



**Review of Safeguarding Practice**

**in the**

**Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
(Ireland)**

**undertaken by**

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

**This review was undertaken at the invitation of the Leaders of the three  
Provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland**

**Date: July 2014**

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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 Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland. The purpose of the review 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 Church authority is to be reviewed through an examination of case records and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to a diocese or other authority.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Union of Presentation Sisters (Ireland)* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies. It is based upon the case material made available to the NBSCCCI by the Provincial leaders of the three Irish provinces of the Congregation, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Presentation Sisters. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the three Provincial leaders have confirmed this.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the three Provincial leaders of the Presentation Sisters, along with any recommendations arising from the findings.

The fieldwork for this review was conducted over five days between June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014 and July 8<sup>th</sup> 2014 in the three Presentation Sisters in Ireland's Provincial offices, in Dublin, Athlone and Cork. In each location the reviewers were hosted with genuine hospitality and were provided with every assistance in undertaking their review task. The reviewers wish to thank each Provincial Leader and her congregational sisters for their open and generous cooperation. These were Sr. Imelda Carew\*, South East (SE) Province, Sr. Elizabeth Maxwell, Northern Province, and Sr. Mary Hoare, South West (SW) Province.

[\*Since the completion of the fieldwork, and during the writing of this review report, the tragic deaths of Sr. Imelda Carew and of a sister colleague in the SE Province have occurred. The reviewers and the NBSCCCI wish to offer their sincere condolences to the members of the families of these two Sisters, as well as to all of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland.]

## **Introduction**

While all Church authorities on the island of Ireland are properly constituted according to Canon Law and Civil Law, this has not led to any sort of standardisation in the way in which these authorities, of which there are in excess of 180, are structured. The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland has a unique structure, which influenced how this review was conducted. There are three provinces of the Congregation on the island of Ireland, the Northern Province, the South East Province and the South West Province. The Provincial Leadership Teams of each province are based in Athlone, Dublin and Cork respectively. While all three provinces come together in the Union of Presentation Sisters (Ireland), and while they share one overall child safeguarding policy and procedure and undertake some child safeguarding planning together, they are in fact quite separate legal entities.

Because of this structure, it was agreed between the three Provincial Leadership Teams and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) that a comprehensive review of child safeguarding would have to examine practices at Provincial level as well as at the higher Union of Presentation Sisters level. In effect the fieldwork for this review took place in three separate phases, visiting the South East, Northern and South West Provinces in turn over a period of five days.

The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland, hereinafter referred to as the Presentation Sisters, was founded by a Cork woman, Nano (Honora) Nagle (1718 – 1784) on Christmas Eve in 1775. For many years prior to the establishment of this new religious Congregation, Nano Nagle had been working to set up schools for the Catholic poor in Ireland at a time when there were few opportunities for Catholic children to receive any sort of formal education under the colonial system of government of that time. Catholic Emancipation was not achieved until 1829, so when Nano Nagle was active in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century, conditions for Catholics in Ireland were very oppressive. She opened her first small school in Cork in 1754, and by the time she died, there was a network of schools in place.

This commitment to the education of the poor continued both in Ireland and elsewhere, and the Presentation Sisters now have a presence in 21 countries in addition to Ireland, with a total membership of approximately 2,600 Sisters. Internationally, the Presentation Sisters is comprised of three related but separate entities, the Union of Presentation Sisters, the Conference of Presentation Sisters of North America, and the Society of Australian Congregations, which together make up the International Presentation Association, formed in 1988<sup>1</sup>. Ireland is part of the Union of Presentation Sisters, which was formed by Papal decree in 1976<sup>2</sup>. The Union incorporates most of the countries to which Presentation Sisters in Ireland travelled as part of their missionary activity. This somewhat complicated structure is indicative of a culture of democracy and decentralization within the Presentation Sisters that

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<sup>1</sup> <http://internationalpresentationassociation.org>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.presentationistersunion.org>

is quite marked and distinctive, and is very different to what is encountered in more centrally governed religious Congregations.

A Congregational Leadership Team has overall responsibility for promoting the unity of the Congregation within the Union of Presentation Sisters. This five-member international team is elected at the Congregational Gathering which takes place every six years, the most recent of which was held in 2012. The Congregational Leadership Team is located in Monasterevin, Co. Kildare.

The governance situation within Ireland is changing, and two provinces, the Northern and the South East, have voted to come together in a new amalgamated province. This will become effective from January 1st, 2015. Thereafter, there will be two Presentation Sisters provinces in Ireland.

This review report however addresses the situation as it exists in July 2014, with three separate but related provinces on the island of Ireland, which are self-governing, but which cooperate in a number of important ways. The Presentation Centre for Policy & Systemic Change was established in 1999 as an inter-provincial initiative and the Presentation Sisters Ireland Plan for Ministry 2007 – 2012 was developed through this centre. The Mission Statement adopted by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland in this plan states that:

*In a world where there is joy and hope, great beauty, abundance and creativity but also hunger and destitution, social exclusion, destruction of our planet, inequality between 'One-Third' and 'Two-Thirds' world and a crisis of values and meaning; and inspired by the Spirit which shaped the mission of Jesus and the work of Nano Nagle, our Mission is to promote a more compassionate, just and sustainable world. This mission is influenced by the two powerful forces, which have formed and sustained Presentation commitment since its foundation:*

- *The spirit-filled mission of Jesus (Luke 4:18)*
- *Education, which for Nano Nagle was a way of bringing about personal and social transformation<sup>3</sup>.*

The degree of cooperation is described on the Presentation Union website as follows:

*While the three Irish provinces operate as separate units, they also work together on a variety of projects and issues. They have set up inter-provincial structures to facilitate this work. In particular they have set up the Presentation Centre for Policy & Systemic Change.*

*The Centre was established in 1999 to enable them to engage jointly in strategic thinking about the future development of their work in ministry. The Centre's work covers four broad areas: learning innovation; social inclusion; influencing public*

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<sup>3</sup> Presentation Sisters Ireland – Plan for Ministry 2007 – 2012, p.16

*policy, and human rights / ecology. The Centre recently launched a Plan for Ministry for the next five years.<sup>4</sup> (2007 - 2012)*

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland have sought a way to remain relevant to the spirit of their founder and to the needs of the world in the 21st Century, while operating within the parameters of their resources and traditions. At their Congregational Gathering in 2012 they reiterated their commitment to ‘...to be immersed in the lives of poor and marginalized people...’ They have now largely divested themselves of the ownership and management of Irish secondary schools through the formation of the Ceist Trust, the operation of which is explained as follows on its website:

*Five Catholic Religious Congregations engaged in post primary education for over three and a half centuries –**Daughters of Charity, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of the Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart** – have, in the spirit of their Founders, together established **CEIST – Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust**, thus providing a new moral and legal trustee framework enabling their schools to continue to offer post-primary Catholic education into the future as a viable option and as an integral part of the Irish school system<sup>5</sup>.*

The Congregation is also well advanced in its efforts to transfer responsibility for primary schools to the ownership and management of the parishes in which they are based, or through amalgamation with other primary schools in their locality. The Sisters however continue the development of radical educational initiatives, some of which will be mentioned in this report.

