



## Spring 2024 Newsletter

### *NATIONAL BOARD UPDATE—NEW STANDARDS*



Over the past 12 months the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland have been reviewing the current “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016”

This has been a significant exercise and has involved a process of listening, consultation and discernment across all the Dioceses and Religious Orders in Ireland.

Parishes across Down and Connor were invited to participate in a number of these exercises and also an awareness raising and information meeting was facilitated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team back in Sept 2023 to discuss the revised Policy as it was being developed.

The Diocese was also represented on a national Steering Committee which worked on the revision of Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

This work has now been completed.

In December 2023, the Irish Bishops Conference (IEC) and the Association of Missionary and Religious Leaders of Ireland (AMRI) agreed to adopt the revised safeguarding policy that the National Board has been working on with others across our Church:

**A Safe and Welcoming Church – Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024.**

Down & Connor

Safeguarding & Vetting Office

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[www.downandconnorsafeguarding.org](http://www.downandconnorsafeguarding.org)

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<https://downandconnorsafeguarding.com/>

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## NEW NATIONAL BOARD STANDARDS (CONT'D)

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The essence of safeguarding within our Church doesn't change.

The revised policy embedded in Catholic social teaching and Childrens Rights are fundamental and central in this new policy.

The new policy contains all the core elements of the previous 2016 policy which are now captured under three Standards:

- ◆ **Governance and Leadership**
- ◆ **Embedding a Culture of Safeguarding**
- ◆ **Responding with Care and Compassion**

There will be a suite of indicators and associate guidance aligned to these standards.

The National Board are facilitating a number of induction sessions across the Dioceses. This in turn will be cascaded to all our Parishes in Down and Connor, our Religious and Associations of the Faithful who minister within the Diocese.

The revised Policy will also feature in all safeguarding training.

***So colleagues, watch this space.***

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## NATIONAL BOARD - CHANGES OF PERSONNEL

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Teresa Devlin CEO National Board, is leaving her post. We sincerely thank Teresa for her contribution to safeguarding in our Church and a big welcome to the new CEO of the National Board, Aidan Gordon.



Niall Moore, Director of Training and Support, has also left the National Board. We wish to thank Niall for his engagement with the Diocese and wish him well in his new position within the Church of Ireland.

Lyn McDermott has replaced Niall, as Director of Training and Support.

We look forward to working with Aidan and the new Team.

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## ANNUAL PARISH AUDIT 2023

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We would like to thank all those parishes who completed the Annual Parish Audit for 2023.



The Annual Audit of Safeguarding across the Diocese is a requirement under the National Board for Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland- **Standard 7 - Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards.**

There is a requirement under this standard, that the Bishop of the Diocese confirms the status of safeguarding across the Diocese on an annual basis.

The returns made by parishes inform the Bishop's report to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland on the Diocese's compliance with the Standards and Guidance. This return has now been completed by Bishop Alan McGuckian.

This Audit is your unique Parish's statement with regards to parish safeguarding, areas of strength and innovation and areas where you identify the need for development.

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### TRAINING NEWS—DID YOU KNOW...

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That new dates are continuously added to the [TRAINING CALENDAR](#) on our [WEBSITE](#).

If you would like to book onto a course, simply click on the relevant course link under the [BOOKING COURSES](#) tab and fill out the Online Booking Form.



### *Reminder*

If you are planning activities involving children/young people, you must ensure that all leaders or those in helping roles, are appropriately vetted and trained.



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## OTHER NEWS - ONUS SAFE PLACE

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### WHAT IS “SAFE PLACE”?

“Safe Place” is an initiative that aims to create awareness of what domestic abuse is, who is affected and the range of support available locally.



### YOUR PARISH CAN BECOME A “SAFE PLACE”

To become a “Safe Place” Parishes need to attend a Safe Place webinar and complete a simple registration form. You are then supplied with a range of ‘Safe Place’ resources and ongoing support from Onus. The Safe Place initiative does not involve providing direct support services.

If interested, you can find out more information on the ONUS website: <https://www.onustraining.co.uk/>

You can also register for one of the Safe Place webinars via our website/ [BOOKING COURSES](#)

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## OTHER NEWS—USEFUL LINK—NSPCC— “LISTEN UP SPEAK UP”

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The NSPCC have a 10-minute digital training session called “Listen up, Speak up”



### It covers:

- ◆ Some signs a child might be at risk and steps you can take to help.
- ◆ How to approach difficult conversations to help keep children safe.
- ◆ Who you can contact if you’re ever concerned about a child or their family.

To access this 10-minute digital training session click here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/support-us/listen-up-speak-up/sign-up/>

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## VETTING NEWS

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The Northern Dioceses Vetting Office received a circular from AccessNI informing them of a decrease in application fees for those applicants who will be taking up a **paid role**.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure Check will be reduced from £33.00 to the **new fee of £32.00**. (Cheques to be made payment to: Northern Diocese Vetting)



**Please note - Volunteer roles are still free.**



Always check with the vetting office before you start the vetting process that you have the most recent version of all forms and the correct AccessNI PIN code which you can find in the “guidance document” on the website.

Information and forms regarding new applications and changes in roles can be found at:

<https://downandconnorsafeguarding.com/vetting/>

If you have a query in relation to completing a vetting application you can email your query to [vetting@soddc.org](mailto:vetting@soddc.org)

### UPDATES TO VETTING FORMS

There have been some changes made to the vetting forms. These are now available to download and print from the website, under the [VETTING TAB/TILE](#)

Please destroy any old versions of the forms and use the new versions.



### VETTING OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

#### **Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Ministers visiting private homes**

AccessNI have determined that a eucharistic minister visiting private dwellings does not constitute regulated activity and can not therefore be vetted.



#### **Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Ministers visiting nursing/care homes**

AccessNI have determined that a eucharistic minister visiting nursing/care homes does constitute the definition of “regulated activity” and therefore vetting is required, under the following role:

***“Volunteer providing advice & guidance to Vulnerable Adults weekly working unsupervised in a specified establishment/care home”***

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## USEFUL CONTACTS

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<b>TOWARDS PEACE</b>	00353 (1) 505 3028 00353 (0) 8677 10533	<a href="https://towardspeace.ie/">https://towardspeace.ie/</a>
<b>TOWARDS HEALING</b>	NI Freephone 0800 0963315	<a href="https://towardshealing.ie/">https://towardshealing.ie/</a>

### **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES GATEWAY TEAM**

#### **During normal working hours (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-5.00pm)**

Belfast HSC Trust      Tel: 028 9050 7000;  
South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 0300 1000 300;  
Northern HSC Trust      Tel: 0300 1234 333;  
Southern HSC Trust      Tel: 0800 7837 745  
028 3756 7100

#### **Outside normal working hours (Friday 5.00pm – Monday 9.00am, including Bank holidays):**

#### **Regional Emergency Social Work Service:**

Tel: 0800 1979995  
Email: [resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

### **ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES GATEWAY TEAM**

#### **During normal working hours (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-5.00pm)**

Belfast HSC Trust      Tel: 028 9504 1744;  
South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 028 9250 1227;  
Northern HSC Trust      Tel: 028 9441 3659;  
Southern HSC Trust      Tel: 028 3756 4423.

#### **Outside normal working hours (Friday 5.00pm – Monday 9.00am, including Bank Holidays):**

#### **Regional Emergency Social Work Service**

Tel: 08001979995  
Email: [resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net)