annual Report 2017**



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## STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN



The year 2017 presented the Board and National Office the opportunity to both deepen and enhance the quality of child safeguarding advice and guidance across the Church.

The first cycle of reviews of all Church authorities had been completed in 2016 and the lessons learnt considered. The finalisation of a best practice review methodology to address the monitoring of the new and updated Standards – *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* – represented a significant amount of our work throughout 2017. The extensive consultation process in its regard yielded valuable assistance. When complete, that methodology will be recommended to our sponsoring bodies with a time frame for commencing, by end 2018, the next cycle of reviews of Church authorities.

These activities fed into the whole area of training support; the tracking of these developments is fully addressed within the body of this Annual Report. In addition, the bringing into force of the remaining sections of the *Children First Act 2015* last December and, in Northern Ireland, the requirements within *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*, published in August 2017, generated further training action.

We know that our avowed aim to eradicate abuse, particularly clerical sexual abuse, in Church bodies will not be achieved simply by introducing rules, protocols and guidance. Since the introduction of our new Standards – particularly Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant – it is clear that something more fundamental is required. A clear transforming attitude to ensure justice for complainants is necessary. In order not to further damage a deeply wounded and suffering person, our

pastors and our priests need to acquire some special knowledge about child abuse and its consequences. To be helpful to victims one has to acknowledge the nature and effect of trauma, as identified by psychology, and respect the stages of healing and the needs they represent. The Christian-oriented healing journey is based on the psychological principles involved in human nature but at the same time transcends them.

### **The Board and National Office**

The Board met nine times in the period covered by this report – including a joint meeting with the members, as representatives of the sponsoring bodies.

Two of the directors, Sr Evelyn Greene and Sr Nuala O’Gorman were appointed on 18 October 2017. The remaining directors all served through the year under review. Ms Marie Kennedy, Mr Michael Ringrose and myself were re-elected as directors at the annual general meeting, held on 4 September 2017, in accordance with the Articles of Association. I wish to thank most sincerely each of the directors for their commitment, work, advice and support throughout the period. Mary Waddell, who had been ill for some months, died on 20 February 2018. We mourn her loss greatly. She was a director for five years. Her contribution to our discussion was always most helpful and invariably her advice was laced with wisdom. May she rest in peace.

The National Office team, led so ably by Teresa Devlin, our Chief Executive, has given the Board sustained and spontaneous dedication to all the tasks in hand, being central to any achievement we may claim. On behalf of the Board, I offer them our most sincere thanks.

## Outlook

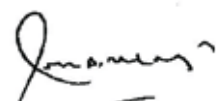
A significant current challenge in our efforts to develop and maintain the level of safety children and young people deserve in any Church setting, is presented, in our opinion, by developments in the civil legal sphere around data protection and information sharing. This is engaging our very close attention. One of the key objectives for 2018 is to undertake an objective analysis of the Board and National Office activities, their structures and 'fitness for purpose' in the context of the future challenges facing the safeguarding and safety of children and young people. Discussion with our sponsoring bodies has been initiated.

On future challenges faced by the Church in the area of the safeguarding of children and young people, the most serious, in common with civil society, is derived from the digital age in which we live. There is rising concern among parents over the safety of children and young people online. An academic adviser to Europol's European Cybercrime Centre, talking about the tsunami of online criminal behaviour targeting young people, has warned that it is no longer good enough to simply give 'helpful hints' to parents in the hope that they can prevent their children being harmed online. During the year under review, we developed the first in our series of GAP (Guidance, Advice and Practice) papers for all Church personnel, entitled *Child Safeguarding and Digital Media*.

The world congress on *Child Dignity in the Digital World*, in which our Chief Executive participated, was hosted by the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome on 3–6 October 2017. It brought together

140 participants from all continents. On Friday, 6 October the *Declaration of Rome*, the final document produced by the congress, was presented to Pope Francis 'on behalf of millions of young people around the world who need information and far more protection from the risks of sexual and other forms of abuse on the internet'. In an important responding address, Pope Francis, identifying the digital world as 'probably the most crucial challenge for the future of the human family: the protection of young people's dignity, their healthy development, their joy and their hope', assured his audience of the Church's commitment and readiness to help, while recognising that broad cooperation among governments and law enforcement agencies on a global level is required as the internet itself is global. As a board, we intend to keep in touch with developments to improve child safeguarding in this area so that our guidance to Church authorities will reflect international best practice.

As a board we wish to echo the words of Pope Francis in his address on 21 September 2017 to the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors when he said that as a church, 'we have also experienced a call, which we are sure comes directly from our Lord Jesus Christ: to embrace the mission of the Gospel for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.'



JOHN B. MORGAN  
Chairman  
31 March 2018



Throughout this past year, the National Board's approach has been to provide support, training and guidance to Church authorities to assist them and their safeguarding personnel with their implementation of *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* (Safeguarding Children 2016). Our aim was to offer this assistance to all Church personnel in a way that enabled them in their ministry to focus on the best interests of children; and to ensure that they reported allegations promptly, that they responded to complainants with compassion, and that they dealt justly with those accused of harming children.

This annual report provides data on the work of the National Board over the past twelve months, and will give an account of the significant efforts we have made to ensure that child safeguarding is a live issue in the Catholic Church in Ireland and to prioritise the well-being of children involved in any way in Catholic ministry in Ireland.

The calendar year 2017 began with the publication of the final four child safeguarding review reports undertaken by the National Board, which had been held back to allow for the publication of the report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry in Northern Ireland. These four National Board review reports once again acted as a reminder, if one was needed, of the significant harm done to children by clerics and religious involved in their care in Church-run residential centres. Sadly, some of those reports showed that child safeguarding practices by some Church bodies in 2016 were still not acceptable, and that urgent corrective action was required. The National Board liaised with the statutory bodies to ensure that appropriate support was offered to the relevant Church authorities to introduce the level of change required to improve their practice.

In preparation for the next iteration of child safeguarding reviews, the National Board established a small working group to devise a new review methodology; and a process of consultation with Church authorities on the draft produced by the working group was initiated, which ran through to the end of 2017. Early in 2018, the National Board sought volunteers to trial the methodology, and it is currently working with one diocese and one religious congregation to test the new approach in practice. The trialling of the new methodology will also allow the National Board to explore ways of safely and sensitively obtaining the views of complainants and respondents, which it is keen to do given the development of two new Standards in *Safeguarding Children 2016* (Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant; and Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent).

