

# Newsletter

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

June 2022

## National Office Staff

Click on any of the links below to  
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## 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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## Introduction

We wish to open this Newsletter with “Thank You” to all who attended the National Conference in Monaghan on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Your participation enabled very positive discussions on a “Theology of Safeguarding”. We also wish to pay tribute and offer thanks to all our speakers, Mr Justice Garrett Sheehan; Cardinal Sean O Malley; Sr Colette Stevenson; Fr. Andrew Small; Dr. Jessie Rogers; Dr. Niall Moore and Mr Paschal Moynihan, who shared wisdom and insight which will help inform our work on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. We also want to offer our particular thanks to those who assisted with the beautiful liturgy in St. McCartan’s Cathedral on the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2022. The National Board commissioned a series of talks in 2021 on the theology of safeguarding in the lead up to the National Conference. We commend each of the presenters who offered their views on a theology of safeguarding, repairing wounds and healing victims and the Church. All the presentations have been assembled into a booklet which can now be downloaded at [https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Corporate\\_Publications/Theology%20of%20Safeguarding%20Transcripts.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Corporate_Publications/Theology%20of%20Safeguarding%20Transcripts.pdf)

For us, in the National Board, life is returning to normal, staff are slowly moving back to office working, though we are still partly working remotely. We hope to reinstate in-person training and meetings during the summer and into the autumn.

A significant amount of time is currently being spent on two major projects: The development of a template vulnerable adults policy and associated resources; and the Revision of *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*. This newsletter will provide updates on both those initiatives, as well as on the following:

- The National Board’s Annual Report, 2021/22
- AGM
- Reviews of Safeguarding Practice
- Training
- International Engagements
- Changes to National Board Guidance
- Practice Issue

# Annual Report

The Annual Report was presented to the AGM of Coimirce on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The report sets out the achievements of the National Board between 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021 and end of March 2022. The section on *Initiatives and Advices offered by the National Board* is very comprehensive and provides the reader with information on all our activities under each of the seven standards. It also provides comparative information in relation to advices and in relation to notifications made to the National Board relating to allegations, suspicions and concerns about child abuse.

The report has been placed on the National Board's website at

[https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Annual\\_Reports/Annual%20Report%202021.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Annual_Reports/Annual%20Report%202021.pdf)

## AGM of Coimirce

The Annual General Meeting of Coimirce took place on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 when Directors were appointed; the audited accounts received and accountants appointed for the next year.

A meeting followed, between Members of the Company and Directors of the Board with the CEO and Company Secretary in attendance. Issues discussed included data protection; outreach to victims and survivors of abuse and leadership in safeguarding.

## Reviews of Safeguarding Practice

Twelve Review Reports (9 Dioceses and 3 Religious Orders) have now been placed on the National Board's website at <https://www.safeguarding.ie/publications/national-board-publications>. There are currently 7 reviews in process (4 dioceses and 3 orders) and 4 dioceses being planned.

All reviewers are independent consultants with a background in social work, having retired from either HSE, Tusla or HSCT.

If you are interested in requesting a Review by the National Board, please write to Teresa Devlin at the National Office, at [teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie](mailto:teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie)

## Revision of Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016.

The review of the Church's child safeguarding policy has so far involved a series of Listening Meetings, initially within the Church, and with complainants and respondents. A steering group has been established to guide the review process, and among its plans is the production of a critique of international best practice policies, from which we can inform our revised policy.

As the work progresses we will engage with other users of safeguarding services- children and their parents and guardians, advocates, and external statutory and NGO experts.

For further information, please contact [imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie](mailto:imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie).



# Training and Support

## Training and Support:

Since the last newsletter, the following training has taken place

- 24/03/2022 -*Training for New Reviewers*- this training was for newly appointed reviewers to carry out the reviews on behalf of the National Board.
- 25/03/2022- *Head to Heart Module*- The second of this year's formation modules was delivered to seminarians and focused on the history of child safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland and internationally.
- 28/03/2022, 25/04/2022, 10/05/2022 and 19/05/2022- *Safeguarding Committee Training*- the training was delivered to three dioceses and one religious order.
- 29/03/2022- *Training for New DLPs*.
- 02/04/2022 (six dates in total)- *Train the Trainers Course*-The latest course has been completed and new training candidates are planning their final community assessments.
- 29/04/2022- *Head to Heart Module*- the third of this year's modules was delivered to seminarians and focused on the topic of boundaries in safeguarding.
- 25/05/2022- *Training for Religious Formation Programme*- As part of our ongoing engagement in formation, staff from the National Office facilitated formation training for Church leaders from other countries on the safeguarding journey so far in Ireland.

## Upcoming Training

Details of all upcoming training is available on the National Board's website here

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/news-events/events>. If you would like specific training delivered that is not on the website, please contact [niall.moore@safeguarding.ie](mailto:niall.moore@safeguarding.ie).

## International Engagements

From time to time, the National Board is invited by Orders who have connections with Ireland to support their safeguarding practice by way of assistance with policy development or training,. In recent months, we have supported safeguarding practice with Presentation Sisters' ministries in Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan. It is interesting to consider the different influences on the Sisters' abilities to deliver and foster best child safeguarding practice with cultural challenges, sometimes in male dominated societies where women's and children's rights are not being upheld. We admire the good work the Presentation Sisters and many others are doing in countries across the world to build safe environments for children.

Staff from the National Office will attend the *International Safeguarding Conference* in the Gregorian University, in Rome in June 2022, where we hope to learn from other countries experiences and help to inform our approach to safeguarding in Ireland.

