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Autumn 2022 UPDATE Information Sheet

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Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

In order for vetting to be carried out on any role within the Catholic Church that involves children or vulnerable adults, we must first consider whether the role can be defined as a “Regulated Activity” within the relevant legislation

AccessNI is the government body charged with the responsibility for overseeing the vetting process and ensuring that all applications meet the terms of the legislation. After lengthy debate and consultation with AccessNI, the following, final decision has been taken regarding the following three likely scenarios where Holy Communion is distributed to parishioners.

Residential Care/Nursing Homes

Visiting individuals in a Residential Care or Nursing Home, on behalf of the Catholic Church, regardless of the role (which may include distributing Holy Communion), will continue to be vetted under Access NI’s pre 2012 legislation, as Residential Care and Nursing Homes are defined as “Specified Establishments” within the legislation.

It is therefore only in these circumstances that a Minister of Holy Communion can be vetted.

Update from Andy Thomson, Vetting and Barring Co-Ordinator

Recent Parish enquiries indicate that more volunteers are now recommencing their role after a considerable break. The situation reflected by Parishes is that those returning have been away from their role for periods exceeding one year, and sometimes nearer two years.

Accordingly, I have taken the opportunity to review the situation around vetting.

With regards to any volunteer who was ‘stood down’ during the covid period, i.e., not removed from their role, but not used, I believe we should follow the ‘[reasonableness](#)’ principle’. The ‘reasonableness principle’ is understood to be what a court would consider if a person who had been disqualified was allowed to resume their role. A common view is that a court would consider a vetting certificate used in pre-employment checking, which was under three months old as reasonable, but using a certificate which was over one year old would be seen as unreasonable.

While I am mindful of the need to be as helpful as possible in these difficult times, I must at the same time adhere to the regulations. **In these circumstances therefore, I consider re-vetting to be appropriate after a period of one year’s absence from the role caused by the Covid 19 pandemic only.**

Autumn 2022 UPDATE Information Sheet (Cont'd)

Vetting Useful Information & Reminders

Vetting Confirmation - Guidelines

In the event that a new volunteer indicates that they are currently performing a role for which they have been vetted in another Parish or Diocese, the Parish Safeguarding Committee Chair/Representative should complete and submit a Vetting Confirmation Request Form to the Vetting Office.



The Vetting Confirmation Request Form enables the Parish to confirm that a volunteer has been vetted and to decide whether a new vetting application is required. It also allows the Vetting Office to update the individual's vetting history.

On receipt of the Vetting Confirmation Request Form, the Vetting Office will consult existing records and confirm to the Parish whether or not the volunteer has been vetted.

Remember

No Record of Individual

If the Vetting Office has no record of the individual, new vetting will be required.

Change of role -Voluntary to Paid

If the previously vetted role was voluntary and the new one is a paid role, a new vetting application is required.

Additional Roles

If a volunteer is taking up an additional role, with either Children or Vulnerable adults and was currently vetted for that group, new vetting is not required, but a Vetting Confirmation Request form should be submitted to the Vetting Office to allow the Northern Diocese Database to be updated.

Vetted to work with children only

If the volunteer is currently vetted to work with children only (for example) and subsequently wanted to work with vulnerable adults (and vice-versa) then a new vetting application must be submitted.



Mass Setting

As before, a Minister of Holy Communion, assisting a priest in the Church during Mass **DOES NOT** require to be vetted as this is **NOT a "Regulated Activity."**

Vetting for this role will not be carried out.

Private Residences

Access NI have informed the D& C Vetting Office that distributing Holy Communion to the Sick & Housebound in their own home, is **NOT a "Regulated Activity"**.

Vetting for this role can therefore no longer be carried out.