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland have a number of interprovincial projects in Ireland, which are the Presentation Ireland Ecology Project, *iScoil*, Social Inclusion, and the Global Education Experience (GEE). Full descriptions of these four inter-provincial projects can be accessed at the following websites: [www.presentation.ie/ecology](http://www.presentation.ie/ecology) ; <http://www.iscoil.ie> ; [www.presentation.ie/social\\_inclusion](http://www.presentation.ie/social_inclusion) ; and <http://www.presentationistersunion.org/news>. The three Provincials also take shared responsibility for child safeguarding in the children’s services in Slovakia that are part of the Presentation Sisters mission outreach in that country. Within the confines of this review report, detailed descriptions of these very interesting and worthwhile initiatives cannot unfortunately be provided. What is important from the perspective of this review is that child safeguarding has been and continues to be an integral part of the planning and operation of all of these projects.

Each of these projects is covered by a Child Safeguarding Policy and they have all had an internal safeguarding audit between April and June 2014.

The *Presentation Sisters Ireland Plan for Ministry 2007 – 2012* is essentially a charter for change and has the stated purpose of giving direction to the Congregation’s ministry. The plan grew out of the commitments made at the Congregational Gathering in 2006. The 51-

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<sup>4</sup> [www.presentation.ie/downloads/Plan\\_for\\_Ministry.pdf](http://www.presentation.ie/downloads/Plan_for_Ministry.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ceist.ie/about\\_us](http://www.ceist.ie/about_us)

page document provides the philosophical and policy foundations for all of the work of the Congregation on the island of Ireland, including the inter-provincial projects.

The Congregational Gathering in 2012 called on the Presentation Sisters to develop further collaboration. In June 2013 at a meeting of the Interprovincial Leadership Teams of Ireland and England, it was decided to invite interprovincial ministries and larger Presentation Centres to explore the possibility of increased collaboration. In November 2013, thirteen projects/centres attended a meeting in the Mount St. Anne's Conference and Retreat Centre to start a process of exploring possibilities for further collaboration. Work on this has continued since then and a further meeting is planned for September 2014.

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland at one stage in their history owned and operated two children's residential centres in Co. Tipperary. In their statement of 25/11/2009, the Leadership of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland described this involvement in residential child care:

*Institutional childcare began for the Congregation when a little girl, aged about three, strayed into the grounds of Presentation Convent, Thurles, on a Fair Day in 1868 and was never claimed. The Sisters decided to look after her. She was soon joined by other children, sent by the social workers of the day. Out of this emerged the first Presentation Orphanage. In time the building became too small and a new orphanage was opened in Dundrum, Co Tipperary. This was one of two Orphanages/Industrial schools established by the Presentation Sisters, the other being in Cashel, Co Tipperary (1869-1969). The Kennedy Report (1973) indicated that a Group Home approach was better for children and so the Congregation closed Dundrum and built three Group Homes in Fethard, Co Tipperary<sup>6</sup>.*

The Group Home in Fethard remains in the ownership of the South East Province of the Presentation Sisters and they are still involved in its management. However, plans are in place to transfer this ownership to a not-for-profit private company by the end of 2014. The Presentation Sisters South East Province made a statement to the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and this is referenced in the Ryan Report<sup>7</sup>. The three provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland acting together have contributed to the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme established by the government, and information in this regard is already in the public domain.

This review report does not revisit the work of either the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse or the Residential Institutions Redress Board and the records of any individual cases dealt with by either of these statutory bodies are legally privileged.

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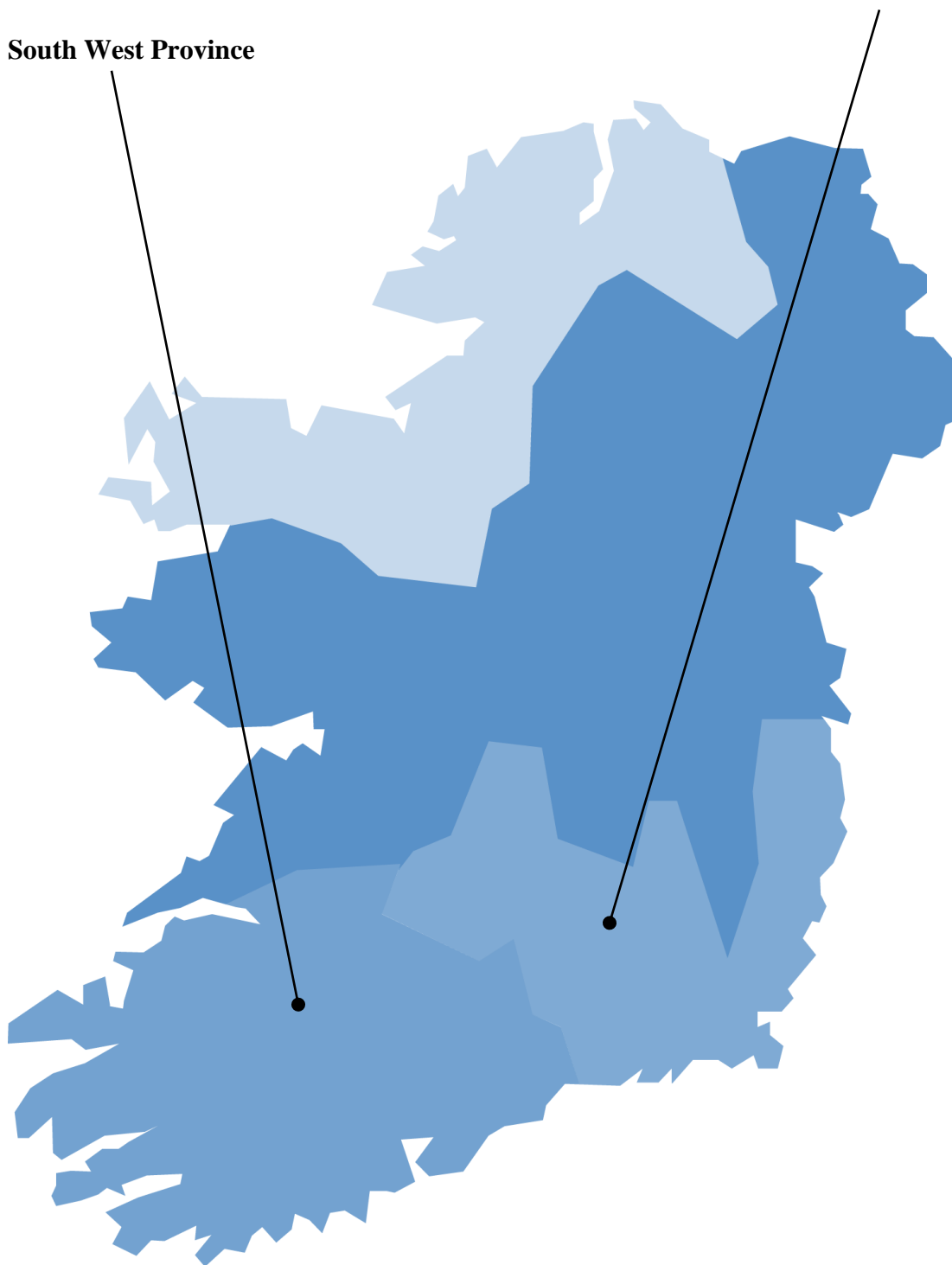
<sup>6</sup> Statement by the Leadership of the Presentation Sisters, Ireland, 25 November 2009

