



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the religious congregation of
The Dominican Nuns of the Monastery of
Saint Catherine of Siena

undertaken by

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the
Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)

Date June 2015

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Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was asked by the Sponsoring Bodies, namely the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of child safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland.

The NBSCCCI is aware that some religious congregations have ministries that involve direct contact with children while others do not. In religious congregations that have direct involvement with children, reviews of child safeguarding have been undertaken by measuring their practice compliance against all seven Church standards. Where a religious congregation no longer has, or never had ministry involving children and has not received any allegation of sexual abuse, the NBSCCCI reviews are conducted using a shorter procedure. The size, age and activity profiles of religious congregations can vary significantly and the NBSCCCI accepts that it is rational that the form of review be tailored to the profile of each Church authority, where the ministry with children is limited or non-existent. The procedure for assessment of safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the contents page of this report. The NBSCCCI welcomes that in order to have full openness, transparency and accountability, religious congregations that do not have ministry with children have made requests to have their safeguarding practice examined and commented upon.

The purpose of this review remains the same and it is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each of these Church authorities is reviewed through an examination of policy and procedures, and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to the religious congregation.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Child Safeguarding Practice in the religious congregation of the Dominican Nuns of the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Siena* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Prioress, Sr M Breda Carroll along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review is not based on a review of case material as during the relevant time period there were no allegations made against members of the congregation that were within the Terms of Reference. There also were no allegations in respect of other forms of abuse within the time period, in respect of deceased and living members of the congregation. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

1. Introduction

The Dominican Nuns of the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Siena are Nuns of the Order of Preachers and belong to the worldwide Dominican Family of Friars, Nuns, Sisters and Laity who aim to centre their lives on the Word of God. The Friars, Sisters and laity of the Order preach the name of Jesus throughout the world, while the Nuns seek, ponder and call upon God in Solitude.

As Dominican Nuns, they are bound by Papal cloister, which means that they have no ministry outside their enclosure. Their ministry is exercised through contemplative and liturgical prayer and works performed within the cloister.

The Dominican Friars and the Dominican Sisters have already been reviewed by NBSCCCI, copies of their review reports can be found on the website www.safeguarding.ie

This review relates to the Nuns of the Dominican Order only – The Dominican Nuns of the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Siena who are a contemplative Order based in Drogheda, they live a monastic life of prayer.

The monastery belonging to the Nuns is located in Drogheda.

1. Role Profile (past and present role with children):

As Contemplative Nuns who live within a monastery, they have no ministry with children.

They do however have a parlour and prayer ministry where some adults are in attendance, with Sisters either as individuals or in small groups. If children attend with their parents, they remain the responsibility of and under the supervision of their parents and have very limited contact with the Nuns.

The Nuns also have a retreat house with five self-contained rooms outside the enclosure but with a link corridor to the monastery. This facility is for adults only and children are not allowed to stay. Apart from the sister in charge, the rest of the community do not normally have access to this area. It is self-catering and therefore only requires the minimum contact with the community. However, occasionally a Sister may be asked to give a talk to a group. A few times during the year they host vocation discernment weekends for young women (18+) during which the novice mistress and some Sisters would have access to this area.

The final facility which is available is the conference room in the retreat house building of the monastery, which again may be used by adults and the requirement is for these adults to care for their own children, if they are in attendance.

Very occasionally local teachers or chaplains make a request to bring a group of pupils to visit our chapel and meet some of the Sisters in the parlour. On such occasions the children are always accompanied and supervised by their teachers.

2. Profile of Members:

There are 20 Sisters living in the monastery in Drogheda, including 1 junior professed and 1 novice within the Dominican Order in Ireland.

The age profile of the Nuns is between 34 and 86; there are 10 over 70; 4 under 40 and the remainder between 40 and 70.

None of the Sisters are involved in public ministry.

3. Policy and Procedures Document:

The Dominican Nuns have a detailed child safeguarding policy document, which follows the Church's seven standards. It is set within the context of the contemplative nature of the Nuns ministry and states *Each nun is committed to respect the rights and integrity of every child and young person whom she may meet in her ministry in the parlour or at any time she may have occasion to meet children or young people or vulnerable adults.*

The policy gives details about how to make an allegation to the civil authorities and to the Order's Prioress. It then details how a safe environment will be created in the event of children ever using the retreat house, by detailing a code of behaviour, parental consent, respecting boundaries and the need for safe recruitment including garda vetting.

The Nuns have placed a notice in their Chapel, sacristy, foyer at reception and in the retreat house, setting out their commitment to safeguarding children and providing contact details for the civil authority agencies as well as safeguarding personnel within the Archdiocese of Armagh, where their Monastery is located.

The safeguarding notice of the Archdiocese of Armagh is also displayed in the chapel porch.

A Dominican priest says Mass in the chapel, and this priest, as well as any visiting priest is required to sign a register as he enters the Sacristy. There are no children altar servers during any of the liturgies in the chapel - in a previous monastery in Chord Road, Drogheda, there were children altar servers, but that practice ceased in 1994.

