



TAKING CARE UPDATE²⁴



We Care Leaflets

- A successful launch for our new We Care leaflets

Important Vetting Information

- Changes to Garda Vetting and Access NI

New Course for Trainers

- Accredited through Union College

EDITORS' WELCOME

(24TH EDITION)

Hello and welcome to this 24th Edition of the Taking Care Update. On returning from maternity leave in mid-August, I have well and truly settled back into work and can't believe that it is time for Christmas shopping already! A huge thanks goes to Geoff Marshall who, once again, so ably carried out the vast and varied work at the office and throughout Ireland during my maternity leave. Geoff remains as a volunteer with us as there is always plenty for him to do!

In this issue, I am excited to announce the date and details of our next Taking Care Conference and our plans for a new Training the Trainers course, accredited through Union College. Not to mention that the Moderator recently launched our new 'We Care' leaflets and that we have successfully completed another round of Foundation Training.

With so much going on, it can be hard to keep focused. Jesus' words are clear: "And any of you who welcomes a child like this in my name is welcoming me." (Matthew 18: 5). Let us not forget in the midst of form filling, handing out leaflets, organising training and trying to get our heads around the ever-changing legislation that we are doing all of this in order to help create a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff so that we can welcome them in the name of our Lord.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from myself and Amanda at the Taking Care Office.

*Take Care,
Deborah
Taking Care Coordinator*



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PCI TAKING CARE

Tribute to Ronnie Orr

In June this year I attended the Thanksgiving Service for Ronnie Orr at Knock Presbyterian Church. Ronnie was on the interview panel when I applied for my job as Taking Care Coordinator, was chair of the Taking Care Committee until September 2011 and thereafter remained on the Advisory Group. Ronnie was a true gentleman and his Christian faith was an example to all. As an expert in child protection Ronnie brought a wealth of wisdom and experience to Taking Care. Ronnie was of great personal support to me and the office and is sadly missed.



LAUNCH OF WE CARE LEAFLETS

At our recent Taking Care Advisory group meeting, the moderator Rev Rob Craig, launched and endorsed our new 'We Care' leaflets. Three versions of the small leaflets are now available for children and young people, leaders and parents.

The leaflet for children lets them know that the Church cares for them and gives the name and contact details of a key leader within the church they can speak to if they have any problems.

The leader's leaflet highlights the main dos and don'ts concerning child protection based on the Taking Care policy that all leaders have received training in.

The leaflet for parents gives information about the Church's child protection policy and also highlights parents' responsibilities to let leaders know of any special circumstances about their children like allergies or medicines

they might require and also the need to keep contact details up to date.

It is advised that when a person becomes a new leader they are given a copy of 'We Care 4U Too'. Congregations are encouraged to decide for themselves how and when they would be best distributing the leaflets for parents and children – perhaps at the start of a Holiday Bible Club or new 'season' of organisations or maybe during a church service such as Children's Day.

Leaflets can be collected from Assembly Buildings in Belfast or from the Taking Care Trainers.



IMPORTANT VETTING INFORMATION

GARDA VETTING MADE LAW (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

Garda Vetting is now a legal requirement! Although it has been the policy of the church since 2006, under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 which was enforced

in March 2013, there is now a legal obligation to vet new leaders who are in regular contact with children. Just a reminder of what that entails.

Leaders who are:

- 18 years old and over
- In new positions of leadership (since 2005)
- Working four or more times a year or an overnight.

If the church appoints new leaders to work with children and young people and they meet the criteria above and does not vet them, they will be breaking the law! Kirk Sessions are reminded to check out that they have vetted all new leaders to date.

FOUNDATION TRAINING

Thank-you to all of our trainers and venues for facilitating the 20 Foundation Training events across all Presbyteries. Thank-you also to all Designated Persons, leaders in charge of organisations and Ministers who have rounded up new leaders and encouraged them to attend.

790 people attended the 20 events, that's a total of 352 new leaders who attended Foundation training in 2013 and exactly 3,000 people since we started the Presbytery events in Autumn 2012! Altogether in 2013 there

have been 139 training events – Foundation, Refresher and Social Media.

Here are some comments about the training:

"I was dreading coming this evening but it turned out to be interesting and relevant" (School Teacher).

"I have attended many child protection training through work and the delivery and information given tonight was excellent" (Senior Social Worker).

TAKING CARE FOR MINISTERS

Child Protection Training for Ministers as agreed by the General Assembly has been organised for 2014. This training is for all active Ministers (including Assistant Ministers who are eligible for a call in 2014 and active retired Ministers currently working in a congregation).

Events held in Northern Ireland will differ to those in the Republic of Ireland in terms of legislation. Therefore Ministers should attend the event in the jurisdiction that the majority of their congregation live in. For a list of dates and venues please contact the Taking Care Office.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The Taking Care Conference 2014 has been arranged for Saturday 12th April. The keynote speaker will be Cathy Bell, regional co-ordinator of Independent Counselling Service for Schools. Cathy also serves on the board for the Big House, Ireland. Cathy will be addressing us on the subject of self-harm, an issue affecting an increasing number of young people today.

ACCESS NI - GET YOUR FORMS IN QUICK!

Access NI have changed their policy to state that an applicant's signature must be dated within three months of when they receive the form from the Taking Care Office. Obviously we need to allow time for the form to be sent from the Taking Care Office to Access NI. Therefore if the date of signature on the form is more than two months ago when it reaches the office, there is a risk that the form will be returned. Designated Persons are advised to send each form to us as soon as it has been completed and checked.



Points for Prayer

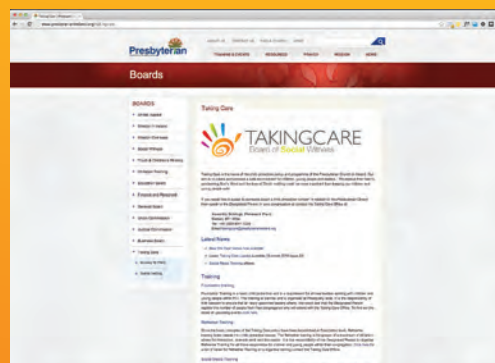
- Young people who are struggling with issues of self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Pray that they will get the help that they need and be able to talk to someone.
- Give thanks for all recent training events for trainers who give up of their time, expertise and commitment to facilitate the Taking Care programme.
- Ministers and Designated persons who are dealing with child protection incidents and issues. Pray for wisdom and grace as they work to resolve issues.

NEW WEBSITE FOR TAKING CARE!

www.presbyterianireland.org/takingcare

The previous Taking Care website has now gone, with all of the information, news and resources on the Presbyterian Church in Ireland website. Keep up to date with Taking Care on this new website.

Here you will find the latest News, Training dates and conferences (see the Events section) and information on Access NI and Garda Vetting. The website will be updated as new information is available.



Training the Trainers...

This new course is offered by the Taking Care Office of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in partnership with Union Theological College and is for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer Taking Care Trainer.

The course will take place during 2014 and the content will include seven modules covering all aspects of child protection with input from experienced experts in various fields.

In addition to attending the classes the certificate for Trainers will be awarded to those who successfully complete assessment in course work and presentation skills.

Taking Care Trainers are asked to deliver Foundation and Refresher training courses at Presbytery and congregational level. Applicants are expected to have some experience in child protection issues as well as skills in training or teaching.

For an application form or for further information speak to Deborah at the Office.