



**Review of Child Safeguarding Practice**  
**in the religious congregation of**  
**The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament**

**undertaken by**

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

**December 2015**

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## **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (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 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 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 Child Safeguarding Practice in the religious congregation of The Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament* 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 reviewer by the Provincial, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewer and the Provincial has confirmed this.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to Provincial of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament along with any recommendations arising from the findings.

## **Introduction**

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is an apostolic group of men whose ideal is to assist the Church in her efforts to form Christian communities whose centre of life is the Eucharist. They commit themselves to the implementation of this ideal in collaboration with lay persons engaged in Christian ministries.

For 150 years, priests, deacons, and brothers have reached all continents of the globe and continue the mission begun by St. Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist.

The Congregation was founded by Father Peter Julian Eymard in 1856 in Paris, France. He opened his first community on Rue d'Enfer in Paris. The work of preparation for First Communion, especially among adults, was the aspect of the new Eucharistic venture that had interested the archbishop of Paris and for which he had granted his approbation to the new group founded by Eymard.

Anticipating the renewal of the Church brought about by Vatican Councils I and II, Eymard had a vision of priests, deacons, sisters, and lay people living lives of total dedication to the spiritual values that are celebrated and contemplated in the Eucharistic celebration and in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1978, the British-Irish Region of the American Province was created and 9 years later, the British-Irish Province was created. In October 1987, the first Provincial Chapter was held.

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel on Bachelors Walk Dublin was opened on 1st October 1995, by then Archbishop of Dublin, Desmond Cardinal Connell, DD. It was re-located from its original site at 20, D'Olier Street, where it was opened in 1970.

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel provides the people of Dublin, shoppers, workers, tourists and visitors with a sanctuary where they can come to pray or to seek guidance or counselling.

In Ireland the Blessed Sacraments live in a small community of 5, in Dublin on Bachelors Walk. Their ministry is dedicated to adoration of the Eucharist. They say daily mass, hear confession and offer spiritual direction.

The British Irish Province also has small communities in Glasgow and in Liverpool. Across the three communities they have an association with 4 Eucharistic Groups:

- **Life in the Eucharist**

Life in the Eucharist (LITE) is a weekend retreat for adults to help them deepen their understanding of the Eucharist and recognize the implications of their relationship with Christ for their daily living. Developed in recent years by Fr. Robert Rousseu, SSS, of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, this programme of lay evangelisation is

now one of the primary ways of carrying out its Eucharistic mission – to impart the Congregation’s understanding of the Eucharist to all who are thirsting for Eucharistic spirituality, prayer and community.

- **Peoples Eucharistic League**

The People’s Eucharistic League is an association of men and women of all ages, who share with his religious Congregation, the inspiration of St. Peter Julian Eymard. The League is a way of helping people make the Blessed Sacrament the centre of their lives. For St. Peter Julian, the People’s Eucharistic League was an integral part of his plan to have the laity associate themselves with the work and spirit of his religious family. Members promise to spend one hour each month in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

- **Servitium Christi**

Servitium Christi is the Secular Institute of the Blessed Sacrament. A Secular Institute is a recognized way of living the Consecrated Life (i.e. with the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience) but yet remaining in the secular world rather than in a religious community setting. Each Secular Institute has its own individual spirituality. The spirituality of Servitium Christi is the Eucharistic spirituality of St. Peter Julian Eymard. (1811-1868). The members go to daily Mass, an hour of prayer in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and sharing in the Prayer of the Church. They also devote some time each day to Spiritual reading, and keep themselves informed of developments in the Church and the world. All of this is done under the guidance of Spiritual Directors.

Members are received into the Institute by making a Devotional Commitment after a period of discernment and familiarisation. Following three years of “First Formation”, the members may make her first profession of vows. These vows are renewed annually for six years, at which stage the member may make her perpetual profession of vows.

