

TAKING CARE

UPDATE



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Issue

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Spring 2017

Editors' Welcome

(31st Edition)

Hello and welcome to our 31st edition of the Taking Care Update – striving to keep Designated Persons, Ministers and others informed about safeguarding news and changes to policies and procedures.

A special welcome to our newly appointed Designated Persons; it was good to meet so many of you at our two training events for Designated Persons held in March.

Speaking of new appointments, in Autumn last year seven people completed the Taking Care Training the Trainers course. It was so encouraging to meet and get to know these enthusiastic, highly experienced people. This group have gone through an assessed delivery, completed a Learning Journal and are now ready to deliver Foundation and Refresher Training at congregations and different regions. This means we now have a cohort of over 30 trainers, helping to promote a safer environment for children and leaders, all in their own free time.

Thank-you to all who attended this year's Road Trip events which were organised by the Council for Congregational Life & Witness. I was able to take two seminars, 'Encouraging Healthy Online Relationships' and 'The Mystery and Myths Surrounding Self-harm'. It is anticipated that more of these events will be organised in the future.

Take Care,
Deborah Webster
(Programme Co-ordinator)



The Taking Care Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for each of the children and young people you have given us the privilege of working with.

Equip us with the skills we need:

- to be prepared and organised
- to be understanding and compassionate
- to be fair and consistent
- to never take risks or cut corners
- to treat everyone as individuals – unique and precious in your sight

We thank you for the Taking Care Programme and pray that you will bless its use in every congregation and organisation.
AMEN.



A Great Big Thank-you!

thank you!

Sadly, this will be the last edition of the Taking Care Update from me as I will leave the role of Taking Care Programme Co-ordinator this summer.

Having been Co-ordinator for over ten years the time has come for me to move on and I have been given the opportunity to do some research with Queens' University. I would like to say a **MASSIVE THANK-YOU** to each and every one of you who has been involved in my journey with Taking Care in some way. Let's keep on working towards ensuring our churches, our organisations and our places of worship are a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff.

Record Keeping

Just a reminder! Please can everyone check that the letters of appointment sent out on receipt of a completed application form returned from Access NI/Gardaí are kept. It is essential that these letters are stored and filed so that the congregation holds an accurate record of who has been checked.

IMPORTANT: Updated Information about Garda Vetting

As those who attend a congregation within the Republic of Ireland are already aware, a new law –The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 & 2016 was put into effect in April last year. The law has implications for all our congregations who work with children and young people (i.e. anyone under the age of 18).



Five Information Seminars were organised in conjunction with Presbytery Clerks and to date, information has been emailed to all Ministers and posted on our website. Following further guidance from the National Youth Council, the following information needs to be highlighted to those who are sending in Garda Vetting forms to us:

Who needs to be vetted?

'Anyone aged 16 or over and working or volunteering with children (aged 0 -18) on behalf of the Presbyterian Church In Ireland within the Republic of Ireland needs to be appointed by the Kirk Session before they take up their post. This appointment process includes a Garda Vetting form. This is a legal requirement for all positions unless it is a one-off occurrence'.

A **one-off occurrence** could be when a leader is helping out for one evening at Youth club or crèche one morning at the last minute because another leader was unable to make it. It is no longer applicable that leaders working less than four times a year don't need to be vetted.

Young Leaders

- 16 and 17 year olds need to be vetted if they are working with children
- For a 16 or 17 year old to be vetted they require:
 1. To use a parent's email address on the application form
 2. A completed parental consent form which must be sent into the Taking Care Office along with their application form. This form can be found on our website.

Working in partnership with other organisations

If a person comes to work/volunteer on behalf of another organisation e.g. community employment, Christian

Evangelism Fellowship, then the church should check that they have been vetted and ask for this in writing. If they have not been vetted then the church should do so.

Individuals or Teams coming from outside of the Republic of Ireland

If a person or team of people is coming from outside of the Republic of Ireland (please note this includes Northern Ireland) to work with children then they also need to be Garda vetted. See the website for more information.

Remember!

Applicants have 30 days from when they receive an email from the Garda Vetting Unit (vetting@Garda.ie) to complete the online form. After 30 days this link will expire and the process must be started again from the Taking Care Office. This causes unnecessary work and hassle so please highlight this to anyone who is completing an Application Form.

Please look on the website for the Garda Vetting form and more detailed information. Remember, we have until the end of 2017 to retrospectively check all existing leaders.



Kirk Session Training

The need for safeguarding training for all elders has often been highlighted by Designated Persons and Ministers. The Kirk Session are of course responsible that the Taking Care Guidelines are carried out within their congregation but how well are they aware of this and do they know what exactly they are responsible for?

Logistically this was always going to be a challenge with over 400 congregations and anything from 3 to 30 elders in each one. So the Taking Care Committee have decided that the best way to raise awareness is to have a representative in each congregation disseminate the information to their own elders.

To make this achievable, we have put together a short PowerPoint presentation complete with competent notes. The presentation focuses on the responsibilities of the Kirk Session regarding safeguarding rather than the detail that is included in the Foundation and Refresher training. It is suggested that the presentation be delivered as part of a Kirk Session meeting or as a separate evening if desired.

Who should deliver the presentation?

This could be the Minister, the Designated Person, the Clerk of Session or some other appropriate person.

Who should attend the presentation?

The presentation is for all elders, regardless if they work with children and young people or not.

How long will it take?

Should take from 30 to 45 minutes in total.

How will we get any questions answered that are raised at the training?

Any questions that there is no answer to should be emailed along with the evaluation forms to the Taking Care Office.

When should we do it?

There is no set date or time when the presentation is to be done by but you are advised that once the presentation is emailed to you to use it as soon as possible to make sure you are using the most up to date information.

How can we receive the PowerPoint presentation?

To receive a copy of the presentation please email takingcare@presbyterianireland.org and stipulate your role, which congregation you are from and which presentation you require. i.e. Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

What is the content of the presentation?

- To understand the aim of the Taking Care Guidelines and their relevance to each congregation
- To understand the role and responsibilities of the Kirk Session in relation to Safeguarding
- To understand the role of the Designated Person
- To understand the role of the Taking Care Office

If you have any questions regarding training for Kirk Session, please do not hesitate to contact the Taking Care Office in the usual manner.

