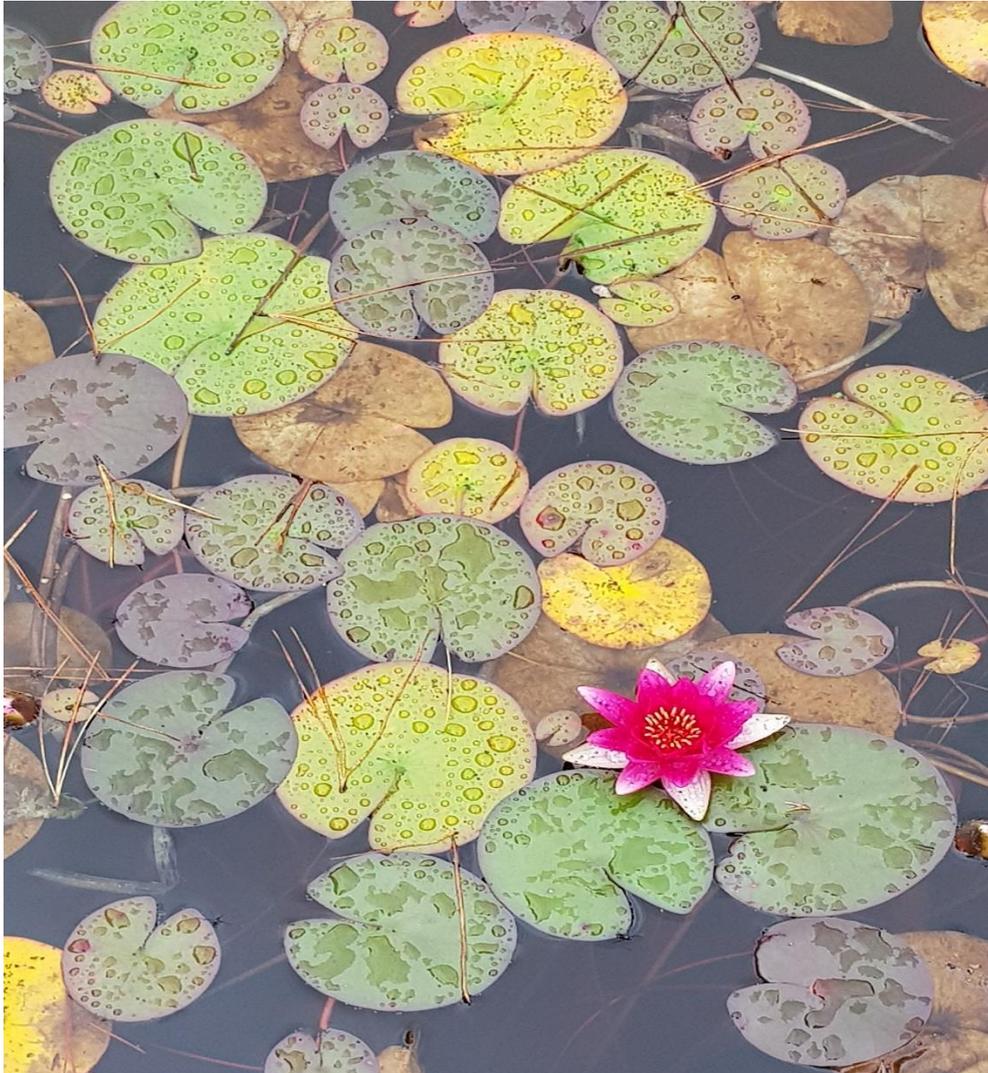




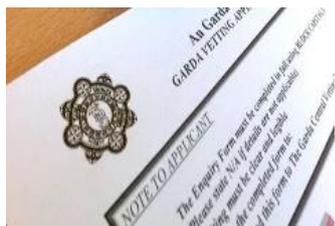
Safeguarding Development Newsletter

(Oct. 2021 – Issue 17)



***Bless the Lord, O my soul:
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
(Ps. 103:1)***

OSA Vetting Policy (Amendment)



With effect from Oct. 2021 all Vetting Applications will be subject to a 3-year renewal cycle and not 4 years as was the case. This will bring OSA Policy in line with NVB Legislation (yet to be enacted), NBSCCCI Guidance and the timeframe operated and expected by most Dioceses processing applications on behalf of Religious Congregations and Orders.

