

Review of Safeguarding Practice in the religious institute of

The Holy Family of Bordeaux

undertaken by

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

December 2014

CONTENTS

Page

8

Background	3
Introduction	4
Role Profile	5

Profile of Members5

Policy and Procedures Document6

Structures 7

Management of Allegations8

Conclusion

Terms of Reference9

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/institutes have ministries that involve direct contact with children while others do not. In religious congregations/institutes 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/institute 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/institutes 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/institutes 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/institutes that do not have ministry with children have made requests to have their safeguarding practice examined and commented upon.

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux have currently a very limited role with children. One sister is chaplain in a secondary school, another sister is a classroom assistant and several other sisters are involved in parish ministry, counselling and spiritual direction. The schools policy and procedures are observed in relation to all school based ministry and the policies of the diocese are followed for parish ministry. In addition there have been no recorded allegations of child sexual abuse against any member of this institute and for these reasons, a limited review is appropriate.

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 Safeguarding Practice within the religious institute of the Holy Family of Bordeaux* 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 Provincial along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review is not based on a review of case material as during the relevant time period there were no allegations made against members of the Institute that were within the Terms of Reference. There also were no allegations in respect of other forms of abuse within the time period, in respect of deceased and living members of the institute. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the institute, particularly in the services run by the

congregation.

1. Introduction

The Holy Family of Bordeaux is a worldwide Spiritual and Apostolic Family founded by French priest Pierre Bienvenue Noailles in 1820. In doing so he envisaged an Association of people from *every tribe and language and people and nation* representing all vocations in the Catholic Church and motivated by *the same spirit and the same aim* - to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ taking for inspiration the life and virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Worldwide, the Holy Family of Bordeaux is composed of women and men, youth and children from all vocations and walks of life in the Catholic Church – Apostolic and Contemplative Women Religious, Consecrated Secular Women, and Lay and Priest Associates.

The first Holy Family Sisters arrived in Leeds, England in 1853 at the height of the Industrial Revolution and commenced basic education classes for children and young girls. They cared for orphaned children and extended their work to include the provision of health care.

The Holy Family Sisters arrived in Ireland from Leeds in 1875 and founded their first convent in Newbridge, Co. Kildare. From there they opened Convents in Magherafelt, Co Derry in 1889, Portlaoise 1945, Kilkenny 1947, Clane Co Kildare 1970, Moneenroe, Co Kilkenny 1971, 'Sonas Chriost' Newbridge 1974, Darndale, Dublin 1976, Draperstown, Co Derry 1978, and Arran Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 1990.

On the island of Ireland today, there are 43 Apostolic Religious Sisters of the Holy Family living within eight communities, six of which are based in the Republic and two based in Northern Ireland. The majority of the sisters in Ireland are retired from active ministry. 27 sisters live in the Holy Family retirement home in Newbridge, Co. Kildare where a sizable proportion of these sisters require full time care. The sisters managed the provision of care in this home until approximately ten years ago at which point it became necessary for them, because of their aging profile and lower numbers to employ the services of an outside company to manage and run the nursing home. The remaining sisters live in community houses in locations in Co. Kildare, Co. Laois, Co Kilkenny, and Dublin.

The province of Britain and Ireland comprises the 46 Sisters in Ireland and 51 in England and Wales. The Provincial, Sr. Gemma Corbett is based in London and is in the second year of a three year term of office. The Provincial is assisted in her role by a council which is comprised of four sisters, three of whom are based in Britain. The council meets on a monthly basis. Amongst the many tasks of the council meeting are the monthly reviews of the work of the various teams of sisters engaged in the different aspects of Holy Family work. The provincial safeguarding team, referred to later in this report, reports to these monthly council meetings.

The Provincial reports to the General Leadership team which is based in Rome. In Britain the institute of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux is registered as a charity and is accountable to the Charities Commission. As 'Trustees' of the charity, the Provincial and her council are obliged to submit a detailed annual report of all its activities to the Commission. The province of Britain and Ireland is subject to a yearly audit by the Charities Commission.

In advance of this planned review by the NBSCCCI, the institute placed a notice on their website announcing the upcoming review and inviting those with concerns to come forward, there have not been any approaches made as a consequence of this notice.

The reviewer wishes to thank Sr Gemma and the Safeguarding team for their welcome and courtesy shown in the facilitation of this review.

