

Newsletter

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Staff Changes

The staff of Church of Ireland House and the Board of Education team in particular, will be very sorry to say goodbye to Jennifer Byrne. Jennifer will be leaving at the end of May, after 14 years of employment with the RCB.

Jennifer has had many roles in Education administration, one of which involves *Safeguarding Trust*. She has an in depth knowledge of *Safeguarding Trust* as it has developed over several editions and has provided wise counsel to parishes by phone and in person over the years.

Jennifer was the first authorised signatory for the Church of Ireland and set up the vetting procedures used by the Church when Garda vetting of persons working with children came on stream in September 2006. She and Canon John McCullagh went 'on tour' with a Garda vetting road show, explaining the requirements for all involved in youth work.

A portion of Jennifer's duties with the Board of Education will be undertaken by Eimear Ryan acting in her new role as Education Advisor, reporting to Dr Ken Fennelly Education Officer/Secretary to the Board of Education. You may already know Eimear in relation to her existing responsibilities as a solicitor with the Legal Department.

Good practice tip

Safeguarding Trust Parish Evaluation 9.1.6 A 2. asks 'How is the parish being informed about the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*?' 

Why not think of including a piece in your parish sheet, diocesan magazine or on your website letting people know what a parish evaluation is and when your parish had one? Areas that scored well and steps taken to improve practice if necessary could be highlighted. 

This is another way of keeping *Safeguarding Trust* in the consciousness of parishioners. 

Volunteer Recruitment

Some parishes have experienced difficulties in recruiting people to work with children and young people. Perhaps the recession could offer a silver lining in this, the European Year of the Volunteer?

New figures released by Volunteer Centres Ireland (VCI) show that the recession has continued to have a huge impact on the numbers of people registering to volunteer. 'Recently made redundant' is now one of the top ten reasons people are volunteering, while 'free time' and 'to gain work experience' are the second and third most popular reasons to volunteer respectively.

The article overleaf will hopefully inspire you!

OUR POLICY

"It is the policy of the Church of Ireland to set standards for the welfare of all children sharing in its ministry with a view to protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm."

Extract from an article on recruiting and keeping volunteers

by Ian MacDonald, Youth Adviser, Oxford Diocese

1. ASK!

Vague desperate pleas read out by the rector DO NOT WORK. "We need someone, anybody PLEASE?" is not a great pitch and beside which it gives a potential volunteer the idea that they are just being thrown at a problem rather than recruited to a ministry! Pray, think, reflect and ask specific people.

2. PRESENT VISION!

People don't respond to vague need, they respond to Vision. They also respond even more to thought-out Vision that has some practical framework, e.g "We have built relationships with a great bunch of 11-14's and now have an opportunity to run an Youth Emmaus course with the older ones and believe you could be a real blessing to that group and help to develop this ministry!"

3. GIVE DETAILS

Remember the church has a really really bad history with volunteers for youth work i.e if you got suckered into being a leader of a group there was NO escape unless you a) died or b) moved away! So if you do ask someone, let them know the expectations and timescale!

4. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Think wider than just trendy young 20's and the newly wed couple, there are great youthwork volunteers of all ages.

5. BUILD TEAMS

No one wants to be passed a crisis, however people do enjoy joining functional envisioned teams THAT enjoy what they do. In a good team people grow and develop in their faith, that's attractive. Teams allow you to recruit a more diverse mix of people too, so greater pool to draw from.

6. OVERCOME FEAR

Remember that congregations are heavily influenced by media opinions of young people, they are often scared of them and at the very least think "I could never talk to one of those TEENAGERS!" *quake*. So ask one or two people to help with a one-off specific event where they encounter the young people and may be surprised to find themselves in conversation with young people. Get the young people involved in running an event for the congregation that will break down some barriers.

7. OUR SIDE OF THE DEAL

What support, resourcing, training, budget can the volunteer expect? Is there demonstrated commitment from those doing the recruiting or is the volunteer just going to be left to it with no budget or framework!

There's also a foundational stage. Have you created a place where volunteers are supported, valued and encouraged? Do the existing volunteers work with vision and creativity? If your support of existing volunteers is rubbish and no-one is allowed to EVER retire from a job ... then you've created a climate in which no-one would want to volunteer.

