

Newsletter

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

October 2020

ALERT BOX

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

Website Cookies	pg 5
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National Office Staff

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

Chief Executive Officer
[Teresa Devlin](#)

Director of Training and Support
[Niall Moore](#)

Part time Director of Safeguarding
[Peter Kieran](#)

Administrators
[Imelda Ashe](#)

Advice and Support
[Ann Cunningham](#)
[Sister Colette Stevenson](#)

Introduction

This Newsletter will provide the reader with some insight into the governance arrangements of the National Board. As a registered charity in the Republic of Ireland, we are required to comply with charity regulations from the Charities Regulator including risk assessment and risk management and lobbying legislation. Below you will learn of the controls that are in place to meet these legislative requirements. The National Board also produces an annual report on activities and undertakes an external financial audit. Every year at the AGM of the company Coimisce, Directors, (on a rotational basis) are put forward for re-election for a three year term of office, now with a maximum renewal of two terms per Director. This year's AGM took place by video link in June 2020. For details of the Directors see the 2019 Annual Report by following this link https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Annual_Reports/NBSCCC%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf

The Newsletter will also provide information on activities within the National Office during the Covid 19 health pandemic. We have taken the opportunity to update contact information, review and destroy records in line with our data destruction procedures and update other internal administrative arrangements to ensure we comply with good governance.

Safeguarding continues, in spite of staff working reduced hours and remotely. The Newsletter will provide interesting statistical information on requests for advice,

allegations notified to the National Board, training delivered, planned and research currently in process by the National Office.

We are all getting used to the new reality of working online and holding small meetings using safe distancing. With these changes come additional risks for children that must be considered. We understand the cautiousness with which Church authorities are engaging children in ministry, and while the National Office will not determine whether ministry with children should or should not take place, we can provide support around assessing and managing risks online. Anecdotally we hear of the disappointment from children and their parents and carers about not having the opportunity to meet for sacramental preparation, delayed First Communion and Confirmations. These important milestones in faith development will need to be revisited using a different – blended approach (on-line and in person) which ensures the health and well-being of children.

This Newsletter provides information on: Governance requirements on the National Board; data protection work; notices regarding safeguarding Reviews and annual self-audits; training; National Board Conference; Resources and *Children First* Safeguarding Statements.

Governance Requirements- Imelda Ashe, Company Secretary

As a company limited by guarantee, and as a registered charity based in the Republic of Ireland, there are Government obligations that much be fulfilled by the National Board. These include external annual financial audit; compliance with the Charities Regulations and cooperation with the Charities Regulator; completion of lobbying returns to demonstrate if the National Board has engaged with Government at any level and compliance with data protection legislation. The National Board reviews each of these expectations on a regular basis, and those which require particular scrutiny are the Charities Compliance Code and Risk Register. In light of Covid 19 and the restrictions on everyone's ability to conduct "business" the National Board's review of risk has changed in some areas. The National Board will continue to monitor whether it has the resources and capacity to undertake its remit.

A word from Ann Cunningham

Since lockdown commenced on the 13 March 2020 I have had the opportunity to quality check data on the National Board's Contact database.

This task entailed contacting 1547 individuals asking for their permission to remain on the database and to confirm if the information we have for them is still accurate. This exercise proved to be essential as many people had changed their contact details or their job titles. In some instances Church authorities were able to inform me of their plans to step down and who would be stepping into their shoes and when this would take place, giving me the opportunity to send an introductory email to the new Church authority informing them of our work and that we are here to answer any child safeguarding concerns they may have.

We hope to repeat this task every two years. Thank you to all who have responded to my email.

Reviews of Child Safeguarding Practice

The National Board is considering how to undertake Reviews of Child Safeguarding practice using electronic communication where possible, and ensuring safe distancing for on-site visits.

If you would like to invite the National Board to review your child safeguarding practice, please send a letter of invitation to Teresa Devlin so that a suitable timetable can be developed for 2021.