In effect, all OSA renewals falling due within in one year or less (i.e., on or before Oct. 2022) will be processed before 31 December 2021 and all others will take place a year earlier than previously scheduled. All new applications will adhere to the new 3-year cycle. Orla Lalor (Vetting Co-ordinator) will be in touch with relevant friars and volunteers to activate this change of timeframe. In the meantime if you have any queries you can contact Orla at vetting@augustinians.ie

Safeguarding Training

It is not clear yet when we will be able to resume face-to-face training. Some church locations were due to host training for volunteers and friars during 2020 and 2021. That was not possible. All future training, when resumed, will operate on a 3-yearly renewal cycle and appropriate details recorded. The NBSCCCI has produced shorter 'Refresher Sessions' to follow on from the Information Session (2 Hrs.) and/or the Training for Working with Children (Full-day). This will help to distinguish between the needs of current and new volunteers for training delivery in the New Year.



For now, a first step is to identify what is needed in each church location. To that end a recent email to Priors & PPs (7 Oct. 2021) asked that the following questions be responded to by each LSG:

- *What training is required for your church setting over the coming 6 months (e.g., Information Session and/or Full-Day's Training for friars & those working directly with children)?*
- *What numbers do you envisage for either or both categories of training?*
- *What means of delivery would you prefer: online and/or face-to-face training allowing for social distancing?*
- *In terms of timing, when would best suit: month and time of day (e.g. Saturday morning or weekday evening)?*

‘Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment’ Workshop (20 Nov. 2021)

A new template for completing a ‘Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment’ was introduced briefly during the Safeguarding Network 2021. This is a requirement under *Children First 2015* and applies to all groups working with children, including church related activities. To bring all Local Safeguarding Groups up to speed on what is involved a 2-hour workshop via Zoom will take place Saturday, 20 November (10:30 – 12:30). LSG members will then be able to assist and support each Activity Co-ordinator in completing the annual assessment when the opportunity arises.



Whether the intention is to re-activate a children’s choir or to recruit new altar servers, circumstances permitting, it will be important that your LSG is represented by two people at the workshop. That said, all LSG members are welcome to participate. Priors & PPs will be notified separately and asked to confirm participants’ email addresses in advance so that the Zoom invitation can be issued directly to each person.



Progress Reports ’20 – ’21

SDG members acknowledge that the period under review has been one of unprecedented disruption to the way religious communities and society function normally.

The fact that nine out of ten reports have been completed and submitted to-date is to be commended. That each LSG made the time, by whatever means, to address the reporting requirements with care and attention to detail is very encouraging.

How many volunteers will return to full involvement in ministry is, as yet, unknown. Next year’s reports will hopefully reflect more accurately the actual situation and offer a better comparison with the last pre-COVID report of ’19 – ’20.

Positive observations that can be made include:

1. LSG meetings in most locations were not held since March 2020 but in some cases were and in others resumed from May 2021 following the SDG’s invitation issued to complete the ‘Progress Report’.
2. LSG vetting/renewal & training information is provided in all cases.
3. Minutes of LSG meetings have been provided where available.

4. Little or no ministry has taken place with children (e.g. Section 3.1 is invariable blank throughout the reports).
5. Existing volunteers and some new people took on the role of 'Stewarding' during the initial re-opening of churches and continue to do so.
6. Compliance with the 'Adult Code of Behaviour' is quite varied with one location recording a 100% success rate.
7. Future Training requirements are referenced or noted but will require more specific information to inform an actual delivery schedule.
8. Visiting Clergy Protocol (3.2.) is consistently applied; External Groups Register (3.3.) applies in one location with 'Child Risk Assessment' yet to be completed.
9. Methods for Communicating Child Safeguarding (4.1.) & Child Protection (4.2.) Messages are well established and on par with previous reports.
10. 'Progress Reports April 2020+' understandably contain limited updates.
11. Some 'Action Plans' adopt a conditional approach that will naturally depend upon the successful outcome of 'reopening' measures. Most record a little vs. a lot of administrative tasks in the hope of 'normal services' resuming as before. All reflect a welcome level of Safeguarding awareness and accountability.



