



**Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the religious congregation of**

**The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de
Paul**

undertaken by

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

Date: February 2015

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Background

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

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

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

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Child Safeguarding Practice within the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul along with any recommendations arising from the findings. There was one allegation of physical/emotional abuse made against a deceased member. At the request of the Provincial, the reviewer examined the papers relating to this case, even though it fell outside the terms of reference for the review. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

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1. Introduction

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul is an international congregation whose motherhouse is situated in Paris. The community is divided into provinces and Ireland (North and South) is one province, with links to missions in Kenya and Nigeria. Each province is made up of local communities of between 3 to 18 sisters who work in the services of a particular area. The Daughters of Charity are present in:

- Belfast
- Wicklow
- Drogheda
- Dublin / city & county
- Galway
- Knock
- Lisnagry – Co. Limerick
- Cork

There are 183 members resident in Ireland with a median age of 75.

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

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul provide a large variety of services to children and adults. The majority of services offered by The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul are in collaboration with state agencies – in the case of childcare services with TUSLA (Child and family agency) and in the case of the adult disability services with the HSE.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul manage services on behalf of both TUSLA and the HSE. These services are funded directly by these state agencies. Integral to the provision of this funding is a submission by the congregation of its policies and procedures, (which are inclusive of child protection and safeguarding policies) and which have to be approved by the relevant state bodies prior to the granting of state funding.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul child protection policy and procedures are applicable to and implemented in those organizations which the congregation manages on behalf of the above named state agencies.

Each service area of operation is responsible for its own training programme in respect of the child protection policies as well as their implementation.

The wide range of services, the Sisters administer/ minister in, include:

- Intellectual Disability Services.
- Hospice.
- High support nursing unit in St. Joseph's Clonsilla.
- Services based in dedicated centre and community settings.
- Day services in Dublin/ Limerick include- early intervention, rehabilitative training, day activation and individualised therapies.

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- 3 Special Schools.

An intellectual disability service in Roscrea has recently come under the management of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, at the request of the H.S.E. This facility was previously operated by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary.

Homeless service

This service is in collaboration with De Paul Ireland providing shelter for people who are homeless or have addiction issues. The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul work as volunteers in this service provision.

Healthcare

St. Francis Hospice Raheny and Blanchardstown (4 sisters involved).

Education

1 Sister involved in St. Louise's School in Belfast as Chaplain.

1 Sister involved in primary education in Dublin.

1 Sister involved in secondary education in Cork.

Members of 11 boards of management.

Trustees of 8 schools, joint trustees in further 3 primary, 4 special needs school and 1 in Henrietta Street.

Involved in 4 special needs schools – 3 of these schools cater for children with intellectual disability and 1 targets early school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul had one voluntary secondary school for girls, Caritas College, Ballyfermot. This school is now a member of CEIST – EDUCENA Trust. In total, the combined number of students in these schools is 3430 students. The schools have independent safeguarding policies and procedures, in line with Department of Education and Skills guidelines.

Partnerships

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul is involved in two partnerships – The Vincentian Partnership for Justice in collaboration with The Vincentians; and The Society of St. Vincent De Paul and The Sisters of The Holy Faith. These partnerships activities include:

- Active citizenship – voter education programme.
- Research into the impact of poverty.
- Advocacy.

All of these programmes are facilitated with communities in disadvantaged areas. The Active Citizenship/ Voter Education programme is present in a number of counties involving 800 community groups. One sister works in the partnership full time and two others work in a voluntary capacity.

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Vincentian Housing Partnership

This service is based in North William St. Dublin and was run in collaboration with the Society of St. Vincent De Paul and The Vincentian Fathers. It comprises 19 transitional units of accommodation for vulnerable people. It transferred to de Paul Trust in 2011. A range of services are available for the client group including literacy, computer skills, money management and counselling. A six month to one year resettlement support programme is offered to people who have moved on from their transitional accommodation.

Child and Family Service

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul provide a range of therapeutic services for children and families in family centres. There are 9 family centres catering for a total of 900 families and 5 early education centres, catering for 370 children. One Sister is employed full time in the child and family service. All of the centres are within the greater Dublin area.

Across these services, in excess of 900 families attend the centres in the course of a year. 780 children attended the service in the last year, 431 boys and 349 girls.