Training and Support

Training Delivered

Since the last Newsletter published in August 2020 the following training has been delivered:

- Safeguarding Committee Training for two separate religious Church bodies.
- Safeguarding formation input to pastoral theology students in St Patrick's College Maynooth.
- Ministering with Children Online - This has been delivered to a further four Church bodies since August.
- Head to Heart Induction for new seminarians

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-joomla/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 December. 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.

We are continuing to explore how we deliver some of our planned training online, however if there is training you require on any aspect of safeguarding children please contact

niall.moore@safeguarding.ie.

Training Manuals Pickup

As noted above, as all of the trainers have now been trained, the PowerPoint slides from the updated training manual have been uploaded onto the trainers' section of the National Board website. If any trainers are having any trouble logging on or have forgotten their log in details please contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie. There are three different versions of the slides to accommodate those trainers who want to use different software and who have different types of hardware. These are:

- PowerPoint slides with animation
- PowerPoint slides without animation
- Apple Keynote slides

All of the slides have embedded audio clips to make it easier for trainers to use the PowerPoint effectively.

New versions of the certificates have also been provided on the website - one version that can be printed and completed by hand; and another version that can be completed on the computer and then sent on to participants.

In terms of the hard copy training manual, these are in Maynooth (subject to Government restrictions being lifted for the country and ready for collection. We would encourage all trainers to contact imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie to arrange a time that is mutually convenient to pick up the hard copy version of the manual. If other personnel from your Church body are in Maynooth on other business, it is fine for them to collect the manual on behalf of the trainer.

Guidance Updates

Since the last Newsletter new guidance on Whistle Blowing has been published. To read the guidance, follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%201.pdf> (Page 98-102).

Annual Self Audits

Indicator 7.1 of the *Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* outlines the requirement that Church authorities ensure that an annual self-audit is completed. While this audit is for the Church authority to ensure the implementation of effective safeguarding practice, there is also a requirement to notify the National Board that the audit has been completed. Given the impact that Covid 19 has had on ministry, parish and religious life, added to the absence of children attending for a significant part of this year we understand that conducting a child safeguarding self-audit may not be a priority for many of you this year. We have decided therefore that there will be no requirement to inform the National Board that you have conducted a self-audit for the 2020 period.



Data Protection and Data Destruction

Cookies and Data Protection

Following new regulations from the European Union the National Board has revised its notification on its use of cookies on the Safeguarding.ie website. It is important that each Church body should consider their use of cookies and the consent that is required from users of their websites. The Data Protection Officer of each Church body can assist with this.

Data Destruction

- Over the past number of months the National Board has been going through a process of data destruction. This overall process is broken down into a number of streams of work outlined below:
- Allegations data from 2008-2019- This has now been returned to the relevant Church bodies and all electronic copies have been destroyed from the National Board's records.
 - Allegation data from 2019-2020- Following publication of the 2019 Annual Report data received during this period will be returned to the relevant Church authorities. Letters have been sent to all Church authorities in Ireland where we hold allegation data. We would urge all Church leaders who have received a letter from us to arrange a date to pick up the data as soon as possible. If you do not wish to collect your data and would like the National Board to destroy it please confirm this in writing. If you have not received a letter, and would like to find out if we hold allegations data belonging to your Church body please contact acuningham@safeguarding.ie or imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie.
 - Allegations which the National Board received from one Church body where the respondent belonged to another Church body- This data will now be returned to the Church authority who originally shared the data with the National Board. In the coming weeks all relevant Church authorities will receive a letter encouraging collection of this data. If you have not received a letter and would like to find out if there is data which you need to collect please contact acuningham@safeguarding.ie or imeldaashe@safeguarding.ie.

Guidance, Advice and Practice (GAP) Papers

The National Board has now written two further in a series of eight GAP papers. The final GAP papers of 2020 will deal with Information Sharing and a further GAP paper will review Children's Rights in Child Safeguarding. The Information Sharing Paper will be presented to the Board for approval in October and will be released on the National Boards website thereafter.

The Children's Rights Paper will be released later in the year.