- **Eurocamp**

Each summer at the beginning of August there is a meeting in Europe of young adults organized by some Blessed Sacrament Religious. It takes place in different countries each year and brings together young people aged 18-35. It is dedicated to the developing the faith and Christian vocation of the participants. It tries to develop, with the participants, spirituality found on the fullness of the Eucharist. It is organized and run by priests and young lay people associated with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

## **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 *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 Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament. 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 order - 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 the Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament meet 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.   | Not Met                                      |
| <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.   | Partially met                                |
| <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                                    |

The Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are contained in an eight page booklet. The booklet sets out that the “Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Ireland consists of a community of six religious (priests and brothers) (that number is now five) who reside in our only residence in Ireland... The Blessed Sacrament Chapel is not a parish – it is in the parish of St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral, and does not have a school chaplaincy, or activities specifically for children.”

It sets out the policy statement for the Congregation, stating that all members will adhere to the policy and it is signed by the Provincial Superior. The policy booklet was written in May 2010 and has not been reviewed since then. Given that the revised standards of the Church are in process and should be in place by March 2016, there is no need for the Congregation to review their own policy document. The Provincial Superior has indicated his commitment to adopting and following the revised national standards and guidance as those of the Blessed Sacraments when approved by the Bishops Conference, the Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union.

The policy document although brief does cover all aspects required under Standard 1, with the exception of greater detail necessary to demonstrate how those who pose a risk to children are managed (Criterion 1.6). The document simply states “Those who harmed children will be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing, including participation in a treatment course at a recognised treatment centre”. The reviewer believes that more information about what this means in practice should have been inserted into the document. That said, as will be noted under Standard 6 below, in practice there has been engagement by respondent priests in assessments and treatment facilities, to assess the level of risk and reduce the likelihood of harm to children.

The overall assessment is that the policy document is brief in nature; however, given that the Congregation has limited or in fact no ministry with children, it has served its purpose, but should be replaced with a more detailed framework for practice when the revised standards are put in place.

There is no need for the reviewer to make recommendations in relation to Criterion 1.4, or Criterion 1.6 as the revised guidance will be adopted by the Congregation early in 2016.

## **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 the Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament meet 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 partially                                |
| <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.  | Not Met*                                     |
| <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                                    |

\*Denotes limited or no applicability

In written policy and guidance terms all of the criteria, with the exception of Criterion 2.5, are either partially or fully met. The Congregation's only ministry in Ireland is that within their chapel on Bachelors Walk, while the services are open to all age range, the reviewer was advised that there are no altar servers who are children, children do not attend any of the services and none of the ministry is with children under the age of 18. For that reason, the Congregation have not developed a general complaints procedure for children and the reviewer assesses that this is a reasonable approach to take here to now. When the Congregation adopt the revised standards, they will also adopt the guidance in relation to the management of complaints as outlined in Criteria 2.5. The reviewer will not therefore make a recommendation in relation to this.

In practice terms the management of allegations lacks structure. The case records are poor and do not in any way reflect the responses made by the Congregation. While there is evidence of risk assessments and treatment/counselling, there is limited evidence of other important aspects of case management as will be referenced below. There has been limited cause for notification to the civil authorities, as in one case the allegation was made directly to the Police and in the other case, none of the concerns give sufficient detail to establish if they were allegations of abuse and therefore notifiable. Further comment will also be made in relation to this.

