

Newsletter

July 2026



Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of our bi-annual newsletter. Since the last edition of our newsletter there have been several important changes that have taken place within safeguarding.

As reported in the last newsletter, the governance review of safeguarding was completed, and additional staff are now in place. We are currently in a recruitment process for a Training and Vetting Coordinator and a new Vetting and AccessNI Administrator. This second post is to take on the role that is currently held by our colleague Alex, who will be leaving the RCB in August to study for a Masters in Media and International Conflict.

Many of you involved in Vetting and AccessNI will be aware of Alex's immense contribution to safeguarding. We wish him well as he begins his studies.

Another significant change in terms of safeguarding relates to the introduction of the Child Safeguarding Policy which replaces Safeguarding Trust. An update on this and several other important areas are contained in this newsletter.

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.

Niall Moore- Head of Safeguarding-
safeguarding@rcbcoi.org

Gillian Taylor- Safeguarding Manager for Casework- safeguarding@rcbcoi.org

Anthony Russell- Safeguarding Casework Officer- safeguarding@rcbcoi.org

Katie Harrian- Safeguarding Casework Officer- safeguarding@rcbcoi.org

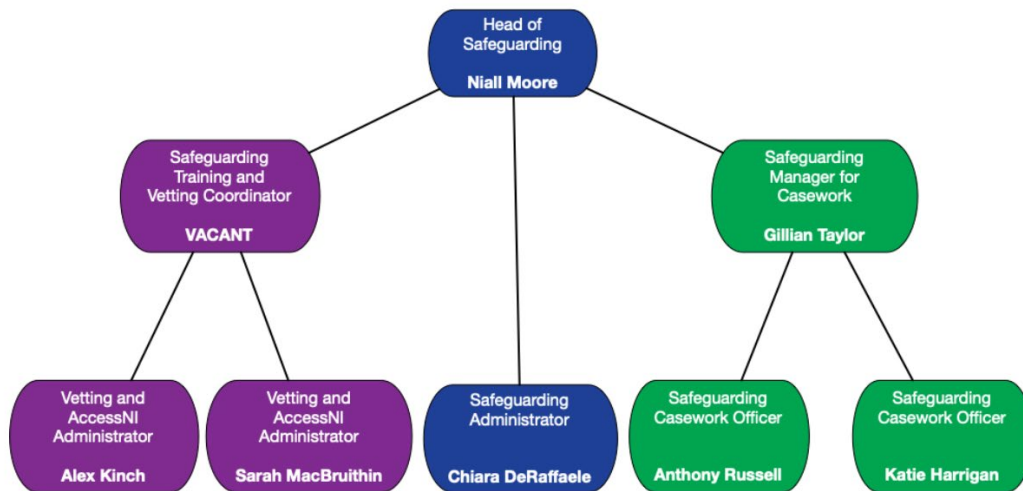
Alex Kinch- Vetting and Access NI Administrator
vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org or
AccessNI.admin@rcbcoi.org

Sarah MacBruithin- Vetting and Access NI Administrator
vetting.admin@rcbcoi.org or
accessni.admin@rcbcoi.org

Chiara DeRaffaele- Safeguarding Administrator-
chiara.deraffaele@rcbcoi.org

New Safeguarding Structure

Following a governance review, the safeguarding team has been restructured to operate across both jurisdictions of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Existing staff now have a focus on specialisms with one team focusing on policy, training, vetting and AccessNI and proactive safeguarding and another team focusing on casework, as outlined in the diagram below.



Further contact details for all staff can be found on the safeguarding website at this link <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/contact/>.

AccessNI Update

Forthcoming amendments to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (SVGO) will remove the supervision exemption from the definition of regulated activity involving children. These will come into effect on **1st September 2026** and apply to England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. **As a result, individuals who frequently undertake roles involving teaching, supervision, instruction or care of children, will be considered to be engaged in regulated activity, irrespective of whether they are supervised. They will therefore be eligible for an enhanced with children's barred list check.**

We have already begun work on reviewing our matrix and guidance in line with these changes and will update our guidance and list of roles on the 1st of September on our website here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/access-ni/>.

Please note that over the last three months there have been a significant increase in the amount of incorrect AccessNI forms being submitted, which can lead to lengthy delays in the process for all involved. Please ensure you follow the guidance and use the latest forms available on our website at the address above.

Garda Vetting Update

Since the last newsletter there have been several important updates provided by the Garda National Vetting Bureau relating to the acceptable list of IDs, appropriate documentation for 16–18-year-olds and practice issues relating to the processing of checks. We have updated our guidance to reflect this, and it is available to view here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Vetting-Guidelines-for-Dioceses-and-Parishes-APR2026.pdf>.

Throughout the year we have been offering regular online vetting training, this is a mandatory requirement for those involved in the processing of vetting checks. **We may no longer be able to process vetting applications unless you have attended training.** Those who have not yet attended training have been contacted directly with upcoming dates. If you haven't attended and have not received an email with dates from us, please contact: Chiara.DeRaffaele@rcbcoi.org.

New Child Safeguarding Policy

The new Child Safeguarding Policy for the Church of Ireland was launched on the 7th of May. **It is important to note that only the Child Safeguarding Policy has changed, the Adult Safeguarding Policies remain the same.** Some of the recent changes between Safeguarding Trust and the Child Safeguarding Policy include:

- The Child Safeguarding Policy is now one document which covers ROI and NI. You can download the policy here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Child-Safeguarding-Policy-Document-2026.pdf>. The policy is structured under three standards with each standard being further subdivided into a number of indicators. These indicators are used to structure the accompanying guidance, which includes all the templates and procedures needed to implement the policy.
- The Guidance is available on the website here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding/>. You can view the Guidance in three ways:

You can view the complete guidance for each standard

- Click on <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding-full-guidance-and-templates>
- Then select the appropriate standard and clicking on 'open the guidance'

To find a word version or pdf of a particular template

- Click on <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding-full-guidance-and-templates>
- Go to the relevant standard contained in one of the three coloured boxes
- Click on the section called 'Templates in Word and PDF'
- Find the relevant template and select either PDF or DOCX

You can view the relevant pieces of guidance which are relevant to specific roles in the safeguarding structure.