<sup>7</sup> CICA Investigation Committee Report Vol. I, p.25

**Northern Province**

**South East Province**

**South West Province**





This map of the three existing provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland is reproduced from the Presentation Union website. These provinces follow diocesan boundaries at their margins.

The balance between three independent provinces and a coordinated child safeguarding approach at all-island level is achieved through a somewhat complex but evidently effective structure.

Each of the three provinces has a Provincial and a Provincial Leadership Team (PLT). Reporting relationships and accountability at Provincial level is to the Provincial and PLT. (The Congregational Leadership Team has an international remit and is not part of the Irish leadership structure).

When the Presentation Sisters in Ireland want to achieve something that has all-island application, the three Provincial Leadership Teams come together as the Interprovincial Leadership Team (IPLT). The Interprovincial Leadership Team on behalf of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland wanted to coordinate child safeguarding and acted in the following ways:

- It approved the Presentation Safeguarding Children policy and procedures document to be followed by all Presentation Sisters.
- It ensured (and ensures) that Safeguarding Children policies and procedures are in place for all Presentation Interprovincial Projects.
- It appointed (and appoints) suitable people to Child Safeguarding roles in Interprovincial ministries.
- It supported (and supports) the Interprovincial Safeguarding Children Committee through funding etc.

To simplify reporting relationships and accountability for the various Interprovincial Projects, the SE Provincial Sr. Imelda Carew was appointed to be the responsible leader at national level. This responsibility will be rotated when PLTs are changed. To ensure that there is clarity around reporting of child protection concerns by all Interprovincial Projects, one Provincial Designated Officer (DO) also acts as Interprovincial Projects DO.

The IPLT appointed an Interprovincial Safeguarding Children Committee and this group is accountable back to the IPLT. The Interprovincial Safeguarding Children Committee is responsible for:

- Drawing up and reviewing as necessary the Presentation Sisters child safeguarding policy and procedures in line with the guidelines of the NBSCCCI.
- Checking and approving the policies and procedures of interprovincial ministries.
- Keeping an up to date record of training for these ministries.
- Checking and following up the annual self-audits from these ministries.
- Developing child safeguarding within the Presentation Sisters in Ireland.

The work of the Interprovincial Safeguarding Children Committee is discussed later in this report.

## **Description of the three Provinces**

Some details of the three independent provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland are set out below. These details are as accurate as possible, bearing in mind that the residences and activities of 600 Sisters are being summarised here. These three tables attempt to capture the profile of each province, while at the same time showing how they differ one from the other.

### **South East Province**

<b>Number of Sisters</b>	<b>Average age</b>	<b>Ministry Projects – under the Auspices of the Province</b>	<b>Ministries engaged in include</b>
171	78	Preschool, Dungarvan Nagle Centre, Waterford Boarding School, Thurles Playschool, Waterford	Pre-school Primary School Secondary School Counselling Bereavement Groups Language support Retreat work Prayer Groups Pastoral work Teaching Music Global Education Experiences
<b>Number of houses</b>		<b>Other Projects</b>	
31		MAST Homework Club, Mayfield, Clondalkin St. Bernard's Group Home, Fethard, Co. Tipperary	

### **Northern Province**

<b>Number of Sisters</b>	<b>Average age</b>	<b>Ministry Projects – under the Auspices of the Province</b>	<b>Ministries engaged in include</b>
200	78	Three Primary schools in Archdiocese of Tuam Mount St. Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre, Co. Laois Nursing Home, Kilcock	Teaching (6 Sisters) Psychotherapy School Boards of Management Pastoral development Family Support Literacy for migrants Bereavement Groups School chaplaincy Community development St. Vincent de Paul Prayer Groups Global Education Experiences
<b>Number of houses</b>		<b>Other Projects</b>	
27			

### **South West Province**

<b>Number of Sisters</b>	<b>Average age</b>	<b>Ministry Projects – under the Auspices of the Province</b>	<b>Ministries engaged in include</b>
226	76	Nano Nagle Centre, Ballygriffin, Co. Cork*	Teaching (3 Sisters) School Boards of Management Homework club Children’s liturgy Youth work Family Support Bereavement Groups Literacy for migrants Pastoral care St. Vincent de Paul School chaplaincy Sacramental preparation Global Education Experiences
<b>Number of houses</b>		<b>Other Projects</b>	
52			

\*Birth place of Nano Nagle

+Location of Nano Nagle’s grave

The various ministries that the Sisters engage in are undertaken professionally, or in the majority of cases, on a voluntary basis. It is striking just how many ‘retired’ Sisters have never stopped working. The oldest sister actively involved in ministry is 94 years old. This capacity for engagement and involvement is reflected in the manner in which older Sisters are anxious to know about developments in child safeguarding and are keen participants in briefing and training sessions. The reviewers were impressed with the way in which safeguarding has become a very normal and integrated consideration in the day to day life and work of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland.