**Recommendation 1:**

**The Provincial Leader must ensure that all records relating to the reporting of allegations and the written record of case management are maintained in line with the NBSCCCI's template and guidance on recording.**

**Table 1**

**Incidence of safeguarding allegations received within the Congregation of Blessed Sacrament in Ireland against Priests and Brothers, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to time of review.**

| <b>Congregation of Blessed Sacrament</b> |   |                      |
|--|---|----------------------|
| <b>1.</b>                                | Number of Religious Order members against whom allegations have been made since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the Review.  | <b>4</b>             |
| <b>2.</b>                                | Total number of allegations received by the Religious Congregation since 1 <sup>st</sup> January, 1975  | <b>6<sup>1</sup></b> |
| <b>3.</b>                                | Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána involving priests since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.   | <b>2</b>             |
| <b>4.</b>                                | Number of allegations reported to the Tusla/HSE (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE) involving priests of the Religious Congregation since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975. | <b>2</b>             |
| <b>5.</b>                                | Number of members (still members of the Congregation) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.  | <b>2</b>             |
| <b>6.</b>                                | Number of members against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.   | <b>2<sup>2</sup></b> |
| <b>7.</b>                                | Number of members against whom an allegation has been made and who are in ministry.   | <b>1</b>             |
| <b>8.</b>                                | Number of members against whom an allegation was made and who are “Out of Ministry, but are still members of the Congregation”.   | <b>1</b>             |
| <b>9.</b>                                | Number of members against whom an allegation was made and who are retired   | <b>0</b>             |
| <b>10.</b>                               | Number of members against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Congregation / priesthood.  | <b>1<sup>3</sup></b> |
| <b>11.</b>                               | Number of members 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>2</b>             |

<sup>1</sup> This figure may be larger – see Member D

<sup>2</sup> This relates to Member D who had also left the Order

<sup>3</sup> This relates to Member D who was also deceased

There have 6 allegations/suspensions/concerns against four member brought to the attention of the Congregation since 1974 up to the period of this review December 2015. Two of the respondent members are still alive and continue to be members of the Congregation. There are in addition allegations/suspensions/concerns against two deceased members, one of whom had already left the Congregation by the time he was convicted of child abuse. The case papers relating to the members who are alive along with those relating to one deceased member were examined as part of this review.

As already stated the records were not well documented, though they were in chronological date order. The written records do not reflect significant correspondence and action taken by the Congregation. As a result it was challenging for the reviewer to assess the pastoral response as well as the management of those accused. The reviewer has offered detailed guidance to the Provincial on the management of the concerns against living members. The details recorded below provide a brief summary of the three cases examined during the review.

#### **Member A**

There are 4 concerns relating to Member A, about behaviour prior to him becoming a member of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Taken individually, none of the concerns provide sufficient evidence to reach the threshold of abuse. The concerns were raised in 2010 and 2011 and relate to the period 1971 to 1976. In the absence of fuller information, or complainants coming forward, the Congregation was unable to assess the concerns. One of the concerns was notified to An Garda Síochána and TUSLA. The other 3 were vague, and insufficient information was given to enable a referral to the civil authority agencies. Member A was advised of the concerns and denied any wrong doing. He has been advised not to have any unsupervised contact with minors. He is a member in good standing.

#### **Member B**

Member B received a police caution for “lewd behaviour” with a minor in 2013 in an English jurisdiction. When he informed the Provincial Leader, he was placed on Administrative Leave immediately. There are no records of the management plan on file. The canonical inquiry started in 2013 and following the completion of legal matters, is now in the process of being completed.

#### **Member C (Deceased)**

The records relating to Member C are extremely limited, and state simply that there was a concern raised through a diocese to the Congregation, no details are given.

#### **Member D (Deceased)**

Member D joined the Congregation from another organisation where it was known that he had abused children in 1960s and 1970s. It is not clear whether this important information was shared with the Congregation as there is no record to suggest that was the case; the current Provincial was clearly not informed of the previous allegations. He ministered within the Congregation for 10 years but was removed from ministry following criminal proceedings for child abuse, within the other organisation. The Judge ordered that he be removed from the country. The Congregation moved him as requested, though he was not given any ministry. Following this, he left the Congregation, was dispensed from his Vows and was residing in the

South East of Ireland. Subsequently he was further charged and served a 4 month prison sentence for abuse of 4 boys in the mid 1960s in Dublin. Shortly after his release from jail, he died. Further allegations emerged prior to his death which were listed, but no further action could be taken due to the fact that he was deceased. It is not known how many children he abused, or whether he abused any as a Blessed Sacrament member. Once again the records are not fit for purpose.