From time to time complainants and respondents contact the National Board to share their experiences of engaging with Church authorities. It is important therefore to formally capture the learning of those who come forward so that practice can be further improved. Every complainant is different; for many they just want to be able to tell their story, often long after their abuser has died. Those who have approached the National Board – who have included family members of complainants and family members of respondents – have had much to share about their individual hurts and their arduous path towards healing. Sometimes they speak about the positive, caring and pastoral response of the Church authorities they had approached, which is reassuring. However, others have spoken of experiencing a response that created further distancing and fear. In recognition of the need to offer compassionate and effective responses to complainants, the National Board,

Towards Healing, and Towards Peace co-produced a discussion paper on how the Catholic Church in Ireland might provide such responses generally, which we have sent to the IEC and to AMRI for their consideration.

During the past year the National Board also consulted a range of Church personnel and external practitioners and interested parties, and has conducted a review of literature, on the basis of which it has produced a discussion paper on caring for and managing respondents; and we intend publishing that paper during 2018.

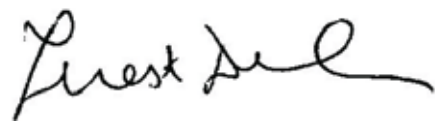
Throughout the year, the National Case Management Committee (NCMC) met almost monthly to offer advice to Church authorities dealing with allegations of abuse. The focus of this advice has been on responding to complainants, while also putting together management plans for those against whom a credible allegation was made. During the course of the NCMC's work a number of issues were highlighted, which required the National Board to develop training and further clarification for Church authorities. It provided training to a small number of personnel on conducting preliminary investigations under Canon Law. This initiative was an attempt to improve the standard of preliminary investigations across the Church. It was clear from many cases presented to the NCMC that drift has been occurring, leaving both complainants and respondents in a limbo situation without satisfactory resolution; this was more likely to happen when allegations had not been processed and/or prosecuted through the criminal system.

The NCMC also sought feedback on its own operations during the latter part of 2017 by undertaking a questionnaire-based review with those Church authorities who comprise its subscribing members so that it can improve the service provided to them. Issues on which feedback was sought included: the composition of the committee and the skills of its members; the frequency and location of meetings; the written materials circulated for discussion before, during and after meetings; and the quality and usefulness of the advice offered.

From the evaluation responses received it is clear that there was an extremely high level of satisfaction with the work of the committee; and the suggestions received for further improvement that were offered have been accepted by the NCMC.

One of the highlights of the year was the conference which the National Board co-hosted with NOTA on *Child Dignity in the Digital World*. This conference followed on from an international congress hosted by the Gregorian University in Rome, which resulted in the *Declaration of Rome* and a call to action for world leaders and technology companies, amongst others, to safeguard children online. While digital media can have a positive influence on children's lives, it also presents risks that need to be managed. Within the Church context, it is critical that all opportunities are taken to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation online. Following these two conferences, the National Board produced its first guidance, advice and practice (GAP) paper, entitled *Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland in Relation to the use of Electronic and Digital Media*. This paper will shortly be available on the National Board's website as the first in a series of GAP papers to be published during 2018.

The work to ensure that children are safe in Catholic Church ministries must remain a priority, and we must adapt and respond to changes that challenge children's safety as these arise. It is a tribute to the 'foot soldiers' on the ground in parishes and communities across Ireland that the Church's standards are being implemented, and that in doing so, the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. The National Board's remit includes support for those who work to ensure the development of best possible practice in child safeguarding, in caring for those who have been harmed, and in ensuring that a fair and just process is available for those accused of abusing a child in the Catholic Church in Ireland.



TERESA DEVLIN  
Chief Executive Officer  
31 March 2018



# ALLEGATIONS, SUSPICIONS AND CONCERNS NOTIFIED TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2017 AND 31 MARCH 2018

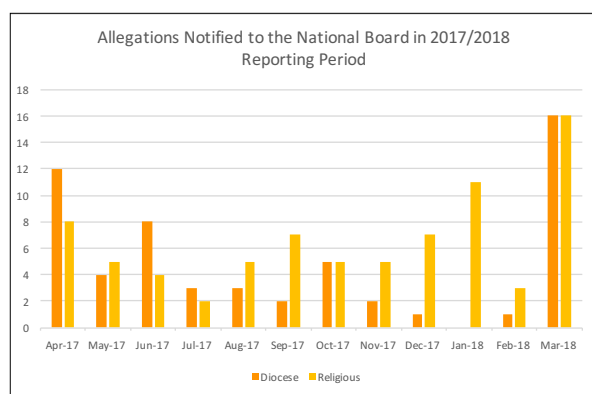


During 2017/18, 135 notifications of allegations, suspicions and concerns were received by the National Board from Church authorities. Of these allegations, 104 related to child sexual abuse. This is a significant increase over the previous year, when the number of new allegations relating to child sexual abuse amounted to 72. The overall number reported in 2016/17 was 86.

The dates on which the abuse is alleged to have taken place were not provided for 57 of these. Of the remaining 78 notifications, the dates of the alleged abuse provided were as follows:

- Before 1960 – 14
- Between 1960 and the end of the 1999 – 63
- Between 2000 and 2012 – 1

The allegations received in 2017/18 are shown in Figure 1 and are displayed to show how many were received in each of the 12 months involved.



**Figure 1**

The number of allegations notified tends to be greater than the number of respondents – clerics and religious – notified, as often there is more than

one allegation, suspicion or concern about some respondents. In the year being reported on, the National Board received notifications from Church authorities relating to 35 diocesan clerics and 63 members of religious orders or congregations, which amounts to 98 respondents in total. This compares with 76 respondents notified in the previous year, an increase of 29 per cent.

