

# Newsletter

December 2024



## Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of our new look bi-annual newsletter. We hope to provide a more regular update on the work of the Safeguarding Team and developments within safeguarding in the Church of Ireland.

As this is a first edition, we would love to hear from you with your feedback on any areas you would like to be included in future editions. You can do this by emailing [christine.cody@rcbcoi.org](mailto:christine.cody@rcbcoi.org).

This newsletter will provide an update on the following:

- Safeguarding Trust Child Safeguarding Policy
- New centralised database
- Vetting in ROI
- AccessNI in Northern Ireland
- Health and Safety Information
- Governance Review
- Training

## Key Contacts

Listed below are some key contacts for the staff working in the Safeguarding Team. Click on the email links below to send an email directly from this newsletter.

Gillian Taylor- Safeguarding Officer NI  
[sgoni@rcbcoi.org](mailto:sgoni@rcbcoi.org)

Niall Moore- Safeguarding Officer ROI  
[niall.moore@rcbcoi.org](mailto:niall.moore@rcbcoi.org)

Christine Cody- Safeguarding Administrator  
and Garda Vetting Liaison Person  
[christine.cody@rcbcoi.org](mailto:christine.cody@rcbcoi.org)

Alex Kinch- Garda Vetting Liaison Person  
[vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org](mailto:vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org)

Claire Geoghegan-AccessNI Administrator  
[claire.geoghegan@rcbcoi.org](mailto:claire.geoghegan@rcbcoi.org)

## Subscribe

If you know of someone who wishes to subscribe to this newsletter or if you wish to unsubscribe, please email [christine.cody@rcbcoi.org](mailto:christine.cody@rcbcoi.org).

# Safeguarding Trust Child Safeguarding Policy

As many of you will be aware, the latest draft of the revised Safeguarding Trust policy is currently with Tusla for their comments. Once these comments are received, they will be incorporated into a new draft for consideration by the Safeguarding Board. Many thanks to those who have contributed to the work in drafting this important document.

Until a new draft is approved, we continue to work with our existing policies which are available to view here:

- ROI- [https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SGT\\_ROI.pdf](https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SGT_ROI.pdf)
- NI- <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SGT-NI.pdf>

Once a new policy is approved, it is our intention to begin a process of induction for all involved in child safeguarding across the Church, to allow sufficient time for dioceses and parishes to begin to implement the necessary changes before the policy becomes operational.

## New Centralised Database

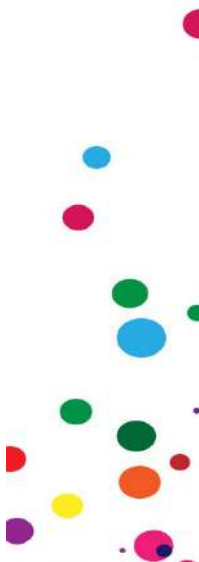
In April, we began a project to develop a centralised secure database which is hosted in the Cloud. The purpose of this new database is to provide a centralised system for storing safeguarding information relating to contacts, roles, training records, vetting contact information and advice offered. The system is now fully developed and operational, and a huge amount of work has gone into amalgamating our existing systems into one central point, involving contacting people to gain consent, data transfer and software development.

The data migration process will continue into next year, and we hope that the new system allows for more efficient and effective communication, alongside powerful reporting tools, to gain insights into areas of safeguarding that require development.

To enable the database to be effective, it requires accurate information. Please inform the Safeguarding Office of any changes to the safeguarding roles in your diocese or parish, we will then contact them directly to gain consent to be added to the database.

## Historical Clerical Child Abuse Research (Northern Ireland Parishes Only)

Many thanks to those who contributed to the first phase of this project. The next strand of the work is about to begin, which focuses on the development of policy and procedures for safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Officer ROI and the Chief Officer met with representatives from Trilateral Research who have been commissioned by the Executive Office to carry out the next phase of this work. It is anticipated that a short 20 minute survey will be sent to parishes in Northern Ireland on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January- with a two week window to complete the return. Please contact your diocesan compliance officer for more information.



# AccessNI Checks Important Update

Those taking part in regulated activity (as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order 2007) must have an enhanced Access NI check. More specific guidance on regulated activity is available here: <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wpcontent/uploads/2024/04/REGULATE-D-ACTIVITY-GUIDANCE-COI-FOR-WEBSITE.pdf>.

Following a recent meeting with AccessNI, we have begun a process to develop a clear table outlining the roles that can and cannot receive an enhanced check.

People in roles which are not considered to be regulated activity can apply to have a basic check completed, and it is even more important that consideration is given to good recruitment practice in relation to this. If you need further clarity on this please contact [claire.geoghegan@rcbcoi.org](mailto:claire.geoghegan@rcbcoi.org).

We have scheduled to meet with AccessNI in the new year to seek further clarity and once the new AccessNI table is completed and agreed it will be shared with those who apply for checks through the NI Board of Education.

# Garda Vetting Update

Since the Spring, staff in the Vetting Team in ROI have been engaging with the Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) to develop a matrix to outline roles that require vetting and those that do not. This table is now in its third draft and is with the GNVB for consideration. When it is agreed, it will be shared with all those with whom the office holds a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for vetting purposes.

Updated guidance and a new SLA have also been completed and was circulated to all SLA holders. It is important that completed SLAs are returned to the office as soon as possible, and if there are any changes to authorised signatories that you notify the office as soon as possible.

You can contact Christine and Alex at this email in relation to any vetting or SLA queries [vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org](mailto:vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org).



# Governance Review of Safeguarding

At the December meeting the Safeguarding Board, a paper proposing a new governance structure for the service was considered. The paper included several recommendations, including:

- A move towards staff specialisms within the RCB safeguarding office
- Implementing a triage function in the RCB to better direct requests for advice outside of the remit of the safeguarding service
- More support for local training
- Considering approaches to how the RCB safeguarding office works alongside dioceses.

We will provide you with updates once they are agreed.

## Health and Safety Information

The Church of Ireland Health and Safety has been updated. The latest information is now available on the ecclesiastical website at the following links:

NI- <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-health-and-safety/>

ROI- <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/risk-assessment-roi/>

Further information can be found under parish resources on the RCB website at this link: <https://www.churchofireland.org/parish-resources/property-trusts#section-130>.

## Safeguarding Training

As we come to the end of another year, a significant number of training sessions have been delivered to parish panels in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. To assist with forward planning, if you require training for parish panels, or those involved in adult safeguarding, please contact your diocesan safeguarding lead or diocesan secretary, who can liaise with the Safeguarding Officers to organise dates for 2025.