The designated person of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is a priest based in Dublin. He relates to his Provincial who is based in Scotland. In reality it has been former provincials who managed cases and had responsibility for the case files. The designated person has not had any experience of reporting allegations and has limited involvement in all aspects of child safeguarding. This is due in the main to the limited ministry the congregation has with children, the limited number of allegations received and the direct management of cases by the Provincial Leader. The current Provincial has been in office for 5 years and has assumed responsibility for case management.

Overall in assessing practice in relation to reporting allegations and managing cases, the congregation appears to have taken reasonable steps to comply with the standard. In direct reporting terms, the congregation has not had to report any allegations, as in one case there was a self-report by the respondent member and in the other case, the allegations were reported by a third party as they predated the ministry of the member within the Blessed Sacraments. In relation to the other concerns noted, there is insufficient information given by the complainant to assess whether the threshold of reasonable grounds for concern has been reached. In these instances, the reviewer would always advise that consultation with the civil authority agencies should take place.

In order to ensure prompt reporting and greater clarity around assessments of thresholds, the reviewer recommends that the role of the designated person is clarified and removed to an appropriate person outside the congregation. While it has not happened, given the small number of members living in Ireland (6 in total) and across the Province (15 in total) there could be conflict of interest if the DLP remained as a member of the Congregation.

In addition the Provincial should ensure that appropriate external advice is sought on each case, either through establishing an advisory panel, or by joining the National Case Management Committee (NCMC). This would provide the Provincial with independent guidance on all aspects of case management.

**Recommendation 2:**

**The Provincial Leader should appoint an external designated liaison person, and seek support and training for this person from the NBSCCCI and ensure there is clarity around the role and responsibilities within the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament's child safeguarding structure.**

**Recommendation 3:**

**The Provincial Leader should establish an Advisory Panel or join the National Case Management Committee to receive advice on all aspects of case management.**

### **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 the Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament meet 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 partially                                |
| <b>3.2</b>    | The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.  | Met partially                                |
| <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. | Not Met*                                     |

#### **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).      | Not Met *                                    |

|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
| <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.    | Not Met * |
| <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.  | Not met*  |
| <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. | Not Met*  |
| <b>3.9</b> | Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.   | Not Met*  |

**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.  | Not Met *                                    |
| <b>3.11</b>   | When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.   | Partially Met                                |
| <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. | Not Met                                      |

Where criteria are denoted with an \*, it is recognised that the range of activity relating to children and young people performed by the Congregation is very limited and in reality non-existent, therefore criteria has limited application. Given the few professed members resident in Ireland (5) and their very limited ministry, the reviewer also recognises that the Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament are required to be cognisant of and follow the Dublin Archdiocesan child safeguarding policies and procedures appropriate to the activities of their ministry.

In relation to Standard 3 the written guidance is very underdeveloped in the policy document of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Most aspects are minimally referenced, but require greater development to guide any member who may have ministry with children. The reviewer notes that in the everyday ministry of the members there is no contact with children and the Congregation does not provide any dedicated children's services. If any child attends the Blessed Sacrament chapel they would always be in the presence of and under the supervision of their parent/carer.

In spite of their limited ministry with children, the reviewer believes that there are measures that the Congregation could take to improve awareness amongst the members of good child safeguarding practice. These include adopting the new standards, being inducted as a community into the standards, and undergoing training in all aspects of the standards. In addition, in line with the Vetting Bureau Act 2012, all members who are priests are religious must undergo vetting, as their role in the advancement of religious beliefs may bring them into contact with children.