New programmes have been developed through these centres recently including

- Outreach services, cooperative parenting programme (separated parents)
- Support group for fathers, anti-bullying programme – piloted in a number of schools in the Cherry Orchard area.

Suicide bereavement and Console Service

Two Sisters are employed by Console, an organisation which provides counselling for families bereaved through suicide.

Aftercare Services

There are also aftercare services to former residents provided by two Sisters in a full-time capacity, with other sisters working on a part-time basis

Family Tracing Service

One Sister is employed, full time with part time staff, providing a family tracing service for past recipients of childcare services.

Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul Community Services, Henrietta Street, Dublin

Founded in 1970's – services provided include:

- St. Mary's Day Nursery.
- Henrietta Street School – High support school for 20 young people at risk.
- St. Vincent's Community Training Centre – Vocational Training/ Personal Development for 60+ early school leavers and other vulnerable young people.
- Henrietta Adult and Community Education – Facilitation of return to education for 300 adults.
- Henrietta Senior Service Centre – Meals on Wheels educational and health related services, outreach, and social and pastoral activities.

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Killinarden Family Resource Centre

Opened in 1999 - includes

- Adult training and education programmes- with a view to return to work or further education. Childcare services are provided to facilitate attendance.
- Active Citizenship Programme.
- Facilities at the family resource center available to various youth and voluntary groups in the area. One Sister serves on the Board of Management of this facility.

Hollyhill Knocknaheeny, Cork, Family Centre

- Nursery with capacity for 57 children.
- Adult education and training, 3 Sisters serve on the Board of Directors.

Services for Older people

Based in Carnew, Co. Wicklow and Galway.

Prison Ministry

Two Sisters are employed in Wheatfield and Cloverhill. Two other Sisters work in a voluntary capacity in Dochas women's prison. One Sister works in prison ministry in Belfast.

Belfast

- Parish Ministry.
- Pastoral Care.
- Transitional Housing.
- Chaplaincy in school and prison.

Mission Outreach

The Sisters of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in Ireland established ministries in Kenya and Nigeria. Nigeria is now an independent province where Nigerian Sisters minister to marginalised communities in areas of Nigeria, Ghana and Burkina Faso. One Irish sister continues to work in Nigeria.

The congregation has produced separate child protection guidance for each of these provinces, copies of which were made available to the reviewer.

3. Profile of Members:

There are 181 members present in the island of Ireland, the age of the Sisters vary from 50+ years to 90+ years. 17 of the members are residents in nursing homes.

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The numbers of members of the congregation who work directly with children are as follows:

- 10-11 Sisters in parishes.
- 2 Sisters in Console – one full one part-time.
- 1 Sister in a school in the Republic of Ireland.
- 1 Sister is a Chaplain in Northern Ireland.
- 7 Sisters involved in disability services.
- 6 Sisters and 4 employed staff work in the Provincial Administration.
- 1 Sister is an art therapist.
- 4 Sisters minister in a hospice.
- 5 Sisters minister in prison chaplaincy/visitation.
- 1 Sister ministers in Respect.
- 2 Sisters minister in refugee services.
- 3 Sisters minister in mission development.
- Retired Sisters conduct prayer ministry.
- 3 Sisters work in the Justice Office.
- 4 Sisters work in SPRED

4. Policy and Procedures Document:

The policy and procedures document of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in Ireland outlines the NBSCCCI's seven standards. Each standard is addressed individually with attendant procedural guidance regarding the implementation of each standard e.g. how to respond to allegations of abuse, the creation of a safe environment, good management practice guidelines. The reviewer commends the emphasis on the paramount interests of the child in the policy document.

Each aspect in relation to the implementation of the standard is covered with a comprehensive set of appendices which include the role of the DLP, the advisory panel, sample recording forms, parental consent forms among others. In addition there is guidance on associated child protection policies e.g. whistle-blowing policies, bullying and sexual harassment policy and electronic communications policies.

The reviewer commends this document very highly. It is clear, detailed but yet concise and easy to understand. The reviewer also notes the formation of guidance documents in respect of the ministries in Kenya and Nigeria.