All new GAP papers and those already available can be read here

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/publications>

National Conference- Theology of Safeguarding

The National Board's biennial conference due to take place in October 2020 has been postponed until 13th and 14th October 2021. In line with the National Board's desire to create a focus within the Catholic Church in Ireland on the consideration of, reflection on and development of theology in relation to the safeguarding of children, the theme of the Conference and for our work during 2021 will be the Theology of Safeguarding. We intend hosting a series of videos on our website over 2021 featuring experts in safeguarding and theologians responding to questions which will then lead us into a discussion at the Conference in 2021.

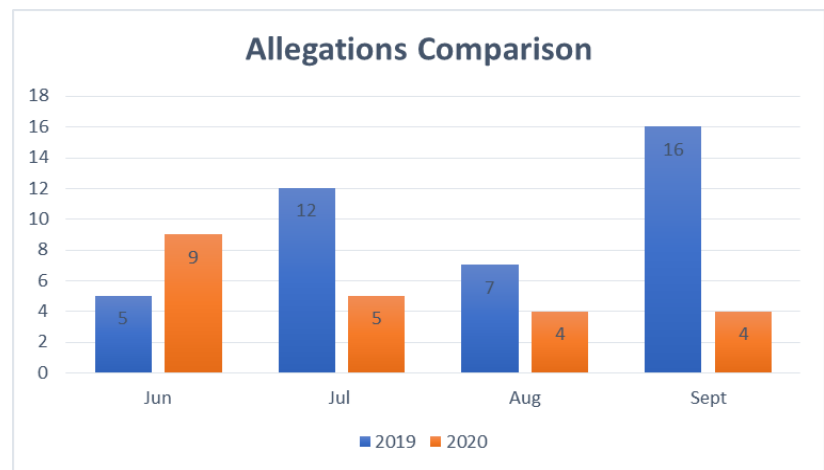
Notification of Allegations and Advice Offered by the National Board

The National Board is required, as one of its functions, to monitor the notification of allegations to statutory authorities. While identifying information is not shared with the National Board, we do track if allegations, suspicions and concerns are notified to An Garda Síochána, PSNI, Tusla and Social Services in Northern Ireland. We report on this statistical data annually in our Annual Report.

The National Board is regularly consulted on case management matters, procedural and practice initiatives. Given the current health pandemic the National Board decided to share a comparative statement on the amount of advice offered and the allegations received between June to September 2020 with the same period in 2019.

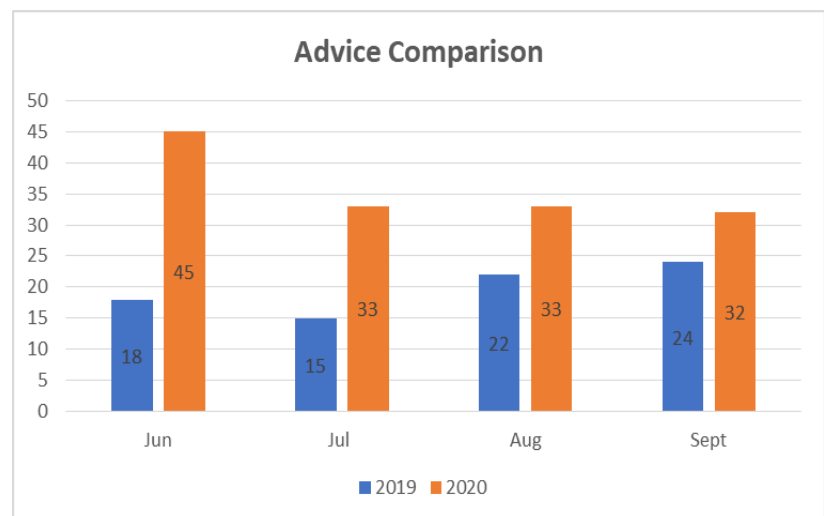
Allegations Comparison

	June	July	August	September
2019	5	12	7	16
2020	9	5	4	4



Advice Comparison

	June	July	August	September
2019	18	15	22	24
2020	45	33	33	32



Safeguarding Statements – Requirement of *Children First* for Church bodies with ministry with children in the Republic of Ireland

Child Safeguarding Statements are a statutory requirement of *Children First*. The development of a statement demonstrates how an organisation which engages with children assesses and manages risk during activities. Church bodies that have ministry with children are required to comply with this aspect of *Children First*. To assist in the development of a child safeguarding statement, the National Board developed a template, with links to all the required procedures on 29th January 2018.

