

Newsletter

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Safeguarding Trust – A Guide for Select Vestry Members

This new guide is an addition to the Safeguarding Trust suite of resources.

The role of select vestries with regard to Safeguarding Trust (The Code) is outlined in Part 2 of the nine part policy document. A useful checklist for select vestries is provided in Part 9.1.1.

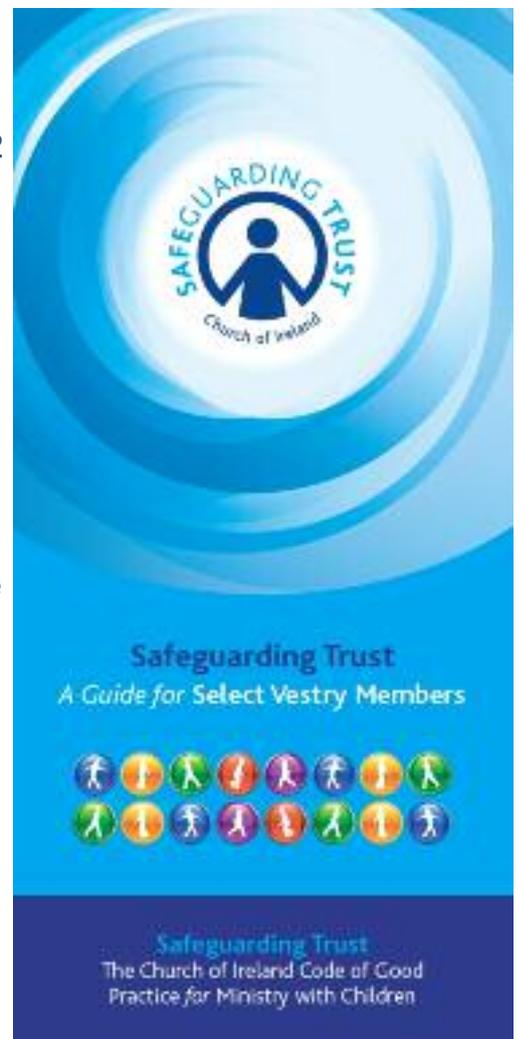
Currently rectors inform select vestries about their responsibilities but no specific resource was previously available.

The guide may be provided to members of select vestries, especially those newly elected.

It may also be useful at select vestry meetings to refresh members about their responsibilities. Safeguarding Trust should be a regular item on the select vestry agenda.

It is recommended that at least some members of select vestries attend panel training.

The leaflet has not been published in hard copy but is available to download free from the Safeguarding Trust website www.sgt.ireland.anglican.org. Downloading instructions are provided. If hard copies are preferred please contact the CPO who can forward copies on request.



Diocesan Support Teams' Meeting

A meeting for diocesan support team members was held at Church House on 13th November 2014. The meeting provided a good opportunity for colleagues across the dioceses to meet, share experiences, make suggestions and update on child protection developments.

Teresa Devlin, CEO of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church was the invited speaker. Teresa took up her post in early 2014, when the former CEO Ian Elliott retired. She was previously deputy CEO.

Teresa spoke about the shameful history of child abuse in the Catholic Church and said that they were not in a position to tell other organisations how to do child protection. Practice had greatly improved since 2009. All 26 dioceses have now had a safeguarding audit and audits are in progress in religious congregations. Bishops are data controllers for purposes of data protection. Disciplinary processes against clergy are under the authority of Rome.

Teresa is keen to give children an empowered voice and said that a recent abuse case came to light as a result of a child's disclosure. Workers now talk to children about keeping safe. There have been changes in practice, for example altar servers are never alone with a priest. Priests travelling to other jurisdictions must carry a card which states that they are 'in good standing'.



Teresa Devlin

Teresa also raised the need for a vulnerable adult policy. The Catholic Church currently has draft guidelines.

The Catholic Church is in the process of reviewing its child protection policy, which consists of seven standards for child safeguarding with criteria for demonstrating that each one is in place

A project has been established with working groups preparing draft material for each standard. There will be consultation with statutory bodies, parents and survivors of abuse. It is expected that the revised standards will be published later in 2015.

The Catholic Church held its first national safeguarding conference in Athlone in February 2015.

9.1.6 Safeguarding Trust Evaluation Form Update

As part of the implementation of Safeguarding Trust, parishes undergo a triennial parish evaluation. The evaluation takes place during a meeting between the parish panel and one or more members of the local diocesan support team. The purpose of the evaluation is to confirm good practice and to set out an action plan for improvement, if and when required.

An updated template has been developed using feedback from diocesan support team members and will be used at future evaluations.

Copies of the updated form are downloadable from the Safeguarding Trust website or may be forwarded on request.

Among the changes is the inclusion of the question 'How often do the panel meet?'

There is no 'right' answer to this question but it makes the presumption that the panel will meet at intervals to review practice and plan the safeguarding of children. The panel will also meet in order to prepare for the parish evaluation.