Recently published in Church News Ireland.



Garda Vetting

Renée English has been the second authorised signatory for Garda vetting since October 2010. Her part of the process is to check the forms as they come in, enter the record on the database, copy and send in batches of approximately 20 to the Garda Central Vetting Unit. Responsibility for the return of completed copy forms to parishes has been undertaken by Jennifer Byrne. Jennifer was also responsible for the follow up where the origin was unclear and advising parishes where a disclosure had been made. Jennifer's role will shortly be taken over by Eimear Ryan, as soon as Eimear's training is complete. Either authorised signatory is happy to respond to queries and to send out forms on request.



Returns

Currently 20-25% of application forms have to be returned to the 'originator' before processing, sometimes more than once, creating additional delay at both ends of the process.

The variety of errors in form completion is amazing. Recent examples include a form completed in pencil and one signed by a person other than the applicant!

A common mistake is to omit the current address date. 'Present' or 'to date' must be included.

If you are an incumbent or a *Safeguarding Trust* panel member designated as the person to handle vetting, please check that forms have been correctly completed before submission. If you have any doubts, please contact Church of Ireland House first. Please also note that panel members designated to handle vetting, other than the Incumbent, must be vetted themselves before they can undertake the task.

A policy on the retrospective vetting of clergy is currently being drawn up.

PPS Number

Earlier Garda vetting forms included a field for the PPS number, which has since been omitted for legal reasons. If you are photocopying Garda application forms, please delete this heading, or preferably, use the current form. It will save applicants from having to find their number and save time for the authorised signatory in deleting it before it goes to the Gvu.

Current return time from the Garda Vetting unit is running at about 12 weeks.

Please submit Garda Vetting forms outside the peak season of September to December if at all possible.

Safeguarding Trust Training for Select Vestries

Select Vestries have a vital role to play in the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*.

The parish panel is a sub committee entrusted to carry out some of their responsibilities.

The Incumbent is the person with a dual role, as chairperson of the Select Vestry and parish panel member. 2.4 of *Safeguarding Trust* outlines the duties of incumbents and select vestries. 9.1.1 is a checklist for select vestries to help them ensure the safety of children and young people. It is very beneficial if vestry members can attend *Safeguarding Trust* panel training.

As another option, Mike Edwards, Diocesan Youth Officer for Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, has developed a powerpoint presentation which can be used by diocesan support team members or panel members for select vestry training. It can be used as a 'stand alone' session or could be incorporated into an extended select vestry meeting.

Please make contact with this office if you would like to avail of this resource.

Diocesan Support Team Meeting

The annual meeting was held at Church of Ireland House on 27 October 2010.

An interesting presentation was made by the Rev Pearl Luxon who was, until recently, Safeguarding Adviser to the Church of England and Methodist Church. The current post holder is Elizabeth Hall.

Pearl gave a presentation entitled 'Safeguarding and Child Protection: Past, Present and Future'.

She described her role as *'developing policy, good practice, 'trouble shooting', giving advice, developing training and supporting the networks of advisers and reps in 33 Districts (Methodist) and 43 Dioceses (Church of England).'*

One of the protocols which she was involved in developing in recent times was the Church of England's Past Child Protection Cases Review, in which all the dioceses re-examined old cases to ensure that any outstanding issues were addressed by current best practice standards.

Pearl is now working freelance as a consultant and trainer in safeguarding, professional supervisor, spiritual director, writer and Methodist minister. She is open to work in Ireland. You can visit her website at www.pearlluxon.org.uk.



Information Leaflet for Parents and Guardians

This free leaflet was published in September 2010. It is designed to be given to parents and guardians when a child or young person is enrolled in a parish activity.

Copies may also be made available on parish



premises to inform parishioners about our child protection policy.

The leaflets have been widely distributed to

date. Do you need some or more for your parish? Contact us and we will send them out or you can collect them if you plan to visit Church of Ireland House.

The Safeguarding Trust policy can be accessed via
www.ireland.anglican.org/policy



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