## **STANDARDS**

This section provides the findings of the review. The template employed to present the findings are the seven standards, set down and described in the Church guidance, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities that minister on the island of Ireland, including the Presentation Sisters. The seven standards are:

**Standard 1** A written policy on keeping children safe

**Standard 2** Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

**Standard 3** Preventing harm to children:

- recruitment and vetting
- running safe activities for children
- codes of behaviour

**Standard 4** Training and education

**Standard 5** Communicating the Church's safeguarding message:

- to children
- to parents and adults
- to other organisations

**Standard 6** Access to advice and support

**Standard 7** Implementing and monitoring the standards.

Each standard contains a list of criteria, which are indicators that help decide whether this standard has been met. The criteria give details of the steps that a Church organisation, diocese or religious Congregation, needs to take to meet the standard and ways of providing evidence that the standard has been met.

## **Standard 1**

### **A written policy on keeping children safe**

*Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.*

Compliance with Standard 1 is only fully achieved when a religious meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

#### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>1.1</b>	The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Met fully
<b>1.2</b>	The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation (e.g. the Bishop of the diocese or Provincial of a religious congregation).	Met fully
<b>1.3</b>	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Met fully
<b>1.4</b>	The policy is reviewed at regular intervals no more than three years apart and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or legislation.	Met fully
<b>1.5</b>	The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work e.g. within a church building, community work, pilgrimages, trips and holidays.	Met fully
<b>1.6</b>	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Met fully
<b>1.7</b>	The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.	Met fully
<b>1.8</b>	The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.	Met fully
<b>1.9</b>	The policy should be created at diocese or congregational level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the diocesan or congregational policy and approved by the relevant diocesan or congregational authority before distribution.	Met fully

Two documents are relevant to Standard 1, and both have been created for use across all of the activities of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland. The first of these is entitled the *Congregational Child Safeguarding Policy*, which was signed by the five-person Congregational Leadership Team on 01/03/2013. This three-page policy statement is generic to all of the elements (Provinces and Units) that make up the Union of Presentation Sisters. It

includes the clear statement that *All Congregational members are required to comply with this document*<sup>8</sup>. The document references the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is commended. This is relatively rare for a document issued by a Church authority in Ireland. The policy has three sections, guiding principles, guidance for ministry and leadership commitment. Despite its brevity, this is a comprehensive and well written document that can provide the foundations for more detailed local policy and procedural guidance. It is available on the website <http://www.presentationistersunion.org>

The three provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland have developed a more complete 46-page document entitled *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)*, which was updated in June 2013 from their previous documents of October 2007 and June 2010. This policy document is structured with reference to the seven safeguarding standards, stating how each of them will be implemented. This standards based approach is mirrored in the safeguarding policies of individual ministries, thus seeking to integrate the standards with practice. The reviewers commend this commitment to promoting best safeguarding practice. All three documents are signed by the relevant Provincial Leader.

In the Preface of the June 2013 document it is stated that *All Presentation personnel (Presentation Sisters, employees, volunteers) are required to accept, in writing, this document*. In order to ensure that this in fact happens, each province has a Coordinator of Safeguarding whose responsibility it is to ensure that all personnel have received the policy document and have signed the pro-forma form stating that they have received, read and intend to follow the child safeguarding policy and procedures document. In order to track this compliance, the Presentation Sisters have developed a special spreadsheet in which the following information is recorded for every member:

- Name
- Nature of work with children
- Nature of work with vulnerable adults
- Location of work
- Works alone or with others
- Name of programme
- Date of Training
- Name of Trainer
- Location of Training
- Certificate received
- Garda Vetting and date of clearance

Each province maintains its own copy of the spreadsheet containing these details on their Sisters, and the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinators make sure that they are kept up to date. This development is highly commended and is an exemplar of how a simple but extremely useful database can be constructed and maintained.

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<sup>8</sup> Congregational Child Safeguarding Policy, p. 3

On the basis of the information provided, the Presentation Sisters in Ireland are fully compliant with Criteria 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.

In addition to the Irish safeguarding children policy document, the Presentation Sisters have also developed specific guidance for services that interface with children and young people, such as the Mount St. Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre – *Safeguarding Children Policy* document, adopted on 31/01/2011, and the Global Education Experience Presentation Project Network – *Child Safeguarding Policy*, adopted on 14/11/2012. The Mount St. Anne's Centre in Co. Laois is managed by the Northern Province of the Presentation Sisters and among the groups for which it caters are schools that come for day retreats. The Global Education Experience Presentation Project Network (GEEPPN) offers Irish teachers and students a work experience in the developing world and it is an interprovincial Presentation project. Both Mount St. Anne's Centre and the GEEPPN have their own Child Protection Designated Officer.

The SE Province of the Presentation Sisters operate a number of projects that cater for children and young people, including the MAST After-school Homework Club in Mayfield, Clondalkin, a playschool in Waterford, an IT training facility for adolescents named the Nagle Centre in Waterford, a pre-school in Dungarvan and a boarding school in Thurles. The reviewers have seen confirmation that each of these projects has its own child safeguarding policy and procedures and its own Designated Officer and all have been subject to an internal safeguarding audit.

The reviewers also saw the safeguarding children policy and procedures of the Nano Nagle Centre in Spisske Podhradie, Slovakia, adopted on 02/03/2013. Slovakia is a mission development from the Presentation Sisters in Ireland, and the Nano Nagle Centre there is a day care facility for children. While there is no Slovakian requirement for this service to have a child safeguarding policy and procedure, it is an indication of the commitment of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland to child safeguarding that they have developed and iterated such a policy. The document is written in both Slovak and English.

On the evidence examined, the Presentation Sisters in Ireland are fully compliant with Criteria 1.5 and 1.9.

The all island *Safeguarding Children Policy Document* of June 2013 does address what can happen to a member about whom child safeguarding concerns arise, and the document provides good information in a five-page appendix on the definitions and signs and symptoms of child abuse. Therefore the Presentation Sisters are compliant with criteria 1.6 and 1.7 of the NBSCCCI Standards.

Finally, on page 12 of the safeguarding children policy document of June 2013, the following statement is made in bolded italics:

*All allegations of abuse against a member of the Congregation or against a lay person who is an employee or volunteer in a Presentation ministry, shall be reported, without delay, to the civil authorities by the Provincial Designated Officer or the local Designated Officer, as appropriate.*

This unequivocal statement meets the requirements of compliance with Criterion 1.8 of the NBSCCCI Standards.

