

# Newsletter

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## Canon John McCullagh's departure

The staff at Church House were very sorry to part with Canon John McCullagh who was instituted as rector of Rathdrum and Derralossary with Glenagealy, Co. Wicklow on 9th December 2008.

Canon McCullagh spent nine years in the roles of Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education, Secretary to the Secondary Education Committee and Education Officer.

In his role as Education Officer he had responsibility for Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children.

He was deeply committed to the implementation of Safeguarding Trust and the protection and welfare of children in youth ministry. He was involved in the revisions of SGT that took place during his years in office, travelled the country providing training for panels and workers and supported the work of the Diocesan trainers. More recently he and Jennifer Byrne, the authorised signatory, were involved in explaining the vetting requirements for all involved in youth work.

His career as both school principal and as a clergyman provided an excellent background and over the years he acquired an in-depth knowledge of child protection.

He kept abreast of changes in law and guidelines and amended policies accordingly. He spent endless hours answering queries from parishes around the country, always with patience and courtesy. His advice, careful, wise and humorous, was widely valued.

We know that John will be missed by his colleagues north and south of the border and that they wish him well as he and Ruth take up the challenge of parish life.

Hopefully it will not be too long before this important position is filled.



*The Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr John Neill making a presentation to the Revd Canon John McCullagh at a recent reception in his honour.*

## Panel Reporting Responsibilities

There has been much recent media coverage of the Roscommon neglect and incest case.

One of the issues raised was of people not knowing who to contact in relation to concerns about child abuse. Safeguarding Trust, (see 1.1 Introduction) provides that the reporting procedure regarding abuse shall be applied both if the parish panel has a legal

interest in receiving the report i.e.

***The report relates to a parish worker or concerns a parish organisation or some act or event which has occurred on parish premises or at an event undertaken by the parish or if a worker or the panel has received a disclosure or formed a suspicion that a child may be suffering abuse.***

See inside for Training News and Garda Vetting FAQ, and new guidelines

In both instances the panel will report to the statutory authorities if they decide that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

This policy change brings the Church of Ireland into line with Children First the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

# TRAINING NEWS

## Keeping Safe Child Protection Training Course

Renée English and Suzie Evans of Youth for Christ, who are Keeping Safe trainers, recently ran a 9 hour programme (over 3 evenings) at Urban Junction Youth Centre, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

The course was developed by the Volunteer Development Agency in Northern Ireland for the voluntary and community sector and is provided in conjunction with the Health Service Executive. It is relevant for anyone involved in youth work in a parish or at diocesan level. It addresses topics included in Safeguarding Trust, such as Child Protection Awareness, reporting procedures and recruitment in greater detail, in a lively interactive way. Additional material in the form of a disability awareness module will be incorporated in the training package in the future.

Rosemary Kingston who is involved with a variety of youth

activities in her parish of Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan successfully completed the programme and is pictured here with the trainers at the presentation of certificates. Rosemary said *"The Keeping Safe Training Course was great. I feel it made me even more aware of some issues. I found the discussions in the small groups interesting as we all had differing backgrounds and sometimes had differing perceptions, depending on our experiences and cultures. I also found the breadth of the course good. It was a good addition to the training I had already done"*.

The course can cater for up to 14 participants. If your parish youth organisation(s) would be interested in participating in this training, please contact Renée. The course is free of charge



Suzie Evans, Rosemary Kingston and Renée English.

provided a venue is supplied. Alternatively, your local HSE Information and Advice Person – Children First (see insert for contact details) may be able to put you in touch with local training opportunities.

Information on all HSE services may be obtained by contacting the HSE infoline. Lo-call:1890 927 277 [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie).

See Part 9 of Safeguarding Trust for a list of Helpful Organisations.

## Safeguarding Trust Training Material

At the meeting for SGT trainers, held in August 2008, the need for more in-depth training for discussed. It was recommended that there would be a session for youth workers and panel members together and a second session for panel members alone, in view of their particular responsibilities in relation to recruitment and supervision of workers and the reporting of child abuse concerns.

The extended training is in line with the recommended guidelines for child protection in youth work.

Revised powerpoint presentations have been prepared and also a number of exercises suitable for group work. These can be obtained from the Child Protection Officer.

## Safeguarding Trust Train the Trainers

The Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe have been developing a panel of trainers.

It is considered desirable to have a pool of trainers available in order to be able to respond to local requirements, especially where parishes are widely dispersed. Renée met with the group on two dates to assist in their preparation.

There may be other dioceses which are considering recruiting additional trainers or which would welcome a session for existing trainers in relation to the revised material. Renée would be glad to provide support in this regard.

# GARDA VETTING

**Vetting has been a requirement in the Church of Ireland since 1 September 2006 but we still get many questions regarding the process. Here are some of the most common ones!**

## **Who needs to be vetted?**

Everyone who comes to work in the Church of Ireland since 1 September 2006, in either a paid or unpaid capacity, should have been vetted and that includes clergy – even bishops! Also, clergy moving from one jurisdiction to the other will be vetted regardless of how long they have been working with the Church of Ireland.