- If you click on <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding/>
- Scroll down to 'Guidance for Specific Roles'
- Select the relevant role- this will divide the guidance into sections and only show the relevant guidance for the role you have selected.
- The reporting process has now changed. Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations now go to RCB Casework Team and not the Parish Panel. You can read more about this here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2.1A-GUIDANCE-ON-REPORTING-CHILD-SAFEGUARDING-SUSPICIONS-CONCERNS-KNOWLEDGE-OR-ALLEGATIONS.pdf>
- We have clarified and revised the role of all the different panels and groups that are involved in safeguarding. You can read more about this in Appendix D of the policy here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Child-Safeguarding-Policy-Document-2026.pdf>. Two additional roles have now been included in this policy- Support Person and Advisor. These roles are there to ensure support to the complainant and respondent respectively.

New Child Safeguarding Policy Continued

- Other important changes include:
 - New templates for things like consent forms, anti-bullying, audits etc.
 - New expanded procedures for external groups that use Church property which you can read about here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/1.7A-GUIDANCE-ON-EXTERNAL-GROUPS-WHO-USE-CHURCH-PROPERTY.pdf>
 - New requirements to complete Local Safeguarding Risk Assessments of children's activities which is separate from the Health and Safety Risk Assessment (including periodic inspections) the vestry is responsible for. You can read more on this here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/1.3A-GUIDANCE-ON-CONDUCTING-LOCAL-SAFEGUARDING-RISK-ASSESSMENT-OF-ACTIVITIES.pdf>. It is important to note that while the vestry will ensure that Health and Safety Risk Assessments (including periodic inspections) are completed and the leaders of relevant groups working with children will carry out the Local Safeguarding Risk Assessment mentioned in the guidance above, there is no need to do another health and safety assessment of the activities unless a specific activity requires it. This is clarified in this piece of guidance here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/1.3I-GUIDANCE-ON-GENERAL-SAFETY.pdf>.
 - Additional information relating to management of Persons of Concern- you can read more about here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2.5A-GUIDANCE-ON-PERSONS-OF-CONCERN-WHO-WISH-TO-ATTEND-CHURCH-SERVICES-AND-ACTIVITIES.pdf>.
 - Under Safeguarding Trust certain safeguarding policies were required to be signed off by the Select Vestry on an annual basis, these included an anti-bullying procedure, working in partnership with parents and carers procedure, social media policy etc. This is no longer a requirement; the vestry are required to accept the policy and its accompanying guidance on an annual basis only.

Latest Updates to The Guidance

The Guidance which accompanies the Safeguarding Policy will be regularly updated in line with feedback from church personnel, changing practice, legislative or policy requirements. When a piece of guidance is updated the date will change on the bottom of the relevant page and a note explaining what the change is and the location of the change will be available on the 'Latest Updates to the Guidance' section of the website here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding/>.

Since the new policy and guidance launched on the 7th of May several amendments to the guidance have been made. The majority of these changes are minor corrections and rewording, to provide greater clarity and usefulness of templates. Some of these changes include:

- Removing references to Safeguarding Trust
- Clarifying requirements around policy sign off at vestry level
- Clarifying requirement to re vet every 36 months
- Updating wording in relation to health and safety risk assessments
- Updating audit and checklist questions to reflect new role of the parish panel and health and safety requirements

For a full list of the changes to the guidance please go to <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/child-safeguarding/>.

Child Safeguarding Policy Briefings

As many of you will be aware, since March we have been facilitating a series of online briefings to assist those involved in safeguarding to understand the changes associated with the new Child Safeguarding Policy. To date 16 sessions have been delivered and a further four dates are scheduled for August on the following dates:

- 5th August 6-7
- 12th August 12-1
- 17th August 2-3
- 26th August 6-7

Should you wish to attend please contact Chiara.DeRaffaele@rcbcoi.org.

Revised Training Manual

Over the Summer work has recommenced on a revised Training Manual, for facilitating local safeguarding awareness courses in parishes and dioceses across the Church. It is hoped that this piece of work will be completed by early October and we will update all existing trainers with the contents of the new manual, alongside facilitating a Train the Trainers course to accredit new trainers.

Please note that local training delivered by Church of Ireland trainers is valid for three years there is no requirement to repeat training until this period has expired.

Parish Returns

Please remember to complete your parish returns before the end of August. These can be done online by following this link <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/compliance/#safeguarding-returns>.

Safeguarding Strategy 2027-2029

The current three-year Safeguarding Strategy will finish at the end of 2026, and work has begun on drafting the next Strategy for approval by the Safeguarding Board. If you have any ideas or areas that you would wish the Safeguarding Team to consider as part of our work, please contact niall.moore@rcbcoi.org.

You can read the current Safeguarding Strategy here <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Safeguarding-Strategy-2024-2026.pdf>.

Historical Cleric Child Abuse - publication of research reports Northern Ireland

Following pieces of research last year which many of you assisted with, we received communication from the Director of Victims and Survivors in The Executive Office (TEO) to set out the timetable for publication.

The reports were published on the 22nd of July and are available at this link <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/historical-clerical-child-abuse-research-reports>.

The contents of the reports will be discussed at the next meeting of the Safeguarding Board.