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland have also produced a small fold-over leaflet entitled *Summary of Presentation Sisters' Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures Document (2013)*, which includes support contact details, the Presentation Sisters' safeguarding children policy statement, principles, basic procedures to be followed and codes of behaviour. This short and easy to read document is commended.

**Recommendation 1**

**That in addition to the *Congregational Child Safeguarding Policy* on the Presentation Sisters website, the more detailed *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* should also be made available on this website.**



## **Standard 2**

### **Management of allegations**

*Children have a right to be listened to and heard: Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the Church and to civil authorities.*

Compliance with Standard 2 is only fully achieved when a religious Congregation meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>2.1</b>	There are clear child protection procedures in all Church organisations that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child (historic or current).	Met fully
<b>2.2</b>	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.	Met fully
<b>2.3</b>	There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.	Met fully
<b>2.4</b>	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.	Met fully
<b>2.5</b>	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.	Met fully
<b>2.6</b>	There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute.	Met fully
<b>2.7</b>	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI.	Met fully

**Table 1**

**Incidence of safeguarding allegations (sexual abuse) received within the Presentation Sisters in Ireland (all three provinces) against members, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to time of review.**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>1.</b>	Number of Sisters against whom allegations have been made since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the review.	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	Total number of allegations received by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland since 1 <sup>st</sup> January, 1975.	<b>2</b>
<b>3.</b>	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána/PSNI involving Sisters since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.	<b>2</b>
<b>4.</b>	Number of allegations reported to the TUSLA/HSE/HSC (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE,) involving Sisters of the Congregation since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.	<b>2</b>
<b>5.</b>	Number of Sisters (still members of the Congregation) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.	<b>1</b>
<b>6.</b>	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.	<b>1</b>
<b>7.</b>	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation has been made and who are in ministry.	<b>0</b>
<b>8.</b>	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who are out of ministry, but are still members of the Congregation.	<b>0</b>
<b>9.</b>	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who are retired.	<b>1</b>
<b>10.</b>	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Congregation / religious life.	<b>0</b>
<b>11.</b>	Number of Sisters of the Congregation who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.	<b>0</b>

**Footnote:** The term allegation in this table includes complaints and expressions of concern

The focus of NBSCCCI reviews of Church authorities in Ireland is on allegations about the sexual abuse of children and Table 1 above contains the details of the two allegations that have been brought to the attention of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland in all three provinces. One allegation was made in 2001 by a woman against a sister who had died in 1977, so no criminal investigation or HSE assessment of risk was possible. The complainant did not

approach the Congregation herself but had a solicitor write on her behalf from another country.

The other concern was raised by a second woman in 2009 in a phone call to the offices of the NBSCCCI. This was about an elderly retired sister, but the complainant did not wish to pursue the matter with An Garda Síochána. The details of what was complained of would not generally be considered to constitute child sexual abuse. HSE was immediately contacted by the relevant Designated Officer and having considered the information shared, declared that it was satisfied that no risk to any child existed. The complainant in this case was offered counselling support.

The reviewers examined the case files generated from these two referrals and these were well constructed and contained all of the information that would be required to be recorded and kept in such cases.

For completeness and to establish the extent to which the Presentation Sisters in Ireland take a compassionate approach to complainants, the reviewers also read all of the files that have been created to record concerns, complaints and allegations about physical abuse and/or emotional abuse, at the request of the Provincial Leaders. It needs to be borne in mind that the Department of Education of the Republic of Ireland allowed the *moderate physical chastisement* of primary school pupils in certain circumstances, until a Ministerial directive was issued in February 1982. Without any statutory and objective definition of what constituted moderate physical chastisement, it is probable that some teachers in Ireland applied excessive force in physically punishing children in their classrooms. The reviewers however are not in any position to express a view on the use of corporal punishment by any Presentation Sister who was a primary school teacher prior to the February 1982 Ministerial directive.

In total, 8 adults have complained at different times that they had been physically abused (all prior to 1982) by a total of 15 Presentation Sisters in Ireland who had been their teachers. By the time these complaints were received, 10 of the named sisters were already deceased, 4 were elderly and retired and 1 had left religious life. In the cases of at least 4 of the teachers alleged to have physically abused their pupils, there are doubts about the correct identities of the sisters named.

A further second-hand concern was raised by an adult who alleged that they had witnessed a named teaching sister beating a child pupil. No complainant was identified. However, the HSE recommended that a professional risk assessment would be conducted on the named sister and this was completed with her full cooperation. No evidence of any risk to children was established.

The types of emotional abuse complained of involved alleged name calling or being embarrassed in public.

As already noted, the Presentation Sisters have one child safeguarding policy and procedures, *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of*

*the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)*, published in June 2013 for implementation in all three provinces in Ireland. This document is consistent with legislation and national child protection guidance contained in *Children First*, 2011. The 47-page document is very complete and is written in an accessible and easily understood way.

Each of the three provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland has a named Designated Officer for Safeguarding Children and the reviewers met and interviewed each of these. Their roles and responsibilities are clear and well understood by each responsible sister. In addition each province also has a nominated Coordinator of Safeguarding whose responsibility it is to ensure that what needs to be done in the development of safeguarding in their province is being done. This includes the circulation of safeguarding documentation and the communication of safeguarding information to all sisters in the province and ensuring that training and vetting are being kept up to date.

Internal communication within each province is facilitated by the use of internal newsletters. These were checked by the reviewers who established that child safeguarding information is regularly communicated through this medium. For example in one province, 22 newsletters circulated between March 2005 and May 2014 contained some specific mention of child safeguarding. Communications within provinces are also maintained through meetings in the larger convents and cluster meetings of smaller houses and through letters to community leaders with information to be shared with the sister members of their houses. Based on these practices, Criteria 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of Standard 2 are met fully.

Criteria 2.4 and 2.6 relate to the proper recording, storage and sharing of information about child safeguarding concerns. The reviewers visited all three Provincial offices and have verified that proper case records have been compiled on all reports made to the Presentation Sisters in Ireland regarding the possible abuse of a child or young person. The reviewers have also established that these case records are securely and confidentially stored and that access to them is strictly limited.

*Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* has guidance on *Confidentiality and Information Sharing*, but this is at Appendix 8 towards the end of the document. It would be beneficial to reference Appendix 8 at point 10 on Page 11, so that the reader can more easily access the additional guidance. This matter is editorial and can be addressed when the document is next being reviewed and revised.

Criteria 2.4 and 2.6 are both fully met.

*Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* contains a paragraph on *Complaints Procedure* on Page 21. This has been expanded through the production of an *Errata* list by the Congregation in which there is an additional statement that:

*If a person still feels aggrieved having gone through the complaints procedure, each Province will provide access to trained personnel who will address the grievance.*

A new appendix has also been added to the document which is a pro-forma General Complaints Form, which contains a commitment to a timeframe for dealing with a complaint, as far as possible, within three weeks of receiving it. These changes were circulated to all Presentation communities and projects in Ireland. This is an example of an effective way of addressing a matter without having to wait the next iteration of a revised document. Criterion 2.5 is met fully. The Congregation is commended for establishing a target by which time a complaint will be dealt with, along with a process of appeal.

All child safeguarding guidance produced by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland contains the requisite contact information for An Garda Síochána or PSNI, and for Tusla or the relevant Health and Social Care Trust. The unified policy and procedures document also has details on Towards Healing, the NBSCCCI and the HSE National Counselling Service. Criterion 2.7 is deemed to be met fully

### **Standard 3**

#### **Preventing Harm to Children**

*This standard requires that all procedures and practices relating to creating a safe environment for children be in place and effectively implemented. These include having safe recruitment and vetting practices in place, having clear codes of behaviour for adults who work with children and by operating safe activities for children.*

Compliance with Standard 3 is only fully achieved when a religious Congregation meets the requirements of all twelve criteria against which the standard is measured. These criteria are grouped into three areas, safe recruitment and vetting, codes of behaviour and operating safe activities for children.

#### **Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>3.1</b>	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.	Met fully
<b>3.2</b>	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.	Met fully
<b>3.3</b>	All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as required by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.	Met fully

#### **Criteria – Codes of behaviour**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>3.4</b>	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.	Met fully
<b>3.5</b>	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).	Met fully

<b>3.6</b>	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.	Met fully
<b>3.7</b>	There are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.	Met fully
<b>3.8</b>	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.	Met fully
<b>3.9</b>	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Met partially

#### **Criteria – Operating safe activities for children**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>3.10</b>	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Met fully
<b>3.11</b>	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.	Met fully
<b>3.12</b>	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, the Internet) to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation.	Met fully

While there are three distinct and separate provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland, a great deal of cooperation and coordination takes place between them in the area of child safeguarding. One sister, (based in the South West Province), has overall responsibility for Garda vetting within the three provinces, she is the authorised signatory who is recognised by the Central Vetting Unit of An Garda Síochána. The reviewers interviewed this Sister. She took over this responsibility from another sister in 2012 and she received training for her new role from An Garda Síochána. All Sisters, employees and volunteers working with the Presentation Sisters in Ireland are Garda vetted. Safe recruitment practices are followed by

all three provinces in line with the *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)*.<sup>9</sup>

The spread sheet developed by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland that was described under Standard 1 above is of great assistance in relation to tracking recruitment and vetting across all three provinces.

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland established an Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee in 2008 to ensure that all three provinces are following the same procedures in relation to child safeguarding, to coordinate child safeguarding training activities and to provide accountability for safeguarding management for the various inter-provincial projects. The reviewers met with this committee which has two representatives from each province, making up a membership of six (including the two designated trainers). All six members are in turn members of their Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee, so information flows in both directions, while ultimate decision making resides in each province. Among the issues overseen by the Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee are safe recruitment and vetting. In view of these observations, Criteria 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 are met fully.

The *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* has very detailed and extensive guidance on required behaviours for Presentation personnel and for children and young people. This includes a section on combating bullying; it covers whistle-blowing; it contains a section on a complaints procedure; and it deals with young people's disruptive behaviour appropriately. The document has a very good paragraph under this standard headed, *Giving children the confidence to speak out*. In the experience of the reviewers, such an explicit and helpful guidance is relatively rare and this section is a good exemplar of what can be done in terms of providing direction in a written policy. It is commended.

The Criteria 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 are met fully. Criterion 3.9 is considered by the reviewers to be met partially, in that while intimate care and children with disabilities are both mentioned in the *Code of Behaviour for Presentation Personnel*, more specific written guidance, perhaps in a discrete sub-paragraph, would be beneficial.

The guidance provided in the section of *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* on risk management and supervision of all activities involving children and young people is sufficient to meet the requirements of Criteria 3.10 and 3.11.

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<sup>9</sup> Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland), pages 16 & 17



## **Standard 4**

### **Training and Education**

*All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.*

#### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>4.1</b>	All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.	Met fully
<b>4.2</b>	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.	Met fully
<b>4.3</b>	Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person.	Met fully
<b>4.4</b>	Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Met fully

Policy and procedures can only be correctly implemented when the people who are expected to follow them have been trained to do so. As mentioned under Standard 1, the Presentation Sisters in Ireland have established a system whereby all sister members have to sign a pro-forma stating that they have received, read and will abide by the policy and procedures. This information is recorded on a spreadsheet which also charts their Garda vetting status and their child safeguarding training record, as well as information on their residential address and their work outside their house. This data base is one of the keys to ensuring that the impetus for training is maintained and it provides an at-a-glance system of needs identification and audit. It is expected that each active sister will receive refresher training every three years.

The Congregation has two Trainers who together cover the three provinces. These Sisters are attached to the South East and to the Northern Provinces, but their training remits extend to all three provinces on the island of Ireland. The Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee, on which the two Trainers sit, assists the coordination of training nationally and ensures that all Presentation communities and projects can benefit from their work. The reviewers met with both Trainers and also examined the three Provincial Training files in which all training events conducted are recorded and the overall training initiative is

monitored. Both Trainers are registered with the NBSCCCI and have completed the *Train-the-Trainers* course. They have each completed additional relevant child protection and other training to supplement their information and skills.

Essentially, child safeguarding training is given to all Presentation Sisters in Ireland, including older retired members and Sisters returning to Ireland from their missions abroad. Child safeguarding is considered to be part of the commitment of the Congregation to justice for all, including children. The international Congregational Leadership Team, which is based in Monasterevin, Co. Kildare has undergone child safeguarding training and this example 'from the top' has been a positive contribution to the overall training project within the Congregation. There is a tangible and energetic engagement with child safeguarding training across all three provinces.

The reviewers have seen evidence in the training files, that staff within the various Presentation Ireland projects, are also being provided with child safeguarding training and that personnel, religious and lay, who hold positions of special responsibility are provided with additional training related to this responsibility.

All four criteria in relation to Standard 4 are met fully.