Parishes with a high level of children's activities will need to meet more frequently but no parish can be exempt from this responsibility.

Appendix A provides a new profile of organisation for children and vulnerable adults in the parish, to include the workers and members.

Another change is that copies of the completed forms will be forwarded to the CPO, in addition to those retained as part of parish and diocesan records. This has already been happening in a number of dioceses.



Garda Vetting Updates



Revised Garda Vetting Application Form

Reminder for rectors

The revised Garda vetting application form was introduced in June 2014. Copies of the form were sent to all rectors accompanied by an explanatory letter.

The revised form may be printed double sided and copied as required. Hard copy may be forwarded on request. Please destroy/recycle any 'old format' blank forms in your possession.

If the management of Garda vetting forms has been delegated to a parish panel member, please ensure that he/she is aware of the requirements.

The parish contact person should ensure that forms submitted have been correctly completed before submission to Church House, in order to facilitate speedy processing.

Changes in practice

All applications received at the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) from 31st March 2014 onwards have been subject to an administrative filter.

The filter will remain in operation on an interim basis pending the commencement of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

The purpose of the administrative filter is to allow a more balanced, relevant and proportionate approach to Garda vetting. For example, some motoring and minor public order offences will not be disclosed after 7 years, even where more recent offences have been committed.

Please note that it is essential the vetting applicant states the position being applied for as set out in the mandatory field under the 'Declaration of Applicant' in the vetting application form.

Please note also that the contact person must sign the form and state the name of the parish.

Vetting of 16 and 17 year old junior leaders

Vetting for this age group is not currently a requirement of Safeguarding Trust policy but will be required when the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 is commenced. Some parishes have decided to undertake vetting in anticipation of a legal requirement to do so.

The forms must be accompanied by a signed parent/guardian consent form. An updated version of this form was introduced in June 2014 and is available in hard copy or may be forwarded by email.

Please note that as junior leaders are under 18 years of age they must be counted as children in leader child ratios.

A training presentation is available for use with the 14-17 year old age group.

When is the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to be commenced?

It is expected that the legislation will be commenced later this year pending further amendment. The delay has also impacted commencement of the pilot online vetting processing system. Some months ago Ruth and Renée attended training for authorized signatories at the Garda Training College in Templemore.

Processing of Garda Vetting application forms

It is currently taking approximately four weeks for processed forms to be returned to Church House from the GCVU. It is helpful for parish organisations to plan for next September by completing the recruitment process before the summer holiday period.

If vetting returns are urgently required, please contact Ruth. She may be able to prioritise your application.



Departure of Rev'd Dr Ian Ellis

The Boards of Education were very sorry to mark the departure in February of Rev'd Dr Ian Ellis, Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education NI. He had served in this post since 2002.

Dr Ellis has returned to pastoral ministry and was instituted as rector of Rossorry parish Enniskillen, the second largest parish in Clogher Diocese on 20th March 2015.

He graduated from Queen's University Belfast in 1979 with a BSC in Physics, completed a PGCE and taught in Antrim Grammar School until 1986 when he began training for the ordained ministry in the Church of Ireland. He graduated from Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland Theological College in 1989 with a BTh and was ordained to serve as curate assistant in St Mark's Armagh from 1989-1991. He was then appointed rector of the grouped parishes of Loughgall and Grange, also in Armagh diocese, where he remained until taking up the role of Secretary to the Board of Education NI in 2002.

In this role he advised the Board of developments in education in Northern Ireland and represented it at all levels of education in Northern Ireland. He worked closely with the education secretaries of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches through the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) of which he was secretary. He was also a member of the organising group for the Building Blocks Children's ministry conferences.

In 2013 he completed a Doctorate in Education at the School of Education at Queen's University Belfast. His dissertation was a study of the relationship between pupils' spiritual development and school ethos.

Along with Rev'd Canon John Mc Cullagh, Dr Ellis was responsible for leading the development and implementation of Safeguarding Trust -the Church's child protection code and the publication of the current edition in 2008. His support and advice to parishes and dioceses on safeguarding issues was highly valued.

He worked closely with Margaret Yarr, Child Protection Officer NI and Claire Geoghegan, Access NI administrator, Dr Ken Fennelly and Renée English and will be greatly missed by them and by Church House colleagues in both jurisdictions.

It is hoped that this key post will be filled before too long.



The *Safeguarding Trust* policy can be accessed via
www.sgt.ireland.anglican.org
 or
www.ireland.anglican.org/SGT_RI

CONTACT US

Renée English - Child Protection Officer
 Direct dial 01 4125662
 Email renee.english@rcbdub.org

Dr Ken Fennelly
 Direct dial 01 4125609
 Email ken.fennelly@rcbdub.org

Ruth Burleigh
 Direct dial 01 4125624
 Email ruth.burleigh@rcbdub.org

General Synod Board of Education (RI)
 Church of Ireland House
 Church Avenue
 Rathmines
 Dublin 6
 Main telephone: 01 4978422
 Fax: 01 4978821