## **Where do we get the forms?**

Contact either Jennifer Byrne or Vicki Hastie (see contact details overleaf), the Authorised Signatories for the Church of Ireland.

## **Who, at Parish level, handles the forms?**

Only the Incumbent or a designated panel member should handle vetting forms as the information is confidential.

## **How long is a vetting application valid for?**

5 years. Issues surrounding re-vetting will be dealt with at the appropriate time.

## **What about workers from other jurisdictions?**

Please see new guidelines overleaf.

## **What should I put down if I've been out of the country for a year working/travelling abroad or if I have multiple college addresses while still using a permanent parents address?**

Where a volunteer has been travelling for a lengthy period of time, for example a gap year, and has no fixed address for that period it is best to be as detailed as possible. If you can include cities that you spent time in but can't remember the exact address it is helpful to note this. Make sure dates are continuous and if there is an overlap, for example where a parents address is your 'permanent address' and you have given a travelling address please make note of this so that confusion doesn't arise. The same applies for college addresses - be as specific as you can but don't worry if you can't remember the exact details. Always keep in mind that you must have a list of consecutive dates and addresses or the Garda will return the form as incomplete.

## **Do people have to be vetted more than once if they are working with children within other organisations?**

Individuals do not have to be vetted for every role within the Church of Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, one vet is good for five years regardless of any role you undertake as long as it is with the Church of Ireland. You can move from parish to parish, or you can take up a role in both the parish and the school and be covered by the one vet. The applicant must simply request, in writing, the AS to send a copy of the vetting form to the other 'employer', e.g. another parish/school. One would have to be vetted through the Church of Ireland, even if you had just been vetted where say the HSE was your employer, or where a sporting organisation had vetted you for coaching with children.

## **Is vetting unique to the Church of Ireland?**

It is not just the Church of Ireland but all organisations providing services to children and young people where these procedures are the norm. The Girls' Brigade makes a virtue of the fact that all leaders are Garda vetted and completely trained in Child Protection.

## **How long will it take?**

The procedure will take around six to eight weeks from receipt of forms. Delays are only as a result of forms not

being completed fully, correctly or legibly.

## **So once the vetting process is complete, the worker is ready to supervise children?**

Not necessarily! Vetting is just one part of what must be a robust appointment procedure which would include the taking up of references and training.

## **It's all a bit of a hassle, isn't it?**

Not really. The vetting form in the Republic of Ireland is currently only a couple of pages long (the AccessNI form is eight pages!).

It is reassuring to note there have been few problematic disclosures and the appointment process is resulting in the very best of volunteers and paid workers supporting the Church's ministry with children in all its varied forms.

*"the appointment process is resulting in the very best of volunteers and paid workers supporting the Church's ministry with children in all its varied forms."*



# NEW GUIDELINES

## Vetting for workers from other jurisdictions

Anyone coming from another jurisdiction can be vetted provided they have an address either side of the border although the check is currently limited. It is envisaged that links will be made with other countries in the future in order to widen the check. There is a declaration form available in Safeguarding Trust to use in circumstances where an individual has been living abroad. In some cases workers/volunteers from abroad, having no address in this jurisdiction, only complete the Declaration Form which requests the

person to confirm that they have no convictions in other jurisdictions and that there is nothing in their background that precludes them from working with children. Such workers/volunteers should be asked to agree to a Garda Vet after a period of six months. This ensures that such persons enter our system and they would then be re-vetted after five years. Persons having an address in this jurisdiction for a period of less than two years, should be asked to sign the Declaration Form in addition to the Vetting form.

## SUGGESTIONS....

### Safeguarding Trust

#### Newsletter distribution

The Safeguarding Trust newsletter is currently posted to incumbents with copies for panel members. It may be difficult for panel members to obtain their copy.

The newsletter has been available to view at [www.anglican.org](http://www.anglican.org) since last year, when the Safeguarding Trust document was also made available to download.

However, as the newsletter is not published on set dates, panel members do not know when to check for it. A suggestion from one diocese has been that a copy could be emailed to the Diocesan Secretary who could forward to the panel members (with internet connection) as it was published.

Further ideas for distribution welcome!

### Safeguarding Trust

#### For youth workers

The fourth edition is published in a new format of parts and sections which makes the Code more accessible. The ring binder format also facilitates future revisions and the incorporation of additional material. There is no separate handbook for workers but sections may be downloaded or photocopied and given to workers at induction.

Olive Good who provides SGT training for the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough has suggested that this material could be saved on disc for the same purpose. This is an attractive and inexpensive option.

### Safeguarding Trust Leaders Card PLEASE NOTE

It has come to our attention that there was an error on the initial print-run of the leaders card. Please refer to the contact numbers listed below as Renée's telephone number is incorrect on some of the cards.

If you would like summary cards for distribution to your youth leaders please contact this office.

## CONTACT US

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