Overall then, the falling trend reported on for the previous three years has been reversed for both the number of new allegations and the number of respondents. Like all statistical information, care needs to be taken in interpreting these figures. Firstly, while all of the allegations are new, this does not mean either that there were 135 notified allegations, suspicions and concerns about abuse of children that happened in the year. All of the notified new allegations refer to events which allegedly took place between 1940 and 2000, with 1 further incident relating to 2012. While each and every notification has to be a cause for concern, the numbers notified do not indicate that 135 children were definitely abused (sexually, physically or emotionally), as the information provided at the point of notification has not been subjected to any investigation. Of the 98 individual respondents identified by Church authorities in the notifications that they submitted in the year being reported on, 45 of these relate to deceased clerics and religious, indicating that in at least 45 cases there is no current risk to children. Of the remaining 53, 21 are unknown (identity not given by the complainant), leaving 32 alive against whom there were allegations of physical, emotional or sexual abuse notified during the period under review. Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 detail the breakdown of current status and types of abuse.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The monthly notifications indicate spikes in notifications in April 2017, January and March 2018; the National Board is keen to identify whether there was a particular event which encouraged complainants to come forward. We note that in April 2017 there were 9 allegations against the same deceased priest from one diocese in response to a media event, and 4 against another unnamed religious; in January 2018 eleven new allegations were notified to the National Office, 3 against one

deceased priest and another 3 against a different unknown respondent; in March 2018, there were 11 allegations against one deceased priest from a diocese, in response to a media event and a further 9 against a priest from a religious order.

The notifications received during the year 2017/18 can be further analysed according to whether they relate to diocesan clergy or to members of religious orders.

**Table 1:** Respondents who are diocesan clerics (35)

Unknown	Dead	Alive							
3	18	14							
			Laicised	In prison	Dismissed from Church body	Retired	In ministry with children	Out of all ministry	Living in care
			2	1	1	2	2	4	2

Three of these men were not identified by the person who complained that they had been abused by a diocesan cleric, which suggests that either they had forgotten the cleric's name or perhaps never knew their name. The other 32 clerics were identified, and 14 of these men were still alive at the time of the notification. Two were involved in ministry with children, which indicates that the allegation, suspicion or concern had been investigated but was not upheld and the respondent was returned to ministry following the investigative process. This

is also true of the one religious who is in ministry with children, in Table 3 below.

**Table 2:** Breakdown of types of allegations relating to those respondents in Table 1

Category of Abuse	Quantity
Sexual	51
Physical	3
Emotional	0
Unknown	3

**Table 3:** Respondents who were religious (63)

Unknown	Dead	Alive								
18	27	18								
			Laicised	In ministry but not with children	Left Church body	Under restrictions	Retired	In ministry with children	Out of all ministry	Living in care
			3	4	2	3	3	1	1	1

# ALLEGATIONS, SUSPICIONS AND CONCERNS NOTIFIED TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2017 AND 31 MARCH 2018

**Table 4:** Breakdown of types of allegations relating to those respondents in Table 3

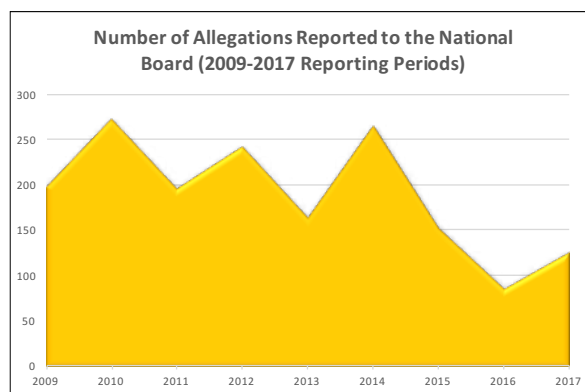
The 63 religious respondents had 78 allegations made against them. These are broken down as follows:

Category of Abuse	Quantity
Sexual	53
Physical	11
Emotional	1
Unknown	13

The category ‘unknown’ that appears in Table 2 and in Table 4 indicates that a complaint has been made against a named or unidentified diocesan cleric or member of a religious order to the relevant Church authority, but the complaint lacked sufficient detail to allow it to be categorised. This sometimes happens when a solicitor writes to a Church authority on behalf of a client who indicates an intention to pursue a claim against the Church body for ‘abuse’, but who either may never follow through with further information, or who awaits further instructions from their clients. On other occasions a complainant may contact a Church authority, whether identifying themselves or not, and make a general complaint about ‘abuse’, but not provide specific detail of the type of abuse they allegedly suffered.

The probable reason for a higher number of complaints of physical abuse against religious is that they are more likely than diocesan clerics to have worked in residential care and educational settings in which the physical punishment of children was tolerated.

The chart in Figure 2 shows the trend that can be tracked for the past nine years since notifications to the National Board have been submitted. The period involved is still too short to allow for any definite explanation of an overall trend, and it can be seen that rises and falls have happened on four occasions over the years, but a general decline in numbers notified is still observable.



**Figure 2**

These figures underline the trend reported in previous years; the evidence suggests that the amount of abuse of children within the Catholic Church in Ireland in recent years is small. While this should not permit any complacency, there is reason for some optimism that the developments made in child safeguarding over the last 10 years in the Catholic Church in Ireland have been effective.

# INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN AND GENERAL ADVICE PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUESTS FROM CHURCH AUTHORITIES: 1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018



The National Board has become a central resource offering advice and guidance on all aspects of child safeguarding in line with the main object for which Coimirce (The Company) was established – to providing advice, services and assistance to any constituent or constituents as provided for in the memorandum of association in furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland.

Advice as a part of the National Board's support work aims to help Church authorities develop best practice in keeping children safe and in responding to allegations of abuse. In 2016, the National Board decided to provide detailed written guidance which could be adopted by Church bodies in response to the growing queries that were emerging. It makes sense that there should be a consistent approach to dealing with common issues. During 2017, therefore, the approach adopted by the National Board was to redirect Church personnel to the written guidance. Over the course of the period under review, the Board refined some guidance and developed further guidance in line with requests from constituent members. For details of written guidance please refer to: [www.safeguarding.ie/guidance](http://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance)

This section contains information based on advice offered by the National Case Management Committee (NCMC) and general advice. The former relates to advice offered when an allegation of child abuse has been made and the latter mostly to safeguarding advice – in other words, what procedures and practice are required to keep children safe.