## **Standard 5**

### **Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message**

*This standard requires that the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures be successfully communicated to Church personnel and parishioners (including children). This can be achieved through the prominent display of the Church policy, making children aware of their right to speak out and knowing who to speak to, having the Designated Person's contact details clearly visible, ensuring Church personnel have access to contact details for child protection services, having good working relationships with statutory child protection agencies and developing a communication plan which reflects the Church's commitment to transparency.*

#### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>5.1</b>	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.	Met fully
<b>5.2</b>	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.	Met fully
<b>5.3</b>	Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Met fully
<b>5.4</b>	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts / Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person.	Met fully
<b>5.5</b>	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.	Met fully
<b>5.6</b>	Church organisations at diocesan and religious Congregation level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.	Met fully

Each of the three provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland has a Designated Officer (DO) for child safeguarding, properly appointed by letter by their Provincial. These three DOs are known to all houses and projects within their province. They, along with each of the three Provincial Safeguarding Coordinators, make sure that information on safeguarding is properly displayed in every Presentation residence and project. The Presentation Projects in Ireland, described earlier, have an assigned DO, who is also known to her work constituency and part of her role is to oversee the provision and display of essential child safeguarding information. The reviewers interviewed all three Designated Officers and found them to be

knowledgeable about their responsibilities and conscientious about how they deliver on these.

Mention has been made earlier in this report of the specific section within the *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* under Standard 3 on giving children the confidence to speak out, and this is also relevant to Criterion 5.2, which is fully met.

The contact details of the Designated Officers (5.3) and statutory child protection services (5.4) are included in all the child safeguarding documents and information leaflets that are made available within the various residential and work units of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland.

The reviewers have made contact with the relevant Garda and PSNI offices and with the statutory child protection services in the Republic of Ireland (Tusla) and in Northern Ireland (Health and Social Care Trusts). In relation to the Gardai and the Tusla child protection service in the Republic of Ireland, they have stated that they are satisfied with the openness and cooperation they have with the Presentation Sisters in Ireland. At the time of writing neither statutory agency in Northern Ireland has responded to the request from the reviewers for their views

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland have produced a one-page A4 document headed, *How are our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Promoted?* This in effect is their statement of their communications policy. There are 10 separate but related statements in response to the prompt question at the top of this sheet, as follows:

1. *Our Irish Policy and Procedures document is distributed to all our Sisters and co-workers*
2. *All our ministries have their own document based on our national document, which they distribute to all their workers and funders, where they exist*
3. *Our summary document is distributed widely to our Sisters and co-workers and interested others*
4. *Parents / guardians are made aware of our safeguarding documents and are encouraged to offer suggestions re: safeguarding issues*
5. *Our annual self-audit is another instrument to keep awareness of child safeguarding issues and the seven standards of best practice in the consciousness of our Sisters and others who work with children.*
6. *Ongoing and updated training is a very important way of promoting our policy and procedures*
7. *Our policy statement and reference to our document is on the Congregational website*
8. *Our policy statement is displayed in all our places of ministry with children and in all our religious houses*
9. *The Safeguarding Committees are encouraging our ministries to include a reference to our safeguarding children policy in all our ministries' brochures and publications*

*10. The Safeguarding Committees are in the process of helping our Sisters and colleagues who work with children develop child friendly notices, information sheets and sessions to make children of the various age groups aware of how to keep safe and what to do if they feel worried or unsafe*

This has been reproduced here almost in full to demonstrate that a written communications policy is a relatively simple document to draw up for a Church authority. In the experience of the reviewers many authorities do not have such a statement. The above statement also shows a commitment to the openness and transparency envisaged in Criterion 5.6, which is met fully.

## **Standard 6**

### **Access to Advice and Support**

*Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.*

*Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.*

### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Met fully
<b>6.2</b>	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Met fully
<b>6.3</b>	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Met fully
<b>6.4</b>	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Met fully
<b>6.5</b>	Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.	Met fully

The three Presentation Sisters' provinces in Ireland have established good working relationships with the NBSCCCI and with Tusla, previously the HSE Children and Family Services. The evidence from the review is that when specialist guidance is required on any matter, this is appropriately sourced. The congregation contributes to *Towards Healing* and ensures that any complainants are provided with the information they need to access that service. The congregation has within its membership a number of counsellors, guidance counsellors and education specialists, all of who have networks of professional colleagues and this provides additional access to advice and information as required. The congregation functions on a very collective and democratic basis, which provides a real measure of support to Sisters who are in positions of responsibility. Criteria 6.1 and 6.2 are fully met.

Reference has already been made to the comprehensive policy and procedures document of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland - *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)*, and this has under Standard 2 very satisfactory guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused.

Prior to this review, the Presentation Union website had notices on each Provincial child safeguarding page inviting people forward. The following is the version included on the Northern Province child safeguarding page:

*We would like to invite anyone who has a concern about abuse by a Presentation Sister who has not yet come forward to do so either to the Gardaí (Harcourt Street 01 666 3437); TUSLA – Children and Family Agency (Duty Social Work Centre, 090 648 3106) or to our Designated Liaison Person (Sr. J C 086 847 6734) or to the National Board for Safeguarding Children Ph. 01 505 3018.*

As part of the child safeguarding structures developed by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland, Support Persons for complainants and Advisers for respondent sisters have been appointed and their functions clarified in the congregation's policy document. The reviewers interviewed two Sisters in each of these roles, i.e. two Support Persons and two Advisers. They were all well briefed about their responsibilities and had a good understanding of what they would be expected to do, if and when called on. However, none of these four Sisters has yet been asked to act within their nominated safeguarding role and so could not speak of any experiences in that regard.

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the Presentation Sisters in Ireland recruit and train a small number of lay Victim Support Persons, female and male, to form an all-Ireland panel along with the existing religious Sisters who are nominated Support Persons. This panel should be convened for a half-day briefing and training session every six months to ensure that they continue to be prepared to act if required.**

There has only been one allegation of sexual abuse against a living Presentation Sister, and this was made anonymously, so a full follow-through, including the allocation of an Adviser was not required. The person involved received support from her local religious community at the time.

The reviewers believe that Criteria 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 are met fully.