2. <u>Role Profile (past and present role with children):</u>

The Holy Family sisters taught initially in primary education in the Newbridge area when they first came to Ireland. They later became involved in the setting up of secondary schools for girls in both Newbridge and Co. Derry. These schools are no longer run by the Holy Family sisters, as they were transferred to their respective dioceses.

During the years 1976 to 1999 the sisters were involved in a caring capacity in a hostel run for children with learning disabilities or who were at risk in their own homes. The children attended a special school in Kilkenny and stayed in the hostel also located in Kilkenny during the week days. There were occasions when the children stayed at weekends also. There were four sisters involved in running of the hostel. The sisters were not involved in the running of the school.

Currently in Ireland, the number of sisters involved in active ministry is extremely small. One sister is chaplain in the secondary school in Newbridge and another sister is a prison chaplain. A further sister is a classroom assistant and several other sisters are involved in parish ministry, counselling and spiritual direction. The reviewer was informed that all sisters in active ministry have been Garda vetted by the various dioceses or parishes they work with. They also follow the child safeguarding policies of those parishes in which they work. The sisters who offer counselling are fully accredited members of IACP and IAHIP and hold professional indemnity insurances. For spiritual direction work the sisters are members of AISGA (All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association) and have public liability, professional indemnity as well as Garda vetting from the diocesan authorities. The sisters who work in either an education or diocesan environment understand and follow the safeguarding guidance policies of those respective bodies.

Each year the Province welcomes a small number of oversee sisters who come to Ireland for a period of study. They mostly stay in one of the Dublin communities. In this event the sisters require a letter of good standing from their Provincial in their own country and when necessary the sister is registered with the Garda immigration section for registration in this country.

3. Profile of Members:

All sisters in Ireland are aged over sixty years. The vast majority of sisters are retired. 27 sisters reside in the retirement home in Kildare with 11 of those in need of full time care. The profile of the province is that of an aging population and one of declining numbers. There are no sisters in formation in Ireland.

4. Policy and Procedures Document:

The safeguarding team developed a policy document for the province in 2011, which was later circulated for all the sisters throughout the world. The sisters were encouraged to use it as a framework document in developing good safeguarding practice in their ministries. This document entitled *Safeguarding children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults - Holy Family of Bordeaux* remains in place as the safeguarding policy document adapted for use by the institute. This is a concise 11 A5 page document which is informative and which contains a Mission Statement and a Code of Good Practice. It also includes definitions of child abuse, including child sexual abuse and information about who is vulnerable and how to protect vulnerable people. It gives practical information about what action should be taken if a member receives information about a concern or allegation and also what actions are taken if a member is the subject of abuse allegations. In tandem with this document, each Holy Family sister and all staff were given a summary guideline of the policy which is presented in double sided A4 format. Both documents lack detail specific to the Irish context and did not provide contact information regarding the civil authorities in Ireland or information about the designated officer.

In addition to both documents the Province has also in place a safeguarding policy statement which is displayed on their website. It states that:

in keeping with our charism and the standards recommended by the NBSCCCI we have drawn up our own guidelines, which we require all Holy Family Sisters in ministry, our lay staff and volunteers to adhere to when in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy statement states that the Holy Family Sisters follow the standards and guidelines for the Catholic Church in Ireland which was issued in 2008. The Safeguarding team has committed to review their policy in the coming months to take account of national changes to policy and legislation and changes to Church standards. The policy statement is viewed therefore as an interim policy statement and indicates its stated intention of compliance to the guidelines under each of the NBSCCCI seven standards guidance currently in place. It is acknowledged that the safeguarding statement is not a complete and comprehensive policy document. It is a safeguarding statement which is proportionate and appropriate to the needs of this Province taking into account the few members who are in active ministry with children.

The statement details a 6 point action plan under Standard 7 –*Implementing and Monitoring the Standards* which delegates the monitoring of the effectiveness of the steps taken to keep children and vulnerable adults safe, to the safeguarding team who are named in the statement. This action plan is comprehensive and contains the following:

- To monitor and oversee that the revised standards set out by the NBSCCCI are being fully implemented to the expected standard in all aspects of their work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To ensure that there is effective communication between the Safeguarding Team and the Trustees Leadership Team.
- To ensure that all policies and procedures are updated within the agreed time frame in line with the current legislation.
- To encourage the sisters, staff and volunteers to make safeguarding a priority in all their ministries and within communities.

- To make sure that the safeguarding policy statement and code of behaviour is on display in all communities and places of ministry and on the Province's website.
- To review the work of the safeguarding team every three years or as and when the need arises.