## National Case Management Committee (NCMC)

The NCMC offers advice to Church authorities on a range of matters including:

- The management of current risk
- Help to be provided to a complainant or their family
- Engagement with the statutory authorities
- The appropriateness of the respondent continuing in his or her present ministry
- The canonical process
- Whether a specialist risk assessment of the respondent should be sought
- The needs of a parish or other community in which the respondent has served
- The needs of the wider community

The NCMC meets on a monthly basis if required. During the last year the NCMC met 10 times and considered 27 cases from both dioceses and religious orders who are members (Figure 3) (current membership is 22 dioceses and 39 religious orders). These cases included advice offered in relation to the management of 20 individual respondents against whom there were 39 complainants; advice on some respondents was sought on more than one occasion. This represents an increase compared with last year's figure of 22 cases where advice was sought.

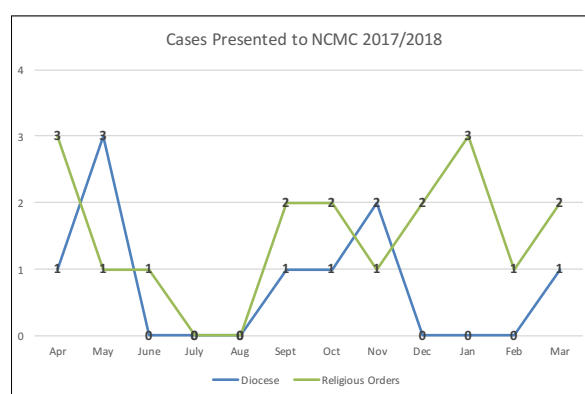


Figure 3

Advice is offered to the Church authority, who confirms in writing whether the advice was followed and the reasons for not following the advice, if that was the case.

Since the initiation of this central committee, which has unique oversight of trends, patterns and how cases are managed across the Church, the NCMC was able to make suggestions on guidance and training needed to the National Board. As a consequence, the National Board clarified the approach needed following conclusion of criminal and civil law enquiries and provided training to 5 people in conducting independent Church investigations, known as preliminary investigations under canon law. The aim was to develop a better and more consistent approach to this important part of trying to establish the credibility of an allegation received. It is not unusual for complainants not to engage with either the criminal or social services agencies and criminal convictions of allegations where the abuse happened many years previous are rare within a Church context. In such circumstances it is critical that the Church authority conducts enquiries to ensure that an appropriate response can be given to the complainant and also to ensure that any risk presented to children is assessed and managed. It is equally important that those accused of abusing are given the opportunity for a just and fair enquiry process.

As part of the quality assurance approach embraced by the National Case Management Committee (NCMC), a review of operations was initiated in November 2017. The approach adopted was to issue a questionnaire seeking feedback on aspects of the management of the NCMC to all members, and 28 responses were received. Overall there is satisfaction with the management and operation of the committee and the advice offered. Some suggestions for change were made and of the suggestions, the following were agreed:

- The NCMC will seek to recruit an additional member to reflect the views of the respondents. In particular a new member who has experience

of working with clerics and religious accused of child abuse will be sought. Additional advice from a psychiatric specialist will be obtained on a case by case basis.

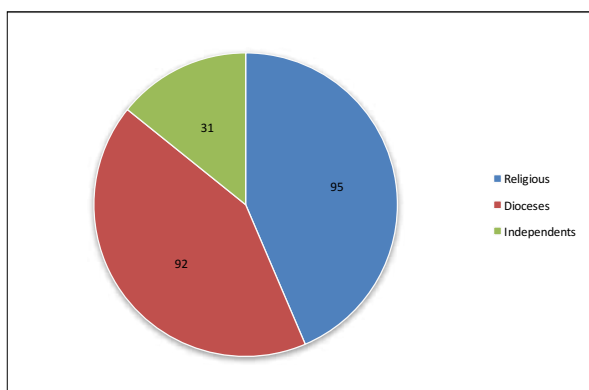
- All existing members signed new contracts 2 years ago; discussion was held about maintaining current members as expertise has been built or allowing a rolling turnover. Agreed there will be natural wastage and new members will be appointed.
- Meetings will continue on a monthly basis; for the present these meetings will take place in Maynooth; electronic communications will be explored to identify if meetings can take place through the electronic technology.
- Legal opinion sought has confirmed that NCMC should be able to receive full information and this is facilitated through the data processing deed. Consideration will be given to any GDPR implications.
- The National Board will provide clarity with regard to the threshold for reporting allegations of corporal punishment in retrospective cases.
- The Church authority and DLP will be required to attend meetings where possible.
- Where a case involves two Church Authorities, the NCMC would like both to be represented at the meeting when the case is discussed.

### **General Safeguarding Advice**

In terms of general advice, this year, National Office staff offered 218 separate pieces of advice across a range of child-safeguarding-related matters to Church personnel who hold safeguarding roles as well as to other Church personnel, to complainants and to those who may have been accused of child abuse. Complainants and respondents who contact the National Board usually seek clarification on procedures that the Church authority is required to follow; in these instances, the National Board seeks to refer the complainant and respondent back to the Church authority who has the responsibility for providing advice and support.

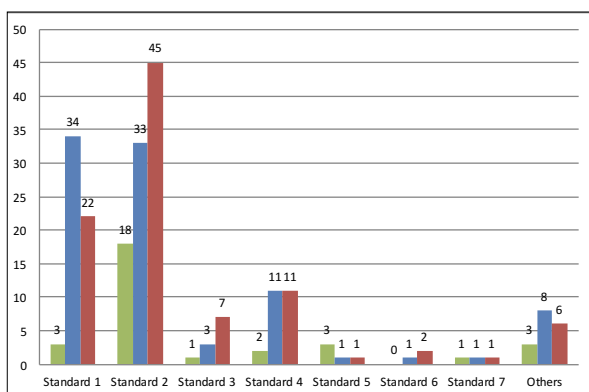
Over this past year, the National Board has received requests for advice as follows in Figure 4.

# INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN AND GENERAL ADVICE PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUESTS FROM CHURCH AUTHORITIES: 1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018



**Figure 4**

The exact breakdown of the advice by type of Church body is shown in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5**

## Child Safeguarding Standards

- Standard 1:** Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
- Standard 2:** Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations
- Standard 3:** Care and Support for the Complainant
- Standard 4:** Care and Management of the Respondent
- Standard 5:** Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
- Standard 6:** Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message
- Standard 7:** Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

As can be seen the biggest area where advice was sought across dioceses, religious orders and independent persons related to matters covered by Standard 2, accounting for almost 44 per cent (96) of the total advice offered. The advice offered by National Office staff in this area focused on case management issues, and it included advice on reporting allegations, suspicions, concerns, or knowledge, information-sharing and case management records.