# Developments of a Vulnerable Adults Policy and Associated Resources

Since the last newsletter, the National Board has produced a Guidance Advice and Practice (GAP) Paper entitled Adult Safeguarding, Current Context in the Catholic Church in Ireland. The paper can be viewed on the National Board's website by clicking on the following link : [https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP\\_Papers/GAP%20Paper%2010-%20Adult%20Safeguarding%20Current%20Context%20in%20the%20Catholic%20Church%20in%20Ireland.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%2010-%20Adult%20Safeguarding%20Current%20Context%20in%20the%20Catholic%20Church%20in%20Ireland.pdf).

Alongside the GAP paper the following activities have taken place:

- The steering committee (4 religious and 4 diocesan safeguarding personnel) has met twice.
- Six (6) one-to-one consultation meetings have been held with experts in the field, including Safeguarding Ireland, St. Vincent De Paul, and the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.
- Four Listening meetings (attended by 66 people) have heard the views of a large number of Church safeguarding personnel. The listening meetings have brought up a range of issues including the following:
  - Definition of vulnerability as wider than the narrow definition offered by legislation in ROI, potentially including issues such as abuse of power, boundaries and integrity in ministry and temporary vulnerability.
  - Those who participated spoke clearly about the need for advice and support to deal with practical situations, such as passing on allegations, supporting those engaged in ministries- for example, to the housebound, caring for vulnerable members of their own religious community.
  - Care for elderly or vulnerable members of religious communities (including canon law implications, next of kin decisions, living wills etc.).

From the work conducted so far it is clear that there are additional complexities in vulnerable adult ministry, which, due to an absence of consistent legislation, in both the Republic and the North of Ireland, will require careful consideration before a final template policy is agreed.

To assist with this work, the National Board has prepared a paper for consideration by the sponsoring bodies to help steer the work towards its conclusion in September 2022.

Three further consultation sessions are now available to book on the National Board's website. The purpose of these meetings is to hear directly from those carrying out ministry with vulnerable adults such as priests, religious or pastoral care workers. If you are involved in direct ministry with adults and you would like to attend any of these meetings, we would really appreciate your feedback. The dates and links to book a place on these free events are outlined below:

- 27/07/2022 10:00-12:00-<https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/adult-safeguarding-listening-meeting-for-those-involved-in-ministry-with-adults>
- 28/07/2022 10:00-12:00- <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/adult-safeguarding-listening-meeting-for-those-involved-in-ministry-with-adults-28-july>
- 29/07/2022 10:00-12:00- <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/listening-meeting-for-those-involved-in-ministry-with-vulnerable-adults-29th-july>

If you have any questions on any aspect of the vulnerable adults work so far, please contact [niall.moore@safeguarding.ie](mailto:niall.moore@safeguarding.ie)

## Practice Supports



This is the logo of an excellent organisation, whose website can be accessed at <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/>. It publishes a lot of very up to date, relevant and helpful material on the scale and nature of CSA, updates on key messages from research, prevention of and response to abuse, evaluation of the effectiveness of services, understanding perpetrators of abuse and improving child-safeguarding practice. The Centre publishes a Newsletter, and if you are interested in receiving a copy, you can apply at <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/about-us/newsletter/>. There is also a CSA Centre blog with regular specialist contributors.

An example of the quality of the free resources that are available from the Centre is the 75-page practice guide, *Communicating with Children*, which can be downloaded from <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/documents/communicating-with-children-guide/>

The Centre has developed a *Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse* film series, for professionals, by professionals, and information on how to access these short films can be gained through <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/knowledge-in-practice/practice-improvement/supporting-practice-in-tackling-child-sexual-abuse/>

## International Inquiries

There are currently inquiries taking place in a number of European countries into child abuse in the Church. These include a review report commissioned by the Focolare Movement in France into abuses perpetrated by a former member. The organisation which undertook the review heard the testimonies of victims who were abused by a former member, between 1963 and 1998. Focolare has made a full apology and put in place a number of restorative processes to assist the victims with healing. A summary of the report can be found on the National Board's website at [https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Briefing\\_papers/Briefing%20Paper%204.pdf](https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Briefing_papers/Briefing%20Paper%204.pdf).

## New Religious Orders who are members of AMRI

Regarding religious orders and congregations that are new to a diocese, are members of AMRI, and are ministering on behalf of a diocese, or are conducting their own ministry with children- it is important that the National Board is notified of these orders to ensure effective safeguarding of children.

Please notify [imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie](mailto:imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie) of the name of the order and the contact details of the relevant Church authority (if they are members of AMRI) so that we can make contact with them.





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



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## Practice Issues- Repairing the Wounds

The National Board is engaged in a series of Listening Meetings in two projects currently underway – developing a template policy for ministry with vulnerable adults, and the revision of *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*. These meetings have brought us into close contact with victims of abuse who are happy to talk us, so that where good practice has been experienced, this can be shared; and where the response from the Church did not meet the expectation of the victim, that lessons can be learned. The National Board is grateful to those who that have already shared their stories, and we are open to hearing from others who wish to engage with this process.

Our aim is to use the learning in the revision of the Church's policy.

At the same time, as stated above there are a number of inquiries in process, the most recent of which has resulted in the Sauvé Report in France. Each such report reminds us of our failures to safeguard children and our inability to respond with care and compassion to the victims when they come forward.

One recent article has caught our attention and we commend it to you:

Repairing the Wound - Coram Fratibus- this article can be read at <https://coramfratribus.com/life-illuminated/repairing-the-wound/>.

Finally as we are engaged in conversation on a synodal pathway, the National Board suggests that we should consider permanently seeking God's mercy and clemency for all the evils of clerical sexual abuse perpetrated, as a significant part of the Liturgy of the Mass.