To assist them with all above developments, the following recommendations are being made:

**Recommendation 4:**

**The Provincial Leader should engage with the NBSCCCI to ensure that induction and preparation for adoption of the revised child safeguarding standards are in place by March 2016. This preparation should include the establishment of an appropriate safeguarding structure to meet the needs of this small Congregation.**

**Recommendation 5:**

**The Community Leader must pursue Garda vetting checks for all priests and religious ministering in Dublin.**

**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 partially                                |
| <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 partially                                |
| <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 partially                                |
| <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                                    |

As already stated there are a very small number of Blessed Sacrament members ministering in Ireland, and their ministry is with adults. Any training that has been provided to the Congregation is now out of date and requires considerable refreshing.

The Provincial Leader and Designated Liaison person have an awareness of proper reporting procedures in terms of allegations; but that seems to be the limit of their knowledge. In the past some of the members have attended child safeguarding training within Dublin Archdiocese, but not in recent years.

The approach by the Congregation to training seems to be based on the absence of ministry with children. Given the history of child abuse within the Church in Ireland and the allegations within the Congregation, the reviewer believes that the congregational members need to be more proactive about informing themselves on all aspects of good child safeguarding practice.

While there is nominally a child safeguarding committee, this committee seldom meets. It needs to be reconstituted and develop a plan for greater awareness of child safeguarding within the Congregation.

**Recommendation 5:**

**The Provincial Leader must ensure the establishment of a child safeguarding committee who should develop a safeguarding plan for the Congregation, which would include conducting a training needs analysis and seeking appropriate training sought to meet the needs of the Congregation.**

## **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<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>5.1</b>    | The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.   |  |
| <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.  | Not Met *  |
| <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.  | Not Met  |
| <b>5.6</b>    | Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.   | Not Met  |

**\*Denotes limited applicability**

In Ireland, the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament have one church, located on Bachelors Walk in Dublin. There are 4 priests, 1 brother and a postulant living and ministering within the community.

The ministry with children is limited, if non-existent, therefore the Congregation has not developed communications in relation to child safeguarding.

The written policy document as already stated is brief and limited in detail terms. The Congregation did not have a notice in the chapel porch advising of the Child Safeguarding policy or how to make a concern and there are no details on the website relating to child safeguarding.

During the fieldwork, the Provincial Leader did place a notice on the website advising of the NBSCCCI review and inviting anyone with a concern to come forward. To date no one has responded to this notice.

**Recommendation 6**

**The Provincial must ensure that there is information on public display regarding their child safeguarding policy with details of how to notify an allegation of child abuse.**

## **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 partially                                |
| <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 partially                                |
| <b>6.4</b>    | Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.  | Not Met                                      |
| <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 Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in Ireland is part of a UK Province which includes England and Scotland. The Provincial Office is in Scotland, where there appears to be support for the Provincial Leader on child safeguarding matters. He has also liaised with the NBSCCCI over allegations relating to Irish members. Advice has also been sought from specialist psychologists and experts working within case management to assist the Provincial in making decisions about risk presented by members.

Criterion 6.1 is therefore fully met.

There is an opportunity now for a greater connection with national and local agencies to ensure that this small congregation receives support on all aspects of child safeguarding,

including awareness raising, advice on case management and on the creation of safe environments for children. Criterion 6.2 is partially met.

Advice was sought from Tusla in December 2015 as part of the fieldwork; their response below is based on their review of the Congregation in 2013 and therefore is slightly out of date as follows:

***“Blessed Sacrament Fathers***

*This male Religious Order has been categorised as Category 1 meaning child sexual abuse allegation(s) have been made against a member(s) and its members may have ministry involving children in Ireland at present.*

*Five members currently reside in the Congregations one community in Ireland. Current ministry does not involve direct ministry with children.*

*Ministry of members includes:*

- *Administering the Lite in the Eucharist (LITE) Programme*
- *Youth 2000 Programme (Over 18s)*
- *Parish pastoral ministry to the Pilipino Community on behalf of the Dublin Archdiocese.*
- *Mass is held daily in the chapel in addition to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.*