The second biggest area of advice as shown in Figure 5 was on Standard 1, which accounted for 27 per cent (59) of the total advice offered. This standard is the most detailed standard in Safeguarding Children 2016. The breakdown below interrogates the requests further and highlights that advice on vetting was most frequently accessed; this is unsurprising given the recent changes in vetting legislation in the Republic of Ireland. Additional popular categories of advice sought related to: visiting clerics/religious, and creating and maintaining safe environments. Other areas of practice about which advice was requested under Standard 1 included advice on clerics and religious who minister in Church bodies other than the one to which they belong, and advice on the use of Church property by external groups.

A full breakdown of the issues about which advice was sought in relation to Standard 1 is shown below.

Topic	Frequency
Vetting	19
Safe Environments	11
Visiting Clerics/Religious	11
External Groups who use Church Property	5
Clerics/Religious Ministering in External Organisations	5
Safe Recruitment	3
Adult Codes of Behaviour	2
Complaints that are not Allegations of Abuse	2
Social Media	1

Standard 3 and 4 accounted for the next main areas of advice sought, with topics such as: supporting complainants; supporting families of complainants; the role of the support person; preliminary investigations; monitoring of respondents out of ministry; and restrictions of ministry. New guidance was produced regarding the implementation of Standard 4 in response to these requests.

In terms of the advice contained in the 'Others' category, this included requests for advice on the Children First Act 2015 and its implications for the Church, the World Meeting of Families, the role of the National Board, and advice to bodies external to the Catholic Church.

While the focus of the National Boards work relates to safeguarding practice in the Catholic Church in Ireland, there is a growing international dimension to our work. Requests for access to the Board's policy, standards and guidance and advice regarding priests and religious in missionary work are regularly sought. In response, the National Board will develop training in 2018 to address concerns about child safeguarding practice within missionary work conducted by Irish priests and religious.

### **Liaison with other Agencies and Statutory Bodies**

The National Board continued throughout 2017 to engage with statutory bodies, NGOs and international child safeguarding organisations to ensure the guidance it produces is in line with legislative requirements, regulation and best practice. Of particular importance during

this year the National Board invested significant resources in preparing for the implications of GDPR. Consultations took place with legal experts, Department of Justice, DCYA (ROI) and Department of Health (Northern Ireland) around the role of the National Board in relation to accessing and processing personal sensitive data. Prior to the commencement of GDPR, the National Board will place its guidance and revised data protection policy on the Board's website. Liaison with agencies and other statutory bodies included the undernoted:

- Tusla (Children and Family Agency Republic of Ireland)
- Department of Children Youth Affairs (Republic of Ireland)
- Department of Justice (Republic of Ireland)
- Department of Health (Northern Ireland)
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) (Northern Ireland)
- Towards Healing
- Towards Peace
- World Meeting of Families
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- AMRI (Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland)
- IEC (Irish Episcopal Conference)
- NOTA (National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers)
- International meetings (Australians; Pontifical University; International Religious Generalates)
- One-in-four
- Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service

# TRAINING AND RELATED SUPPORT REPORT

## 1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018



The Training and Support Strategy (2017–19) highlights that a core function of the National Board is to empower and support Church authorities, Church bodies and Church personnel in the delivery of best practice across the Church's child safeguarding standards. This section will report on activities outlined on each of the objectives within the Training and Support Strategy.

### Building Skills and Capacity at Local Level

A key requirement for training and support is to empower those at local level to ensure safeguarding children is embedded in each Church body. During the 2017/18 period staff from the National Office facilitated the following local training and support programmes.

#### Safeguarding Committee Training

The role of the Safeguarding Committee is to work on behalf of the Church authority to ensure that safeguarding requirements around Standards 1, 5 and 6 (Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments, Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe, and Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message) are implemented locally within each Church body.

As each Safeguarding Committee is unique in terms of its membership and stage of development, since 2013, National Office staff have been delivering training to assist committee members in clarifying their role and function in relation to the stated standards. This year the programme was delivered to 4 religious orders, 1 diocese and 2 seminaries. This brings the total number of times this training has been delivered since 2013 to 56.

#### Specific Training

During the 2017/18 period National Office staff facilitated 6 (3 dioceses and 3 religious congregations)

bespoke training sessions. The issues covered by these programmes included management of case records, support for advisors, child safeguarding in national shrines and case management training.

### Training and Supporting Trainers

#### Local safeguarding awareness training delivered in the reporting period

The 'Train the Trainers' programme facilitates the delivery of Church-specific training to all Church personnel. There are currently 102 trainers registered with the National Board, the geographical spread of these trainers is shown in Figure 6.

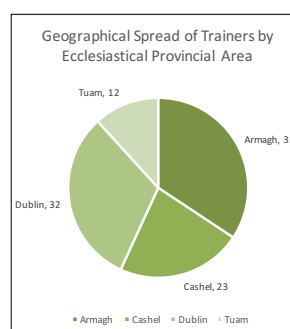


Figure 6

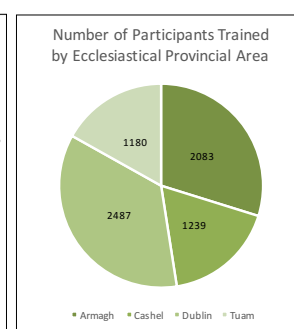


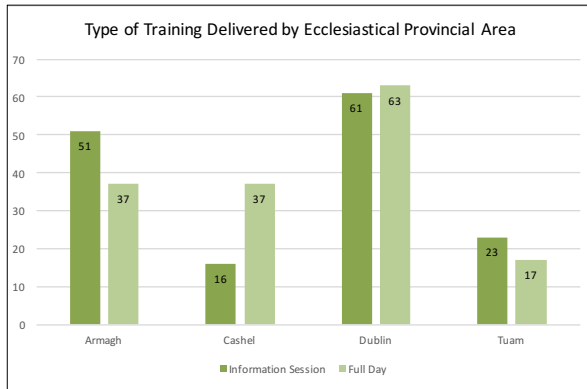
Figure 7

There has been an increase in the number of trainers since last year's annual report (84), due to demand from across Church bodies. In response, the National Board facilitated an additional 'Train the Trainers' course, which complemented a number of trainers completing the registration (and re-registration) process as carried out by National Board appointed tutors during the period under review.