5. Structures:

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul have in place the following personnel in relation to their safeguarding children structure:

- Local Safeguarding representative. The role is outlined in their policy document.
- Designated Liaison Person. The duties are clearly outlined in the policy, though given the limited numbers of allegations this role holder has not been very active.
- Advisory Panel. This Panel has offered advice in relation to the one allegation against a deceased member of staff, received by the Congregation. The role and function of

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the panel is covered in the policy document, and they meet bi-annually and more frequently if required.

- Safeguarding Committee. This is an important committee which oversees the implementation of policy and training again its role and function is detailed in the policy and procedures document.

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

To date one allegation has been made against a member of the congregation. This allegation was notified to the congregation through a solicitor. An appropriate pastoral response was made by the congregation in respect of this allegation. To date there has been no response from the solicitor or from the complainant. This allegation was made against a deceased member and is in its initial stages. All appropriate documentation was made available to the reviewer who can confirm that correct procedures have been followed in this case. Both the An Garda Síochána and TULSA have been made aware of this allegation.

7. Conclusion:

Consultation took place with An Garda Síochána and Tulsa. Based on their feedback, there are no concerns in respect of this congregation.

All Sisters in ministry with children are familiar with the requisite child safeguarding policy and procedures. Given the fact that a number of Sisters work/minister with other organisations, they are required to follow the procedures of that organisation. The congregation has confirmed that this is the case.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul have stewardship of a significant number of services where they are involved in the care of children. It is the reviewer's assessment that all aspects of child safeguarding are understood and prioritised by the Sisters in their ministries. This applies to both services that they directly manage as Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul and where Sisters work/minister in other agencies and fields of work in which they are engaged.

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Terms of Reference

Small Religious Congregations

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

Introduction

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

This review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small religious congregations /orders, and missionary societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the congregation's ministry.

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

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

The proposed review would consider the following:-

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

The objective of the review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice match up to the standards set down in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland and launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples

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will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the review. In cases where the alleged or known offender is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

Guidance Documents

The review will be guided by the following:-

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

The review will be undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

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

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

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Step Guide to the Review Process

Step 1.

A letter of invitation to review is sent by the Provincial/Regional Superior or other person responsible for the congregation/ order or missionary society (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Ordinary’).

Step 2.

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

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

Step 3.

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

Step 4.

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

Step 5.

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

Step 6.

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

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Step 7.

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

Step 8.

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

Step 9.

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

Step 10.

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

Step 11.

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

Step 12.

Following the reading of the case and the creation of a summary, the fieldworkers will analyse and assess the actions taken in the case. They will assess compliance with agreed

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Church policy that was extant at that time. They will also indicate whether any current risk exists in respect of the information contained within the file and advise the church Authority of necessary safeguarding action to reduce the risk.

Step 13.

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

Step 14.

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

Step 15.

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

Step 16.

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

Step 17.

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

Step 18.

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

Step 19.

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

Step 20.

The report will be legally proofed by NBSCCCI lawyer.

Step 21.

The report will be forwarded to the NBSCCCI for approval

Step 22

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

Step 23.

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

Guide for Reviewers

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

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

In relation to category 1 above;

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

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Review of Policy and Procedures

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

Schedule for Interviews

1. The schedule for interviews of individuals and groups who hold specific responsibilities for safeguarding within the Church Authority should be arranged through the relevant designated person.
2. These should include the Advisory panel (if one exists,) the designated person themselves, the Ordinary , the safeguarding committee, some safeguarding representatives, support person for victims and advisors for accused priests/religious as well as representatives of the statutory authorities. The purpose of the interviews is to hear directly from those involved as to their views on the effectiveness of the safeguarding structure and how it may be improved.
3. The Review process itself will conclude with a feedback interview to include the Ordinary.

Final Product of Review

1. The reviewers should have a comprehensive, detailed, and accurate knowledge of the current safeguarding cases within the Church Authority.
2. The reviewers should have an understanding of the adequacy of the existing safeguarding structure in place in the Church Authority.

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3. The reviewers will be able to comment of the quality of the working relationships with key statutory agencies and the Church Authority.
4. The reviewers should be aware of the number, location, and management of all known or suspected perpetrators within the Church Authority who are clergy.
5. The Church Authority will have been provided with a number of recommendations to help them build upon and develop their practice in the field of safeguarding children.