The policy is more than adequate for this Order of enclosed nuns who have no ministry with children.

4. Structures:

The designated liaison person for the order is the Prioress; she has not had to deal with any allegations of child abuse. Given that the Dominican Nuns are a contemplative order who have no ministry with children, this structure of only having a designated person is sufficient and complies with *Children First* requirements.

5. Management of Allegations and liaison with the statutory authorities:

There have not been any allegations, or any contact with TUSLA or An Garda Siochana.

If the Nuns were to receive information, as part of a request for prayer, that a child has been abused, it is their policy to pass this information on to the civil authorities, and they inform people of this in advance. There is a notice in the parlour to that effect.

The Nuns placed a notice on their website announcing this child safeguarding review and inviting any victim to come forward.

6. Conclusion:

The Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena were keen to be reviewed by NBSCCCI to demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding children. While having no ministry and very little contact with children, they are to be commended for their willingness to participate in this process. The reviewer is satisfied that they have an awareness of child safeguarding, and understand the reporting arrangements. There are no child safeguarding concerns about this small community of enclosed Nuns.

Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

Terms of Reference (which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes)

Small Religious Congregations

Introduction

In order for the National Board to be able to state that all Church Authorities on the island of Ireland have been evaluated in respect of their child safeguarding policies and practices, both historical and current, then some form of appropriate assessment has to be conducted of every one of these. It is rational however that the form of assessment is tailored to the profile of each Church Authority, and that needless expenditure of resources and unnecessary interference in the life of religious orders and communities that have no children-specific ministry would be avoided.

This Review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small Religious Congregations /Orders, and Missionary Societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the Congregations ministry.

It would also scrutinize practice within all known cases to ensure that they have been responded to appropriately.

The review's methodology is an adaptation of the methodology developed for all Dioceses and large religious congregations and missionary societies, where the ministry involves regular contact with children.

The proposed Review would consider the following:-

- (a) Former role with children
- (b) Allegations of child abuse against members and how these have been responded to
- (c) Existing relationships with statutory authorities such as the HSE, Gardai in the Republic and the HSCT or PSNI in Northern Ireland.
- (d) Policies in place and being applied for safeguarding children
- (e) Roles and responsibilities and where they exist the operation of Advisory Panels, and Safeguarding Committees

The objective of the Review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice matches up to the standards set down in the Safeguarding Children Guidance published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the Review. In cases where the alleged or known offender

is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

Guidance Documents

The Review will be guided by the following:-

- (a) Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance;
- (b) Children First Guidance in ROI; and Regional Child Protection Guidelines in Northern Ireland;
- (c) Legislation that exists in each jurisdiction which contributes to safeguarding children and young people.

The Review will be undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

The Review process will be overseen by a **Reference Group** to whom the CEO will report on a regular basis. The membership of this **Reference Group** has been drawn from each of the statutory child protection agencies in both jurisdictions, along with eminent individuals in the field from academia. The current Reference Group consists of : Dr Helen Buckley (TCD); Mr Paul Harrison (Tusla), and John Toner (SBNI).

It is important to confirm that the value of the Review is dependent upon full and complete access to all relevant documentation and information relating to the abuse of children known to the individual Church authorities. The Review will proceed on the basis that willingness exists on the part of each of the subjects of the Review to provide full access to the fieldwork team, subject, where relevant, to the terms of the Data Processing Deed agreed between the Sponsoring Bodies and entered into between the parties hereto.

Step Guide to the Review Process

Step 1.

A letter of invitation to review is sent by the Provincial/Regional Superior or other person responsible for the Congregation/ Order or Missionary Society (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Ordinary’).

Step 2.

The CEO will forward a survey to the provincial which will identify:

- Current number of members
- Past role with children
- Current role with children
- Total number of allegations received up to 2014
- Number of living members against whom there are allegations

Step 3.

For any Order where there have been allegations a full review will proceed, as per step 4 - 23. For those Orders where there have been no known allegations a desk top examination of policies and procedures will take place followed by a site visit to interview all relevant personnel within the safeguarding structure. For these orders **step 5 and 13-23** will apply.

Step 4.

The CEO and Ordinary will confirm the dates for the fieldwork for the Review, and names of the fieldwork team.

Step 5.

The Church Authority will be asked to make available all of the case files and related documentation in respect of any safeguarding concerns that have been identified within the diocese. The Church Authority will make available a room with wireless internet access for the reviewers to conduct their review of files, so that any records made by the reviewers can be directly typed and stored onto a secure server which is only accessed by the reviewers. In the absence of internet access the reviewers will type their notes onto a secure encrypted usb stick for later uploading onto the secure server.

Step 6.

The Church Authority will be requested to sign the revised Data Processing Deed prior to the arrival of the team.

Step 7.

The Church Authority will arrange a schedule of interviews with all who hold safeguarding roles within its functional area. The designated person and the Church Authority will be available to the reviewers throughout the period of fieldwork.

Step 8.