The training delivered by trainers takes the form of two workshops; a full day training (6 hours) or an information session (3 hours). In the period covered by this report, 6,989 people were trained, as



shown in Figure 7. This figure combines attendance at information sessions and full-day training as demonstrated below.



**Figure 8**

The figures shown are based on statistics received from trainers who have been registered by the National Board (100 per cent of returns were received from all registered trainers). The figures detailed are not representative of all Church personnel trained in the Church, but those trained during 2017/18. These figures exclude information sessions which were delivered by local safeguarding representatives.

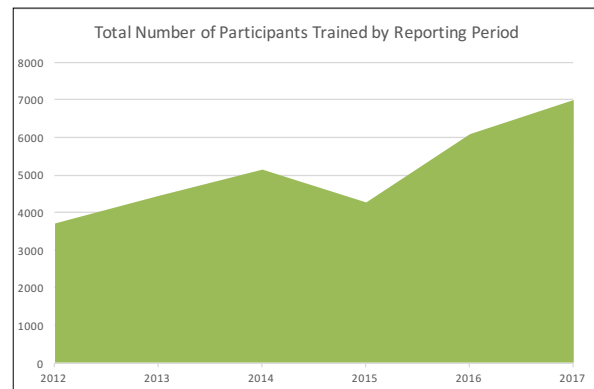
The overall figure for training (6,989) is the highest number recorded in any reporting period as demonstrated by Figure 9 and continues the upward trend of increasing numbers of people trained.

To assist with supporting trainers this year the National Board:

1. Updated the training manual and accompanying resources, in line with changes in policy, legislation and practice in both jurisdictions. Given the significant changes to legislation in relation to *Children First 2015*, it has been important to reflect the current requirements on mandatory reporting, mandatory assisting and child safeguarding statements in the delivery of training for those ministering in the Republic of Ireland. Additionally there has been a revision of *Co-operating to Safeguard Children* and changes

were therefore required to ensure knowledge is transferred to Church personnel in Northern Ireland, relating to statutory guidance contained in the *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Revised 2017)*.

2. Produced additional guidance to provide clearer advice to assist Church authorities to effectively identify training needs based on a comprehensive analysis on a yearly basis.



**Figure 9**

Over the coming year additional sessions will be added to the training manual to allow trainers to deliver other types of training sessions, including training for mandated persons and training for young leaders ministering with children.

### Supporting Individual Church Bodies

The support for individual Church bodies took a different form throughout 2017/18 and involved clarification and redirecting individual members of Church personnel to the National Board's guidance. In addition, significant support was offered throughout the year to Church bodies assisting in identifying their ministry with children and providing them with direction so that they could put in place the specific safeguards to create environments that are safe for children. Considerable effort was expended in supporting Church bodies to assess compliance with standards as part of the self-audit requirements.

# TRAINING AND RELATED SUPPORT REPORT

## 1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018

### Facilitating National Training Events

Key personnel in the Church's safeguarding structure require knowledge and skills to undertake the roles they have been assigned. Therefore national training courses delivered to support the development of knowledge and skills for these role holders, addressed the following:

- **Implementing the Standards Workshop (Tuam Ecclesiastical Provincial Area and Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland) (2 dates)** – This workshop focused on the steps required to implement the new child safeguarding policy and procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland. The day focused on understanding and discussing the following areas:
  - » Implementation of the standards and guidance
  - » Adaptation of new guidance into local procedures
  - » Applying guidance by those in safeguarding roles

The day was tailored to those involved in developing and implementing policy and procedures in each Church body. Usually this role is carried out by the Safeguarding Committee, or Safeguarding Coordinator along with the Church authority.

- **Role-Specific Training for Designated Liaison People (DLPs) (2 dates)** – This training was designed for new DLPs or those who were unable to attend previous role-specific training, to provide awareness and develop skills in relation to the role of the DLP as part of the safeguarding structure.
- **Annual Update for our Registered Trainers (2 dates)** – This training day was for those who are registered as trainers with the Board. This training provided an update on the newly designed training manual, hearing from trainers regarding areas of the manual that need to be

amended or changed, networking with other trainers, outlining further support that the National Board is developing for trainers.

- **Vetting Legislation Briefing with the Garda Vetting Bureau** – This day aimed to clarify the requirements under the Garda vetting legislation, alongside Catholic Church requirements, in line with National Board guidance.
- **Self-Audit Training for Safeguarding Committees and Church Authorities** – This day was designed to support safeguarding committees, DLPs and Church authorities on the new audit framework templates provided as part of the National Board's guidance.
- **Child Safeguarding and Digital Media – Practice and Challenges for Faith Groups in Ireland (Co-Hosted with NOTA)** – This one-day conference aimed to provide participants with a greater understanding of good practice in managing the child safeguarding risks emerging from the ever-changing world of digital media in Irish society, with particular reference to faith groups. From the delivery of a safe ministry with children and young people to managing respondents and supporting complainants, the range of speakers helped participants address three questions:
  - » What are the risks of digital media?
  - » Why are they risks?
  - » How can the risks be managed?
- **Risk Management and Creating Management Plans** – At the request of a number of Church authorities, this training day was specifically for DLPs and Church authorities involved in risk management of respondents. The day focused specifically on:
  - » How to determine risk
  - » Creating interim and permanent management plans
  - » Monitoring

- **‘Train the Trainers’ Course** – This was a seven-day programme delivered during 2017/18 to those seeking to become trainers registered with the National Board. It was an intense programme which sought to develop knowledge and group work and facilitation skills, for onward delivery of the Catholic Church’s child safeguarding training and information sessions. The training included a process of assessment prior to being registered as a trainer with the National Board.
- **Safeguarding Induction Training for New Church Authorities** – This training day was specifically for leaders of Church bodies across Ireland to induct them into their strategic role in safe ministry with children including:
  - » The strategic role of the Church authority in relation to child safeguarding
  - » Pastoral ministry and child safeguarding
  - » The importance of support and supervision
- **Legislation (ROI), Practice and Guidance Updates for DLPs** – This training was designed to update DLPs and Deputy DLPs on the new requirements of the Children First Act 2015, recent changes to practice and guidance and how these impact the role of DLP.

