

Newsletter

April 2012



REPORTING PROTOCOLS BETWEEN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA & RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS WITH REGARD TO CURRENT AND HISTORICAL INCIDENTS OF CLERICAL CHILD ABUSE AND RELATED MATTERS.



In 2011 Dr Ken Fennelly and Renée English met with Garda Detective Superintendent John Mc Cann, head of the Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Investigation Unit, at the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Harcourt Square, Harcourt Street, Dublin 2. The purpose of the meeting was to promote good working practice between An Garda Síochána and the Church of Ireland in relation to the management of child protection cases.

In January 2012 An Garda Síochána issued reporting protocols for religious organisations with regard to the reporting of abuse. Below is an extract from a communication from Garda Detective Superintendent John Mc Cann.

"In April 2010, An Garda Síochána's Policy on the *Investigation of Sexual Crime, Crimes against Children and Child Welfare* was implemented by the Garda Commissioner. The principal purpose of this Policy is to ensure an accountable and professional approach to the investigation of sexual crimes by An Garda Síochána. In conjunction with this Policy the Commissioner, established the Sexual Crime Management Unit at the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Harcourt Square.

"In the context of allegations of clerical child abuse this newly established National Unit has responsibility for the receipt and recording of all such crimes, current and historical. The Sexual Crime Management Unit is the central point of contact for all Religious Orders in relation to disclosures/reports of such crimes/allegations and related matters. The Sexual Crime Management Unit will interact as appropriate with suitably appointed contact persons in these Orders who are in a position and have responsibility to report such matters to An Garda Síochána.

"I would therefore request that you note for future reference that the Sexual Crime Management Unit is the central point of contact within An Garda Síochána for the initial reporting of all incidents of clerical child abuse and all notifications, including those made against deceased Clerics, should be reported in writing/email to that office."

The Child Protection Officer is the contact person for purposes of the protocol.

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Current practice is that all child protection concerns (not just of sexual abuse) involving alleged perpetrators associated with the Church of Ireland are reported centrally to the NCBI by the CPO.

In some cases the alleged perpetrator may be deceased but in others there may be a current risk to children. In such cases the CPO reports to the appropriate HSE Child Care Manager in addition to the NCBI.

It is most important that all such cases are reported to the statutory authorities.

Abuse may have a negative lifetime impact. This highlights the need for good child protection practice in ministry with children in order to minimise risk.

HSE National Counselling Service

A professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service is available free of charge for adults who experienced abuse as children. For more information or to make an appointment contact:

Tel: 1800 235 234

www.hse-ncs.ie

One in Four

A charity set up in 2002 to provide support and resources to men and women who have suffered sexual abuse and violence.

It may be contacted at

Tel. 01 6624070

Email. info@oneinfour.org

www.oneinfour.ie



Diocesan Support Team Members Update

At the end of August 2011 Mike Edwards retired as Diocesan Youth Officer. Mike and his wife Liz have recently moved to England.

Rev Vicki Lynch will be leaving her post as Youth Ministry and Diocesan Resources Development Officer in the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe in July. She will take up duty as minister of Christ Church, a joint Methodist/ Presbyterian parish in Limerick City.

Very Rev Robert Jones and Alison Jones will be leaving Trim in May. Robert will take up an incumbency in Belfast.

Additional parish evaluators joined the team in Limerick and Killaloe Diocese in 2010. They are: Lorna Gleasure, Margaret Schutz, Rev Ruth Gill and Co-Ordinator Niall West.

In 2011 a parish evaluation team was set up in the Diocese of Meath and Kildare, co-ordinated by Very Rev Robert Jones. The team members are: Florence Higgins, David Seaman, Grace Lynam, Rhonda Willoughby, Mark Johnston and Alison Jones.

The Board of Education is very grateful to all former and present members of the diocesan support teams for their work in supporting the implementation of Safeguarding Trust.

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."

Diocesan Support Teams' Meeting

The annual meeting was held at Church of Ireland House on 24th November 2012. 15 team members attended with very good representation from the dioceses. Margaret Yarr, CPO NI, also attended.

There was an opportunity for team members to raise issues from their diocese, some of which arose in the context of parish evaluations.

A presentation was made by Jan Perrin, HSE Information and Advice Person. She gave an overview of Children First Guidance 2011 and outlined the differences between Children First 1999 and Children First Guidance 2011. This was a lively, interactive session.



Key Principles of Best Practice in Child Protection and Welfare



- The Welfare of children is of paramount importance. Family support should form the basis of early intervention.
- Children have right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and to be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
- Balance between protecting children and respecting parents
- Separating children from parents a last resort
- When working with adults, consider impact of adult's behaviour on child and act in the child's best interest



The last point below was emphasised in the presentation as it was not included in Children First 1999.





Link to Safeguarding Trust Newsletters Online!

A direct link has been set up to the Safeguarding Trust newsletters.

Click on www.ireland.anglican.org/sgt_ri

The Safeguarding Trust policy page will open. An archive of Safeguarding Trust newsletters is available to view. The newsletter may be printed off if a hard copy is preferred.

Stop Press!!

The Church of Ireland Board of Education hopes to pilot an online Garda vetting application scheme in the coming months.

A small number of parishes and schools will be involved initially, with a view to rolling out the new process later in the year.

If the pilot project proves successful, there will be substantial labour saving for everyone involved!

Garda Vetting Update

Currently, processed forms are being returned to the Board of Education from the Garda Central Vetting Unit within a 2 week period.

Database of panel members

As part of ongoing development of Safeguarding Trust, a database of panel members in each diocese is to be compiled. This will facilitate communication with panel members and in particular advise them of the publication of the Safeguarding Trust newsletter approximately twice yearly.

An additional list for each diocese will be set up to include others such as select vestry members and youth workers who would like to be included.

Please contact Renée to ensure that your email address is included.

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

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