



Newsbrief...

SUMMER 2011

News, updates and resources in Education, Safeguarding Trust and Children's Ministry

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults New Guidance Launched...

The Child Protection Officer was part of the working group which produced 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults - A Shared Responsibility' which was launched by the Department of Health and Social Services in October 2010.

This guidance outlines standards for good practice in the running of services to vulnerable adults. It is specifically aimed to help those who work in the voluntary and community sectors - including churches. Each parish in Northern Ireland should have received a copy. If your parish has not yet got a copy please contact the Board of Education office.

This guidance may be helpful if a parish offers any of the following types of activity to vulnerable adults:

- Pastoral visiting teams for the elderly
- Luncheon club for the elderly
- Counselling service for those suffering mental illness
- Support group for those suffering addictions
- Activities for adults with learning difficulties

The guidance outlines standards and good practice in the running of any services to vulnerable adults and has been commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.



Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey with a copy of the new guidelines, with from left, Meriel Grant - University of the Third Age, Rosemary Magill - Women's Aid, Wendy Osborne - Volunteer Now, Janet Montgomery - Independent Health Care Providers and Margaret Yarr CPO.



Please note that this is not official Church of Ireland Safeguarding Trust policy and procedures - these will have to be drawn up and presented for approval to Standing Committee of the General Synod. In the interim, parishes undertaking work with vulnerable adults should find these generic guidelines very useful.



Safeguarding Trust information leaflet for parents and guardians

A leaflet for parents and guardians has recently been developed and produced. There is a version for each jurisdiction.

Information for carers is an important aspect of a child protection policy. Parents and guardians have a right to expect high standards of care when they entrust a child or young person to the care of the Church.

This leaflet is a valuable addition to the suite of Safeguarding Trust resources and may be given to parents or guardians when a child is registered for a parish activity or for a diocesan youth event.

Copies can be made available on church premises. The leaflet could also be distributed at a Sunday service when the code is being highlighted by the rector, panel members or organisation leaders.



The leaflet is set out in an accessible question and answer format and addresses issues such as:

- Why a code of good practice is needed?
- Who has responsibility for Safeguarding Trust in the parish?
- How are workers recruited?
- Information required from parents
- Confidentiality

- What happens if there is a concern of a child protection nature?

Leaflets are available to all parishes **free of charge** and many have already been distributed in each diocese.

Please contact the Child Protection Officer if you would like more information or to receive additional leaflets.

We are grateful to Ecclesiastical Insurance for supporting the publication of the leaflet.

Building Blocks Children's Ministry Conferences 2011 dates announced

Belfast:

Saturday 12th November
Orangefield Presbyterian Church

Dublin:

Saturday 19th November
All Hallows College, Drumcondra

Keynote speaker: **Nick Harding**
Full details will follow later in the summer.



Revd Ian Ellis and Mrs Claire Geoghegan - members of the organising group for the Building Blocks pictured at the Belfast conference in 2010.



Q&A...



The following is a useful Q&A section which could be included in a parish newsletter:

What is Safeguarding Trust?

Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children is the Church of Ireland's child protection policy.

The code complies with regional child protection guidelines 'Our Duty to Care' (2008).

Why is a code of good practice needed?

The aim of the policy is to create a safe environment for children and young people and to protect them from all forms of abuse. It also safeguards those who work with children from the consequences of unfounded allegations.

Parents have the right to expect high standards when they entrust their children to the church.

What is included in the code?

The code includes guidance on:

- Areas of responsibility
- Recruitment, selection and management of parish workers
- Child protection reporting procedures
- Codes of conduct for workers* and children and young people
- Sharing information
- General safety and management

**Worker means all who, at times share in the church's ministry with children.*

Who has responsibility for Safeguarding Trust in the parish?

The parish panel has responsibility for overseeing the implementation and use of **Safeguarding Trust**. The panel is a sub-committee of the Select Vestry. It is made up, normally, of the rector and two or more lay people, men and women who are not directly involved with youth ministry at parish level.

An MS Word format of this article is available from the CPO.

AccessNI Forms...

Some of the old nine page application forms are still being received for processing. The new form consists of only five pages and can be downloaded either from the **AccessNI** website: www.accessni.gov.uk or the Church of Ireland website: www.ireland.anglican.org/policy. **AccessNI** will no longer accept the old form. The form may also be completed online, printed off, signed by the applicant and then posted to this office for processing.

When completing a form for a paid post within your Church please do not send a cheque with the application. **AccessNI** now invoice the Board of Education who in turn invoice the parish.

Incorrectly completed forms are still being received. Listed below are some of the most common mistakes on the forms:

- Many application forms are still completed in blue ink - forms must be completed in black ink.
- Incomplete address history on Page 4 - all dates must be FULLY completed over a five year period.
- Position applied for on Page 7 - the position should be completed and must include a clear reference to working with children or vulnerable adults. The name of the parish and diocese should also be completed.
- Signature of registered person on Page 9 - please leave this blank as the registered person is Claire Geoghegan - so it is she only who signs this section.
- ALL application forms MUST be accompanied by a completed Validation Form - available from the Church of Ireland website.
- Identity documents or photocopies of identity documents should NOT be sent to this office.

Failure to complete the form correctly leads to a delay in processing and therefore prohibits the parish from appointing the applicant for a further period.



AccessNI Registration Number...

When applying for grant aid from Education and Library Boards, parishes are asked to supply the Church of Ireland's **AccessNI** registration number. This is the information you require:

The name of the **REGISTERED BODY** is:

BOARD OF EDUCATION NI, CHURCH OF IRELAND

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 800000652

Vetting and Barring Scheme Update April 2011

11 February 2011

Following a period of consultation, the findings of the Government review into the Vetting and Barring Scheme were published. There are 14 recommendations in total which include:

- Regulated activity roles will be redefined
- Registration of the work force will be abolished
- Continuous monitoring of the workforce will be scrapped
- Introduction of a facility for continuous updating of disclosures (at an extra cost) online and in real time creating portability of checks
- The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) will merge to form a new non-departmental public body, independent of government with responsibility for checking and barring
- As criminal record checking is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland, at present this will not affect **AccessNI** - organisations here will request checks through **AccessNI** and make referrals to the new body
- Barring functions will remain with this new non-departmental public body
- Barring will only apply to those who have regular or close contact with vulnerable groups
- The nature of the information used in barring decision making will be a of a serious nature
- Appeals procedures will remain in place



- Controlled activity will be scrapped
- Employers will be given a duty to carry out Enhanced Disclosures Checks.

April 2011

We are currently awaiting further details of the scheme, including planned implementation. The Government has confirmed that until all the appropriate legislation has been introduced and the new arrangements are established, all existing responsibilities and requirements remain in place. This includes:

- A person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults

will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups

- An organisation that knowingly employs someone who is barred to work or volunteer with those groups will also be breaking the law
- If your organisation works with children or vulnerable adults and you dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or you would have done so if they had not left, you must tell the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Useful links:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/vbs-report
www.volunteering-ni.org/what_we_do/vetting_and_barring_scheme.php

Contacts:

Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH
Tel: 028 9082 8860 Fax: 028 9023 7802

Secretary: **Revd. Ian Ellis** Email: edunorth@ireland.anglican.org
Child Protection Officer: **Margaret Yarr** Email: cponi@ireland.anglican.org
AccessNI Co-ordinator: **Claire Geoghegan** Email: claire@diocoff-belfast.org



Church of Ireland
Board of Education (NI)