## **Standard 7**

### **Implementing and Monitoring Standards**

*Standard 7 outlines the need to develop a plan of action, which monitors the effectiveness of the steps being taken to keep children safe. This is achieved through making a written plan, having the human and financial resources available, monitoring compliance and ensuring all allegations and suspicions are recorded and stored securely.*

#### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>7.1</b>	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.	Met partially
<b>7.2</b>	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Met fully
<b>7.3</b>	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Met fully
<b>7.4</b>	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	Met fully
<b>7.5</b>	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met fully

The reviewers have examined Safeguarding Children Committee plans for all three of the provinces of the Presentation Sisters in Ireland. While such plans are very welcome and are encouraged, the reviewers are of the view that Criterion 7.1 requires more specific detail than what is contained in the plans reviewed. Dates for the achievement of goals targeted and the allocation of responsibilities to named individuals or groups would greatly strengthen the impact of the planning process. The fact that planning is taking place is commended. What is being promoted here is reaching the best practice standard.

It may be appropriate for the Presentation Sisters in Ireland to ask the Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee to produce an all island plan in 2015 when the changeovers in the leadership teams within the congregation have taken place. That committee is well positioned to author the plan, while the Provincial committees can oversee the implementation of the plan at province level. This may well be affected by the planned amalgamation of the Northern and South East Provinces in 2015 and the reviewers cannot predict what impact that change will have. Therefore the following recommendation is made in the light of organisational arrangements as they exist at the time of writing.



### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Presentation Sisters in Ireland charge their Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee with the task of producing in 2015 a written three-year plan showing what further steps will be taken to keep children safe, allocating responsibility for implementing these measures to named individuals and groups, and setting dates by which these will be completed.**

All of the evidence examined in the course of the fieldwork for this review, both in interviews and file records, indicates that sufficient resources of personnel and finance are being dedicated to child safeguarding activities by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland. When the three-year safeguarding children plan is available, the cost of its implementation can be computed and resources allocated in advance, as required.

The Presentation Sisters in Ireland through the work of the Provincial Safeguarding Children Coordinators and the use of the internal audit spreadsheet described earlier, as well as through the work of the Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee, are ensuring that there is oversight and monitoring of all child safeguarding within the Congregation and its activities. The positive contributions of the Provincial Safeguarding Committees as well as the people with safeguarding roles within the various communities and projects are also noted here.

While the Presentation Sisters in Ireland do not have responsibility for parishes, they do demonstrate within their projects involving children and young people an attitude of consultation with the users, their parents and other stakeholders about all aspects of their work, including safeguarding. The congregation could consider whether the time has now arrived to have more representation of young people in the various groups that undertake specific safeguarding tasks, such as the Safeguarding Children Committees at Provincial and union level.

The reviewers have had access to all case files stored in each of the three Provincial offices, and they are of the view that these contain all the requisite information, are well maintained and properly stored.

Criteria 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 are fully met on the basis of the data analysed.

In conclusion, the reviewers have seen a great deal of evidence of expertise, knowledge, skill and commitment among members of the Union of Presentation Sisters (Ireland) who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities, which have been applied to the development of an ever increasing awareness and the achievement of standards of best practice in child safeguarding within the Congregation and all of its activities and projects.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been conducting a National Audit of Religious Congregations in the Republic of Ireland, and the three provinces of the Union of Presentation Sisters (Ireland) have participated in this process. To date the report of this HSE audit has not been published.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

**That in addition to the *Congregational Child Safeguarding Policy* on the Presentation Sisters website, the more detailed *Safeguarding Children Policy Document of the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland)* should also be made available on this website.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the Presentation Sisters in Ireland recruit and train a small number of lay Victim Support Persons, female and male, to form an all Ireland panel along with the existing religious Sisters who are nominated Support Persons. This panel should be convened for a half-day briefing and training session every six months to ensure that they continue to be prepared to act if required.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Presentation Sisters in Ireland charge their Inter-Provincial Safeguarding Children Committee with the task of producing in 2015 a written three-year plan showing what further steps will be taken to keep children safe, allocating responsibility for implementing these measures to named individuals and groups, and setting dates by which these will be completed.**

**Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland**

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

1. To ascertain the full extent of all complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority (Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society) by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and who are ministering/or who once ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority, and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
2. If deemed relevant, select a random sample of complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious now deceased and who ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority.
3. Examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
4. To ascertain all of the cases during the relevant period in which the Church Authority
  - knew of child sexual abuse involving Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and including those clergy and/or religious visiting, studying and/or retired;
  - had strong and clear suspicion of child sexual abuse; or
  - had reasonable concern;
  - and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.

As well as examine

- Communication by the Church Authority with the Civil Authorities;
- Current risks and their management.

5. To consider and report on the implementation of the 7 safeguarding standards set out in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2009), including the following:
  - a) A review of the current child safeguarding policies and guidance materials in use by the Church Authority and an evaluation of their application;
  - b) How the Church Authority creates and maintains safe environments.
  - c) How victims are responded to by the Church Authority
  - d) What training is taking place within the Church Authority
  - e) How advice and support is accessed by the Church Authority in relation to victim support and assessment and management of accused respondents.
  - f) What systems are in place for monitoring practice and reporting back to the Church Authority.

### **Accompanying Notes**

#### **Note 1: Definition of Child Sexual Abuse:**

The definition of child sexual abuse is in accordance with the definition adopted by the Ferns Report (and the Commission of Investigation Report into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin). The following is the relevant extract from the Ferns Report:

*“While definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to context, probably the most useful definition and broadest for the purposes of this Report was that which was adopted by the Law Reform Commission in 1990<sup>10</sup> and later developed in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children, 1999) which state that “child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or that of others”. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:*

- *exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;*
- *intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;*
- *masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;*
- *sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal or anal;*
- *sexual exploitation of a child which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape, or other media) or the manipulation for those purposes of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse.”*

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<sup>10</sup> This definition was originally proposed by the Western Australia Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, 1987 and is adopted by the Law Reform Commission (1990) *Report on Child Sexual Abuse*, p. 8.

**Note 2: Definition of Allegation:**

The term allegation is defined as an accusation or complaint where there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse, including retrospective disclosure by adults. It includes allegations that did not necessarily result in a criminal or canonical investigation, or a civil action, and allegations that are unsubstantiated but which are plausible. (NB: Erroneous information does not necessarily make an allegation implausible, for example, a priest arrived in a parish in the Diocese a year after the alleged abuse, but other information supplied appears credible and the alleged victim may have mistaken the date).

**Note 3: False Allegations:**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland wishes to examine any cases of false allegation so as to review the management of the complaint by the Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society.

**Note 4: Random sample:**

The random sample (if applicable) must be taken from complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse made against all deceased Catholic clergy/religious covering the entire of the relevant period being 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 to the date of the Review.

**Note 5: Civil Authorities:**

Civil Authorities are defined in the Republic of Ireland as the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána and in Northern Ireland as the Health and Social Care Trust and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.