*The single allegation against a now former member was first notified to a civil authority by a complainant. The former member was convicted for this allegation and was removed by the RO in ROI, at the request of the Court, to another jurisdiction of the RO.*

*Both a civil authority in the UK and the RO itself notified the civil authorities and a Catholic Church authority in Ireland of the allegation and perceived risk this former member posed upon his return to Ireland – when he left the Congregation.”*

In relation to Criteria 6.3 and 6.4, there is minimal reference within the policy document about accessing support but this needs greater development, particularly around counselling and pastoral responses. In practice, the review saw very little evidence of the Congregation reaching out to anyone who came forward with a concern or allegation. These deficits will be partly filled upon adoption of the revised policy and guidance by the Congregation. In addition, in line with Recommendation 2 – *The Provincial Leader should appoint an external designated liaison person, and seek support and training for this person from the NBSCCCI and ensure there is clarity around the role and responsibilities within the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament’s child safeguarding structure.* The role of the support person needs clarification.

## **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<br/>Met partially or<br/>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. | Not met  |
| <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.   | Not Met  |
| <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.                     | Not met  |
| <b>7.5</b>    | All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.  | Met fully  |

The reviewer accepts that criteria contained within Standard 7 holds limited practical application to the profile and ministry of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in Ireland. They do not have parish ministry but provide a chapel of Adoration in which masses are celebrated and the Sacrament of Reconciliation provided. They do not hold services for children, have altar servers, celebrate weddings or funerals.

Given the small number of Blessed Sacrament members and the limited extent of their engagement with children (only, if ever, in the presence of their parents/carers) the reviewer understands that a formal child safeguarding plan and its monitoring has not featured significantly for this small Congregation.

*Children's First Act (2015)* requires a safeguarding statement and this will place a legal requirement on the Blessed Sacraments to improve their awareness of and response to all aspects of child safeguarding.

The Congregational leadership and all 6 members will be required to work closely with the NBSCCCI in a way that is proportionate to their ministry with children, around ensuring full implementation of the revised standards and relevant indicators. A series of

recommendations have been made which should ensure greater awareness of the Church's child safeguarding policy and the development of a small safeguarding structure where responsibility for the creation of safe environments, training and communication are all addressed. In addition there have been recommendations to the management of allegations, recording and the role of the designated liaison person which would bring this congregation in line with the national standards and ensure access to advice and support in the management of allegations, suspicions and concerns.

In conclusion while aspects of the standards, including Standard 7 are not met, the reviewer is aware that Blessed Sacrament members engaged in ministry within Dublin Archdiocese are bound by the archdiocesan safeguarding policies and practices.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**The Provincial Leader must ensure that all records relating to the reporting of allegations and the written record of case management are maintained in line with the NBSCCCI's template and guidance on recording.**

### **Recommendation 2:**

**The Provincial Leader should appoint an external designated liaison person, and seek support and training for this person from the NBSCCCI and ensure there is clarity around the role and responsibilities within the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament's child safeguarding structure.**

### **Recommendation 3:**

**The Provincial Leader should establish an Advisory Panel or join the National Case Management Committee to receive advice on all aspects of case management.**

### **Recommendation 4:**

**The Provincial Leader should engage with the NBSCCCI to ensure that induction and preparation for adoption of the revised child safeguarding standards are in place by March 2016. This preparation should include the establishment of an appropriate safeguarding structure to meet the needs of this small Congregation.**

### **Recommendation 5:**

**The Community Leader must pursue Garda vetting checks for all priests and religious ministering in Dublin.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**The Provincial must ensure that there is information on public display regarding their child safeguarding policy with details of how to notify an allegation of child abuse.**

**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.

4. To consider and report on the implementation of the 7 Safeguarding Standards set out in *Safeguarding Children* (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>4</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.”

### **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

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<sup>4</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.

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.