### Formation Training

Formation training for seminarians and on-going formation for those who have been ordained or undertaken religious vows continues to be an important part of the work of the National Board. During the period covered by this report the following training was delivered:

- Training 1st year seminarians in St Patrick’s College, Maynooth
- Training 2nd year seminarians in St Patrick’s College, Maynooth
- Pastoral theology students in St Patrick’s College, Maynooth
- Training for international students in Loreto House, Dublin
- Training seminarians in the Pontifical Irish College, Rome (3 dates)
- Training postgraduate students in the Pontifical

Irish College, Rome

- Training for visiting American seminarians in St Patrick’s College, Maynooth

Building on the work outlined in the previous annual reports of 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, a working group made up of representatives from the National Board, St Patrick’s College Maynooth, the Pontifical Irish College and Redemptorist Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary met twice to consider developing more meaningful child safeguarding training for those in training to be clerics. The aim is to assist seminarians to reflect on the opportunities and challenges they will meet when ministering to those who disclose abuse, as well as living the gospel values in ensuring the safety and well-being of all children in the care of the Church. With the agreement of the seminary rectors and boards of trustees, the National Board will deliver safeguarding training to seminarians, across 10 modules over the 6 years of formation. The first 5 modules will be delivered in Autumn 2018 and will focus on: Policies and Procedures; History of Child Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland; the Theology of Child Safeguarding; Impacts of Abuse and Personal Challenges when dealing with Child Safeguarding.

### Communication Methods

In line with data protection requirements, during this reporting cycle, the National Board has reviewed the contacts data it holds. The National Board has contacted every Church body to ensure the contact data held is current, so that communication is delivered to relevant Church personnel who require it to support them in their role. This significant piece of work will be further developed over the coming year in line with the General Data Protection Regulations.

### Supporting Best Practice

Alongside those initiatives mentioned in the previous sections to support and develop best practice, staff from the National Office have taken part in the following:

# TRAINING AND RELATED SUPPORT REPORT

## 1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018

### **Anglophone Conference 2017**

The 2017 Anglophone Conference was hosted by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service, and the Safeguarding Commission of the Archdiocese of Malta, with support from the Centre for Child Protection at the Gregorian University in Rome. The theme for the conference was *Celebrating Hope*. The organisers' ambition was that through keynote speakers, workshops and the opportunity to network and share good practice, participants would collaboratively explore the importance of hope as a Church working to safeguard children.

Each speaker considered the theme of 'Hope' from their own perspective: for survivors; for those working in the Church in safeguarding; and for those who have abused.

A report of the conference can be found on the National Board's website, [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).



### **Guidance**

Following the introduction of *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* in June 2016 the National Board produced accompanying optional guidance to support best practice, learning from examples across the Church, civil authority agencies and international experience. The National Board's guidance is available electronically and is regularly updated. While there have been a significant number of changes, some are small; however, there are a number of areas of important guidance which has been developed during this past year in response to changes in practice, policy and legislation. These include:

- Mandated persons
- Tusla Child Safeguarding Statements
- Reporting procedures
- New reporting forms for ROI
- New template decrees
- Support for parishes when a cleric is stepped aside

- Clarification of vetting guidance and Service Level Agreements
- New definitions of abuse (ROI and NI)
- New contact numbers for Tusla
- Information to support complainants
- Monitoring of respondents by another Church body

It is important that Church bodies understand these changes and reflect them in local practice.

### **Workshops on Adapting the Guidance**

To assist Church bodies in implementing the guidance, a series of sessions were facilitated across Ireland. In this reporting period, the final two of these sessions were completed – one with the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland and one in the Tuam ecclesiastical provincial area.



One of the functions of the National Board is to monitor child safeguarding practice and compliance with all safeguarding standards. Traditionally this activity is conducted through formally reviewing practice. All child safeguarding reviews into religious and diocesan practice was concluded prior to this reporting period. As already reported, 4 review reports were not published until April 2017. Comment has already been made that some of those reports indicated further significant work to be done to bring the practice in those religious orders up to the expected standard.

During 2017 detailed consultation took place with Church authorities and external experts on how to refine the review methodology, taking into account the variations in ministry across Church bodies. Towards the end of March 2018, a trial of the revised methodology took place and the outcome will be considered in concluding the revised methodology which will be implemented with Church authorities who hold a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Board starting in 2019.

### **Self-Audits**

Following the first year of embedding the revised standards under Safeguarding Children 2016, the National Board reminded Church authorities of their obligations under Standard 7: 'The Church body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually.' The annual review requires that the Church authority puts in place mechanisms for an evaluation of practice at local level, commonly known as self-auditing. The purpose is for the Church authority to be assured that all

appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent abuse, and to respond appropriately if concerns are raised. During the implementation stage of the revised standards in 2016 the National Board understood and accepted that the first year would not result in widespread evaluation of local practice through the self-auditing process. During 2017 the National Board provided significant support to Church authorities to enable them to take responsibility for ensuring local implementation and auditing of the applicable standards. It must be remembered that the standards are set out in such a way that each can be adapted depending on the extent of ministry with children. A significant number of religious congregations no longer have ministry with children, though are still required to have in place a safeguarding policy and applicable procedures, particularly in light of the requirements in both jurisdictions around the legislative requirements to report allegations of abuse.

There are 26 dioceses in Ireland and at least 154 religious orders and congregations. Of these, self-audit returns were notified to the National Board by the end of the reporting year from 26 dioceses and 146 religious orders and congregations. Of the remaining religious orders and congregations who did not yet advise that a self-audit had been completed, all have been contacted.

Continuous review of practice, internally and externally will assist in ensuring that complacency does not creep in, leaving children exposed to practice which falls below acceptable standards. Their safety remains the priority.