The fieldwork team when they arrive on site will firstly confirm that they have a suitable place to work in and that all the required documentation has been provided to them for their Review. In the event that the fieldwork team forms the opinion that the Church Authority has not provided access to all such documents, the Board shall give notice in writing to the Church Authority of the opinion of the fieldwork team and such notice shall specify the reasons for same. Thereupon, the Church Authority shall respond in detail to the Notice. Each party shall use its best endeavours to resolve any differences of opinion which shall arise and, in the event that resolution is not arrived at, the parties will attempt to resolve the dispute by recourse to the services of a mediator agreed between them or nominated for the purpose at the request of any of them without prejudice to the Board's entitlement to terminate the Review. In the event that resolution has not been arrived at following mediation, either party shall be at liberty to terminate forthwith the Review.

Step 9.

On arrival, the fieldwork team should be supplied with a single case file index that lists all the cases that have been created within the diocese. These may be divided into two groups. The first group will contain all allegations that relate to living alleged or known perpetrators. The second will contain any that are deceased.

Step 10.

Depending on the volume involved a decision should be made as to whether all or a random sample of the "deceased group" should be reviewed. Care should be taken to include all prominent cases in the sample.

Step 11.

Each case file will be reviewed by each fieldworker independently in the first instance. They will create a written summary with chronological information of the case. In certain cases a second reader may be required, this will be discussed and agreed between the fieldworkers.

Step 12.

Following the reading of the case and the creation of a summary, the fieldworkers will analyse and assess the actions taken in the case. They will assess compliance with agreed Church policy that was extant at that time. They will also indicate whether any current risk exists in respect of the information contained within the file and advise the church Authority of necessary safeguarding action to reduce the risk.

Step 13.

When all the case files have been read, the fieldwork team will then examine and review any procedures or protocols that exist within the diocese to confirm that they are in compliance with the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document issued by the NBSCCI in February of 2009.

Step 14.

To complete the Review, the fieldwork team will then seek to speak to those directly involved in the safeguarding structure in the diocese. This should include the Advisory Panel, a sample of parish safeguarding representatives, the designated person, the safeguarding committee, victim support and advisors and the Bishop/Provincial. The purpose of these interviews is to form a view of the competence and effectiveness of the safeguarding structure that exists within the Church Authority.

Step 15.

The fieldwork team will also seek to speak to representatives of the key statutory agencies to provide them with an opportunity to express their views on the quality of the working relationships that exist between them and the Church Authority.

Step 16.

A verbal feedback session on initial key findings will be given to the Church Authority.

Step 17.

Upon completion of the field work, the team may request to take materials – other than casework records to review off-site; this alongside all materials gathered by the reviewers, including written notes on cases and meetings, will be analysed and will form the basis of the draft assessment review report.

Step 18.

The draft will be forwarded to the Church Authority for factual accuracy checking.

Step 19.

Alongside all other reports under review, the report will be presented in draft to the Reference Group for their critique and comment. If further work is required at the direction of the Reference group the CEO will ensure this work is completed and advise the Church Authority accordingly.

Step 20.

The report will be legally proofed by NBSCCCI lawyer.

Step 21.

The report will be forwarded to the National Board for approval

Step 22

A final draft report will then be submitted to the Church Authority. The expectation would be that the Report will be published by the Church Authority at an agreed time in the future.

Step 23.

All case material written, including summaries, as part of the review, which are for the reviewers use only, will be stored on a secure server.

Guide for Reviewers

In terms of small (female religious orders) reference should be made to the following:

1. Has the Order provided alternative care to children in an orphanage, industrial school or children's residential home, but no longer is engaged in running such services;
2. Has the order provided education to children, in both or either boarding schools and day schools, but no longer does so ;
3. Has the order provided medical and/or nursing services to children, but no longer does so;
4. Has the order provided any other services to children, in community services centres, youth clubs etc., and no longer does so;
5. Does the order currently provide any sort of service to children and families that brings them into regular contact with children;
6. Has the order never provided any service to children (e.g. contemplative orders).

In relation to category 1 above;

1. The reviewers will establish whether any service they provided is included in the list of children's residential services produced by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB);
2. If this is the case, reference should be made to this.
3. If complaints have been referred to the Redress Board or Ryan Commission, this review cannot access these records and that will be stated in the report.
4. If the order has received complaints which have not been processed through Redress or Ryan these cases will be thoroughly examined as detailed above.

Review of Policy and Procedures

1. It is recognised that not all Orders will have any ministry with children and therefore their policies and procedures should reflect the work that they do with children.
2. If the Order only works through other organisations, example in Diocesan work or in schools, they are required to follow the policies of those organisations.
3. If there are gaps in the policy document an assessment should be made as to whether the ministry engaged in requires full compliance with all criteria attached to the seven standards
4. Where it is clear that the criteria do not apply a reference should be made at the beginning of the review report that the Order's ministry is not directly with children and therefore adherence to particular criteria do not apply.
5. In the Order is a contemplative Order, there is no expectation that they will have detailed policies and procedures, but reference should be made to their ministry and that they have no contact with children.
6. In all cases, contact will be made with the civil authorities to identify if they have any child safeguarding concerns in relation to the order.