Following advice from Tusla this statement was updated on 27th of September 2019 and again on 21st of November 2019. Following feedback from Church personnel regarding localised risk, it was updated again on 6th of December 2019 and as with all of our guidance all of these updates were highlighted in the latest update box on the website, on the child safeguarding app and in our Newsletter under the 'Guidance update section'.

It is important to review the update template to ensure compliance with *Children First* requirements on Safeguarding Statements.

The National Board has regularly communicated information about changes needed to safeguarding statements in Newsletters and at Ecclesiastical Provincial area meetings.

The National Board understands that Tusla's Compliance Unit is checking safeguarding statements and failure to comply with the expectations around regularly assessing and managing risk and reflecting this in an updated statement may result in a Church body being placed on a register of non-compliance. Over the past few weeks, the National Board has reviewed a random sample of safeguarding statements on Church bodies' websites to assess whether they are in line with updated guidance, and we have noted that is not the case. The current National Board template has been confirmed as compliant by the Compliance Unit in Tusla, and we would urge all relevant Church bodies to review their statement against the National Board's template available here

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%206.pdf> (Page 24), to ensure that the structure, headings and wording of the risks are in line with the template provided by the National Board, and meet the expectations of Tusla.



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



Contact Details

National Office for
Safeguarding Children
New House
St. Patrick's College
Maynooth
Co. Kildare

T : 00 353 (01)5053124

F : 00 353 (01) 5053026

Resources

Part of the new reality of life in the Covid-19 pandemic is that electronic communication, video meetings, and study through the internet have all become more important to us all. The National Board is undertaking a lot of its work remotely through this medium; and it seems appropriate therefore to let safeguarding personnel know about relevant and helpful e-resources that are available to us all free of charge.

- The Centre for Child Protection (CCP) in the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, which is headed up by Fr. Hans Zollner SJ, has a very informative website at <https://childprotection.unigre.it/>. The CCP ran a short webinar series through the summer of 2020, details of which can be accessed at <http://www.internationalunionsuperiorsgeneral.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Safeguarding-webinar-Series-2020-LISTA.pdf>. This link allows you to see four webinar presentations: Dr Nuala Kenny, SC on *Safeguarding and A Theology of Childhood*; Professor Gabriel S. Dy-Liacco on *Victimology and the Relational Safety Model*; Hans Zollner, SJ on *Safeguarding online in times of lockdown*; and Professor Ernesto Caffo on *Care for children after lockdown*. As well as being able to view these video talks, the link also allows you to download the PowerPoint presentations that accompanied each of them.

- The CCP website also has the video of the Keynote Address at the CCP Diploma in Safeguarding Course Commencement in February 2020 by Prof Dr Myriam Wijlens on the topic of *The Church Being a Safe Place for Children. Opportunities and Challenges for the Ministry of Safeguarding*. This can be accessed at <https://childprotection.unigre.it/prof-dr-myriam-wijlens-keynote-address-at-the-diploma-course-commencement/>

- Another address, with an Irish interest, is the address of Ger Crowley (Limerick Diocese) to the Licentiate in Safeguarding class delivered in June 2020. Both the video and the text of Ger's talk is accessible at <https://childprotection.unigre.it/remote-commencement-exercises-for-first-graduating-licentiate-class/>

- The CCP hosted an important international conference in 2017, *Child Dignity in the Digital World*, and the proceedings of that event can be accessed and viewed at <https://childprotection.unigre.it/conferences/child-dignity-2017>. As a direct outcome of that event, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development's Working Group on Child Online Safety produced the October 2019 publication, *Child Online Safety: Minimizing the Risk of Violence, Abuse and Exploitation Online*, which can be accessed at https://childonlinesafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ChildOnlineSafety_report.pdf