SDG Work Programme '21 - '22

Over the course of its last two meetings (31 Aug. & 7 Oct.) the SDG reviewed the *Safeguarding Development Plan '20 – '23* and agreed work tasks to be completed up to June 2022. Each set of tasks is profiled under the relevant Standard as outlined below:

Overview of Safeguarding Development Workplan Oct. 2021 – June 2022	2021			2022					
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June
Standard 1 - Creating Safe Environments									
1.1(i). SDG Members Evaluation completed.			→						
- 3/4 New 'potential' members attending meetings & appointed.		→	→	→	→	→	→	→	
1.1(ii). Guidelines for interviewing Volunteers finalised & disseminated.		→	→						

Overview of Safeguarding Development Workplan Oct. 2021 – June 2022	2021			2022					
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June
Standard 1 - Creating Safe Environments (Contd.)									
1.2. Adult Code of Behaviour compliance 90 – 100% reached. .		→	→	→	→	→			
1.3. Research, produce & disseminate new Safeguarding Leaflet for 13 – 16 yrs.					→	→			
1.4./8(2). Guidelines for ‘Working with Children’ plus sample ‘Job Description’ finalised & disseminated.		→	→						
1.4./8(4) Guidelines for ‘Volunteers visiting Family Homes or Vulnerable Adults’ finalised & disseminated.				→	→				
1.9. Review & update IT & Social Media Guidelines.				→	→				
Standard 5 – Training & Support									
5.1. Confirm local needs, devise timing & method(s) for agreed resumption of training.		→	→						
- Deliver ‘Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment’ Workshop for LSG Members.		→							
- Establish friars training database on 3-year cycle.						→	→		
5.6. Each LSG visited annually & practice queries responded to on request.					→	→	→		
Standard 6 – Communicating Safeguarding Message									
6.1(4). Publish 4 Newsletters annually.	→		→			→			→
6.4(ii). Consult, review & update OSA – Dublin Archdiocese Parishes Protocol.		→	→						
Standard 7 – Quality Assurance Compliance									
7.1(ii). Review & sign-off on Annual Progress Reports.	→								
7.1(ii). Complete ‘Annual Report 2021’ for Provincial Council.			→	→					
7.3. NBSCCCI Review: To finalise review process and timing; facilitate review programme and publish report on OSA website.				→	→				

Towards a Theology of Safeguarding



The National Board for Safeguarding Children hopes to host a two-day conference in mid-2022. The theme will be *'Towards a Theology of Safeguarding'*. Several short video presentations have been released to encourage thought and reflection about the topic. For instance, Dr. Jessie Rogers (*Scripture Scholar & Dean of Theology at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth*) asks:

"Jesus puts a child in their midst and tells the disciples to welcome children as a way of welcoming Jesus. How can the Church take that seriously today?"

Dr. Rogers presentation and those of other experts and practitioners can be viewed by following this link:

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/national-conference-2022>

SDG Renewal

As with all voluntary groups succession planning and renewal are vital. Come June 2022 up to four SDG members will retire. Where a person originally committed to a four-year term and then gave some more, s/he should be thanked and allowed to move on. And so, new blood and fresh energy is needed. If you have an interest in joining the SDG, why not discuss that with your fellow LSG members and the Prior/PP. To-date a number of people have sat in on meetings to taste and see 'what is good' and then reached a final decision.



*"Let us hope it will always be like this,
each of us going on
in our explicable ways
building the universe."*

(Extract from 'Song of the Builders' by Mary Oliver)