

Newsletter

July 2025



Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of our bi-annual newsletter. Since our last newsletter there have been several important changes to safeguarding within the Church of Ireland, some of these relate to the internal governance of safeguarding, while others are the result of changes from our colleagues in the statutory services. These changes mean we have had to adapt our practice to accommodate. Many thanks to those involved in safeguarding at parish and diocesan level for your patience and support as we have carried out this work.

This newsletter will provide an update on the following:

- Governance Review and Outcomes
- Parish Returns
- Safeguarding Trust Child Safeguarding Policy
- Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement (ROI only)
- Changes to AccessNI (NI only)
- Summary of the Safeguarding Strategy
- Changes to Vetting (ROI only)

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
gillian.taylor@rcbcoi.org

Niall Moore- Safeguarding Officer ROI
niall.moore@rcbcoi.org

Christine Cody- Safeguarding Training and Vetting Coordinator
christine.cody@rcbcoi.org

Alex Kinch- Vetting and Access NI Administrator
vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org or
AccessNI.admin@rcbcoi.org

Chiara De Raffaele- Vetting and Access NI Administrator
vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org or
AccessNI.admin@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.

Governance Review of Safeguarding

As outlined in our last Newsletter. The Safeguarding Board considered the Governance Review and are beginning to implement a series of recommendations arising from this piece of work. These include:

- Creating specialisms within the Safeguarding Team, with one team focusing on policy, training, AccessNI, Vetting, and non case work advice, and another team focusing on casework.
- Moving the AccessNI function from Belfast to be based in the Dublin office in Church House
- Creating a post with a focus on training coordination.

To facilitate these changes three new posts have been recruited; a Safeguarding Case Officer, an AccessNI and Vetting Administrator and a Safeguarding Training and Vetting Coordinator.

Parish Returns

The link for parish returns will close at the end of July please ensure you submit your return using the links provided here

<https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/compliance/#safeguarding-returns>.

Safeguarding Trust Child Safeguarding Policy

Over the Summer work will continue on the revision of the child safeguarding policy, if you have ideas or views you wish to contribute please email

niall.moore@rcbcoi.org.

Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement (ROI Only)

A part of the Children First Act is a requirement that parishes and dioceses have a child safeguarding statement in place which is deemed compliant by Tusla and reviewed every two years. To assist with this process the Safeguarding Board had agreed a template with Tusla which parishes and dioceses have used to develop their own statement. This template was due to be reviewed and a new version has been agreed with Tusla and is available here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Child-SafeguardingStatement-2025.docx>.

What do Parishes and dioceses need to do?

1. Review the new child safeguarding statement and your current parish or diocesan statement and update with any changes.
2. Ensure that there is a person appointed as a relevant person who is the first point of contact for the Child Safeguarding Statement.
3. Share a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement with all staff/volunteers.
4. Share a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement with a parent/guardian, Tusla, or members of the public if requested.
5. Display the Child Safeguarding Statement in a prominent and public place related to the relevant service and/or the location where the service is provided.
6. Review the Child Safeguarding Statement and associated procedures at least every 24 months or as soon as practicable after there has been a change in the service provided or any matter to which the statement refers.

Parishes and dioceses also require an accompanying Assessment of Harm to be completed alongside the statement. To read more about this and the Child Safeguarding Statement follow this link

<https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding-statements/>.

AccessNI Checks Important Update

Since the last Newsletter there have been significant updates in terms of the process for AccessNI checks. Communication about these changes was shared with relevant bishops and diocesan secretaries earlier this year. A summary of these changes is outlined below:

- AccessNI checks are now being processed through the office in Dublin. The hard copy form can be sent electronically to accessni.admin@rcbcoi.org.
- AccessNI have changed the process of how checks are completed. To read more information on this and how the system now works follow this link <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/access-ni/>
- To process AccessNI applications all parish and dioceses need to have a Service Level Agreement in place with the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board. A copy of the Agreement can be found here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/SLA-Version-3.docx>
- We have completed a project with AccessNI to agree a list of roles that can receive an enhanced check and those that are only eligible for a basic check. The current list is available here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/List-of-Roles-ANI.pdf>. If there is a role that you think meets the requirements for an enhanced AccessNI check but it is not listed, please contact a member of the Vetting Team by emailing accessni.admin@rcbcoi.org or calling 0044 7849 643083.

Safeguarding Strategy

The Safeguarding Strategy 2024-2026 is available to view on the website here: <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Safeguarding-Strategy-2024-2026.pdf>. To assist in the development of good safeguarding practice, the Strategy outlines how the Safeguarding Board:

- Supports individual dioceses and parishes to develop a culture of safeguarding.
- Ensures continuous professional development
- Creates a responsive service.

These aims have been broken into several objectives grouped under the following headings:

- Building Competence and Skills at Local Level.
- Maintaining Access NI and Garda Vetting Function.
- Training and Supporting Trainers.
- Facilitating National Training Events.
- Building a Responsive Service and Enhancing Communication.
- Developing Policy, Guidance and Resources.
- Responding to Emerging Issues to Support Best Practice.
- Offering Good Advice.



Garda Vetting Update

In the middle of last month, the Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) advised us of changes to Garda vetting which would be implemented in the first week of July. In response the Vetting Team sent correspondence to all Bishops and Diocesan Secretaries (with parishes in ROI) outlining these changes. In response we have also revised the Garda Vetting Guidance which is available here:

<https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Vetting-Guidelines-for-Dioceses-and-Parishes.pdf>.

Some of the changes to the process which are important to note are:

- Two additional questions have been introduced at the beginning of the online submission process. The first relates to living outside of Ireland but within the EU/UK and if the applicant ticks yes to this alongside the question which relates to working with children, then this will trigger a European Criminal Record Information System (ECRIS) check. We have been advised by the GNVB that this extra ECRIS check will mean that applicants will have to wait up to an additional 20 days for their vetting check to be processed.
- Updated forms which must be used- these are available here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Vetting-Form-NVB1-New.pdf>. These forms also include a new set of questions which must be completed by those verifying the identity of the applicant and returned to the vetting team with the NVB1 form.
- The process of verifying the identity of the applicant has also changed and the previous 100 point system is no longer valid. Applicants will now have to provide 2 different forms of ID outlined in the table contained in the vetting guidelines.
- As outlined in our last newsletter the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board has worked with the GNVB to create a list of roles that can be vetted, this list has now been agreed. The wording for the role being vetted for must match one on the approved list. The list is now available on the Church of Ireland Safeguarding website here: <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/List-of-Roles-GV-Diocese-Parishes.pdf>.
- All new organisations that register with the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board, and all existing registered affiliates must receive training from the Safeguarding Training and Vetting Coordinator in the new vetting process. This is a requirement of the GNVB. Anyone involved in the processing of Garda vetting checks can attend the online training and the following dates are available to book:
 - Friday, 25 July at 11am
 - Wednesday, 30 July at 11am
 - Friday, 8 August at 11am
 - Wednesday, 20 August at 11am

To book a place, please email your name, your parish or diocese and your role to Chiara De Raffaele at chiara.deraffaele@rcbcoi.org.

