

TAKING CARE

UPDATE



**Working together
to protect children**

Other Stories Inside...

Guidelines Update

-

**Permissions for
Photographs**

-

Foundation Training

▼



Garda Vetting Changes

The National Vetting Bureau (children and vulnerable persons) Act 2012 & 2016 has brought in changes regarding who, how and when Garda vetting is to be done.

As well as being part of the guidelines of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, vetting was best practice in youth work. Now it has become a legal requirement.

Four Information Seminars will be held during September. It is very important that each congregation sends along at least one representative.

This could be the Minister, Designated Person or other. The seminars will explain the changes that the Act has brought in, who needs to be vetted, the process of online vetting as well as how the retrospective vetting is going to be rolled out.

The Seminars will last no more than two hours and will start at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated. There is no need to book for these events.

Dates and venues are as follows:

- Letterkenny
12th September
- Cootehill
14th September
- Rathgar
26th September at 8pm
- Tullamore
27th September

More information regarding the Garda Vetting changes is available on our website, notably:

- Garda Vetting 2016 Questions and Answers
- Garda Vetting Step by Step Guide

Editors' Welcome

(29th Edition)

As we hang up our sandals and sunglasses for another year, churches are often straight into preparation for youth organisations starting up again or even some organisations starting for the first time. The focus is often on programmes, materials and the recruitment of new members. Let's take the opportunity to remind ourselves and others about the importance of keeping children, young people and leaders safe by following best practice guidelines. In order to help with this, a checklist can be found on the back page to help remind leaders of everything that they should have in place. I hope this will be helpful to you, if it is, why not copy it for leaders in charge of all the organisations in your church and make sure to keep it handy for next year.

Earlier this year, big changes in legislation for child protection policy and practice were brought in by the government for organisations working with children and young people in the Republic of Ireland. In light of this, Information Seminars have been organised to inform Designated Persons, Ministers, Elders and Leaders of what this means for us within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland - it is important that you read about them below.

Finally, as you will see from the website, our training calendar is fully booked for September and October. However, if you would like to organise training for any dates after that then please get in touch. Foundation training events (for new leaders) have been arranged as usual and are listed below.

If you have any questions about anything in this Update or anything to do with Taking Care please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Take Care,
Deborah Webster (Programme Co-ordinator)

Foundation Training

This training is for new leaders or those who have never attended Taking Care Training before.

The training should last two hours and will start at **7:30pm** unless otherwise stated. There is no need to book for these events.

Kirkpatrick Memorial, Belfast
15th September

Legacurry, Lisburn
13th October

Hazelbank, Coleraine
3rd October

Wellington, Ballymena
13th October

Newcastle, Co. Down
4th October

Faughanvale, Derry
27th October

Assembly Buildings, Belfast
5th October **10:30am – 1pm**



To receive **daily prayer points** to help support both mission at home in Ireland and further afield sign up to PCI's prayer e-mail service. Every morning you will receive new prayer items to help www.presbyterianireland.org/prayer

Points for Prayer

- **Pray for the safety of children, young people and leaders as organisations start up again this Autumn.**
- **Give thanks that the Garda Vetting process is now online and pray that it will improve the effectiveness of a system put in place to protect children.**
- **Give thanks for the enthusiastic applicants for the new Training the Trainers course starting in October and pray that God will bless them and all of the tutors who will take part in the delivery of the course.**

Guidelines Update - Permission for Photographs

The Taking Care Committee has revised the guidelines on the taking of photographs of children and young people at church based activities.

The new guidelines state the following:

- Leaders should not post photographs/video of young people from the organisation in which they are leaders, on any social networking site or elsewhere on the Internet, unless they have written parental/guardian consent.

- Parental/guardian consent should specify what the photographs/video will be used for, for example, as part of a PowerPoint display in advance of a church service.
- Furthermore, if the photographs/video are to be posted on the Internet, the consent form should specify which websites and/or social media that will be used for, for example, the church website and/or the church Facebook page.

The main difference to the previous guidelines is that specific consent is no longer required for each photograph that will be posted online. You can read the new guidelines in full on the website as well as a revised sample consent form.



Working together to protect children

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland, together with representatives from uniformed organisations, have launched a revised edition of 'The Common Protocol' leaflet for the protection of children.

In 2005, the three churches, along with the uniformed organisations - Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade, Scouts NI and Girlguiding Ulster - came together to develop a joint approach to child protection. The revised edition of 'The Common Protocol' leaflet launched in Assembly Buildings explains the working relationship between the three churches and the uniformed organisations. It clearly sets out the expectations and specific responsibilities of the churches and organisations in relation to child protection. This includes police checking of leaders, their appointment, information sharing and reporting of concerns, which may arise.

As well as explaining the working relationship with uniformed organisations, the leaflet also explains what should be agreed with independent organisations using church premises.

If you did not receive a leaflet with this copy of The Taking Care Update, please see the website for a pdf version which can be printed off or contact the office to order a copy.

Best Practice Checklist

With programmes to prepare, rotas to organise and materials to sort sometimes health and safety and child protection are left to the last minute! The aim of this checklist is to act as an aide memoir for leaders preparing for the start-up of youth and childrens' organisations after the summer break. It could also be used for new organisations starting within your church. There may be other things that you have thought of, specific to your church that you might want to add.

Children and young people

- ☐ Are there consent forms or a sign in sheet?
(See website for revised consent form, See Taking Care Two, 12.14 for Sign in Sheet)
- ☐ Do you know of any children with additional needs who will be attending?
Have you found out how best their needs can be met?
- ☐ Is there a code of conduct or list of rules for the organisation? Are leaders, children and parents aware of what these are? (A sample Code of Conduct can be found in Taking Care Two, 12.22)

Leaders

- ☐ Are there enough leaders for the expected number of children/young people?
(Recommended Ratios can be found in Taking Care Two, 7.2)
- ☐ Have all leaders gone through the appointment process, including police check?
- ☐ Has the Register of all Leaders been completed? (Taking Care Two, 12.07)
- ☐ Have all leaders attended Taking Care Training within the last three years?
- ☐ For Girls Brigade/Boys Brigade, has a list of leaders been submitted to the Kirk Session?

Health and Safety

- ☐ Has a Risk Assessment form for the organisation been completed or reviewed from last year?
(Taking Care Two, 12.12)
- ☐ Does the organisation have at least two nominated First Aiders?
- ☐ Are Accident/Incident forms available along with an up to date First Aid Kit? (Taking Care Two, 12.11)
- ☐ Are the Fire escapes and exits clear of obstruction and is there a fire drill planned?

Policies

- ☐ Is the child protection policy up to date and are all leaders familiar with it?
- ☐ Is the child protection policy and Taking Care poster displayed on the premises?
- ☐ Are leaders familiar with other policies e.g. allegations, anti-bullying?