**John Morgan, Chairman** has had a career in business, primarily as a corporate lawyer. He served as chairperson of the Bishops' Committee on Child Protection from 2002–6. Prior to that, he had been a member of the committees established by the bishops dealing with child protection beginning with the first formal Bishops' Committee on Child Abuse, which was set up in 1999. He joined the Board in 2006, and was appointed chairman in 2009.

**Fr Edward Grimes CSSp** is a Spiritan canon lawyer, with experience of rendering assistance to religious congregations and dioceses in safeguarding children. He has served on the Spiritan Leadership Team. He has also served as national director of Pontifical Mission Societies in Ireland, director of Gambia Pastoral Institute, and secretary general of the inter-territorial Bishops' Conference in West Africa. He joined the Board in 2011.

**Dr Keith Holmes** is a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist. He was formerly lead clinician and chairperson of the Medical Board in Lucena Clinic, Dublin, and former chair of the Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry within the College of Psychiatry Ireland. He joined the Board in 2009.

**Marie Kennedy** has a background in social work and has experience in child protection and welfare. Through a range of assignments, she provides significant and extensive experience in many aspects of child care management. She joined the Board in 2008.

**Michael Ringrose** is formerly chief executive of PWD (People with Disabilities in Ireland), the national representative organisation for all people

with disabilities, their parents, carers, families and advocates. Prior to that, he served as a chief superintendent with An Garda Síochána. He joined the Board in 2006.

**Fr Paul Murphy OFM Cap** has wide experience in his own order in child safeguarding, both as a member of its leadership team and as designated liaison person. He served on the child safeguarding desk in CORI for eight years, during which time he was the company secretary for Faoiseamh Ltd (Towards Healing), the victims' support service. He also participated in the working group which drew up *Our Children, Our Church*. Paul has qualified as a trainer of trainers in child safeguarding; he also researched the monitoring and rehabilitation of sexual offenders in religious communities for an MA with the University of the West of England in Bristol. He joined the Board in 2013.

**Jim O'Higgins** is a practising solicitor and accredited mediator. He is a founding member and co-designer of the state Family Mediation Service. He served as honorary secretary and board member of Cheeverstown, a service for the intellectually challenged. He chaired the advisory panel on child abuse for the Ferns diocese for eight years. He is a former chairperson of the Peter McVerry Trust and of the joint board of two national schools in a disadvantaged area in Dublin's North City. He joined the Board in 2013.

**Sr Colette Stevenson PBVM** is a Presentation Sister. She has been involved in child protection work within the Church since 1995, when she became director of the CORI child protection office. Previously she worked as a teacher and later in retreat work. She is a qualified marriage

and family therapist. She recently retired from the National Office as director of professional standards. She joined the Board in 2013.

**Sr Nuala O’Gorman** is a Sister of Mercy of the Southern Province of the Congregation, a retired Secondary Teacher. She has served as Principal of the school, Chairperson of Board of Management and was a member of the Provincial Team in the Province. She was a member of the Steering Group in the Diocese of Cloyne when Child Safeguarding policies were being established and served as a member of the Child Safeguarding Committee in that Diocese for a number of years, drafting policies with same. She is currently one of the Victim Support Persons for the Diocese. She joined the Board in October 2017.

**Sr. Evelyn Greene** Sr Evelyn Greene is a Holy Faith Sister with a background in education. She has been involved in various ways in the area of safeguarding at congregational, diocesan and national levels for several years. At present she is designated trainer for safeguarding. She joined the Board in October 2017.

### Management of National Office

**Teresa Devlin, Chief Executive Officer** has a background in social science, social studies and psychology, and an advanced diploma in child protection. She has extensive experience in child protection management and family support, both at the levels of senior management and in the specific areas of risk assessment and care planning. Formerly director of safeguarding, she was appointed CEO in January 2014.

**Niall Moore, Director of Training and Support** has a degree in law and masters in criminology which he completed while working in the office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY). He has experience facilitating professionals, coordinating teams and

working directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Alongside his full-time role as director of training and support, he is currently completing his doctorate at Queen’s University in Belfast, examining the role of the Holy See as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. He was appointed on 1 February 2013.

### **Peter Kieran, Part-time Director of Safeguarding (policy and case management advice)**

Peter is a professionally qualified social worker and has a masters in counselling. He worked in child protection with the SEHB / HSE South from 1974, and became the regional specialist in children and family services in 2004. He worked in that role until his retirement in December 2010. He has conducted a number of reviews for the National Board since 2011 and is now working on research and policy development. He also teaches on the masters in therapeutic child care at Carlow College.

**Ann Doyle: Administrator**

**Imelda Ashe: Administrator**

**Training Tutors:** Fr Paddy Boyle; Sr Helen O’Riordan; Elaine Murphy Byrne; Sr Anne Lyng; Aoife Walsh; Avril Halley; Jennifer Moran Stritch; Maureen Walsh; and Kevin Duffy (supporting the Director of Training and Support in the delivery of the Training and Support Strategy).

### **NCMC Committee Members**

Iarfhlaith O’Neill (Chair)  
Teresa Devlin (Secretary)  
Phil Mortell  
Sean Moriarty  
Sr Helen O’Riordan  
Anne Confrey  
Sr Colette Stevenson  
Fr Fintan Gavin  
Peter Kieran



## THE BOARD AND OTHER CORPORATE INFORMATION

### **Other Corporate Information**

The members of the Board comprise the directors of Coimirce, a company limited by guarantee without a share capital (co. number: 465899). The members of Coimirce comprise nominees of each of the Episcopal Conference of Irish Bishops and AMRI (Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland).

The registered office and address of Coimirce is New House, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

**Company Secretary:** Ann Doyle

**Website Address:** [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie)

## OBJECTIVES FOR 2018



The key objectives for the Board for 2018 include:

- To initiate a 'fit for purpose' review of the Board and National Office – their structures and operation in the context of the future challenges to the Church in the area of child safety and safeguarding.
- To finalise a best practice review methodology for recommendation to the sponsoring bodies in relation to the monitoring of practice against *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* and to commence implementation by end 2018.
- To review and assess the Training and Support Strategy (2017–2019) with the objective of developing and agreeing a successor plan and strategy.
- To deliver a national conference before end 2018, which will address and plan the next stage of safeguarding performance throughout the Church in Ireland.





THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**  
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