The Safeguarding team is currently working on updating their policy in keeping with the revised standards of the NBSCCCI and CSAS in England and has sought the advice of an experienced practitioner in safeguarding in both Britain and Ireland to assist and facilitate the institute in this respect.

5. Structures:

The sisters living in England are aligned to the Leeds Catholic Diocese Safeguarding Commission and follow the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) national safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

In Ireland the sisters follow the Catholic Church guidelines set down by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church of Ireland (NBSCCCI).

In 2008 the Leadership team of the Province of Britain and Ireland asked four sisters to be responsible for safeguarding within the Province and so the safeguarding team was formed. Since then the safeguarding team has met on average three times yearly. The work and content of these meetings has been well documented and minutes of their meetings have been made available to this reviewer. Their work covers safeguarding issues within both jurisdictions. There are now five members of the team and they are drawn from communities in both Ireland and Britain. One member is a link person with the Provincial Leadership team. This role ensures a clear line of communication between the safeguarding team and the leadership team. Three members of the safeguarding team made themselves available for the purposes of this review. The team is headed by a safeguarding coordinator. The present safeguarding coordinator serves on the Leeds Safeguarding Diocesan Commission. Since their inception, the safeguarding team has assumed the role of taking responsibility for safeguarding issues within the province, by working with sisters and lay staff to create awareness of safeguarding. The team has availed of extensive training and exposure to safeguarding issues both in Britain and Ireland and has in turn facilitated training to sisters and lay staff.

There are differences for the two jurisdictions within the province in how the safeguarding structure is managed because of regulatory/governance differences between the two jurisdictions and church bodies involved. In Britain the institute is governed by the Leeds diocesan safeguarding commission and therefore the roles of designated officer, support people and vetting and safe recruitment person are carried out by diocesan commission personnel. The institute is also bound by the diocesan policy document.

In Ireland the safeguarding team coordinator fulfils the roles of designated officer and trainer. This sister indicated a clear knowledge of her duties as role of designated officer. A victim support person has also been nominated by the institute, while the role of support person for the accused person is to be assigned should the case arise. The sisters who are in active ministry in Ireland are vetted through their various ministries, for example through the Department of Education and Science and the vetting service provided through the diocese.

The safeguarding coordinator oversees that each sister is vetted appropriately. Lay staff who are employed in the retirement home are vetted at recruitment stage by the company that manages the home.

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

At the time of this review the reviewer was informed that there are no past or current allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse known to the institute in Ireland. There therefore has been no requirement for contact with the statutory authorities.

6. Conclusion:

The Institute of the Holy Family of Bordeaux within Ireland is a small institute of sisters of whom only a very small number of sisters are in active ministry. Of those who are, the number who has regular contact with children in their ministry is less than five sisters. This is in stark contrast to their previous role which was principally in education.

The institute has not received any allegation of sexual abuse or of physical abuse to date and therefore there is no basis to measure their response to or management of complaints or allegations of abuse. However, in terms of the level of preparedness for such a situation, the reviewer is satisfied that the provincial and her safeguarding team are highly knowledgeable and aware of their safeguarding duties and responsibilities. There is evidence of strong communication links within the structure of the institute. The action plan as set out in the safeguarding statement is evidence of their commitment to continue to keep safeguarding issues alive within their communities. Their safeguarding statement is an acknowledgement of the commitment of the sisters of the Holy Family to follow the safeguarding policy and procedures of the NBSCCCI. It is their stated intention to formulate a new policy and procedure document based on the new guidelines of the NBSCCCI which will be published in 2015.

Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

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 congregations and communities that have no childrenspecific ministry would be avoided.

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

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

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

The proposed Review would consider the following:-

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

The objective of the Review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice match up to the standards set down in the Safeguarding Children Guidance published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the

provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the Review. In cases where the alleged or known offender is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

Guidance Documents

The Review will be guided by the following:-

- (a) Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance 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 Ireland through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

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

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

Step Guide to the Review Process

Step 1.

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

Step 2.

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

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

Step 3.

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

Step 4.

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

Step 5.

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

Step 6.

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

Step 7.

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

Step 8.

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

Step 9.

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

Step 10.

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

Step 11.

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

Step 12.

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

Step 13.

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

Step 22

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

Step 23.

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

Guide for Reviewers

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

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

In relation to category 1 above;

- 1. The reviewers will establish whether any service they provided is included in the list of children's residential services produced by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB);
- **2.** If this is the case, reference should be made to this.
- **3.** If complaints have been referred to the Redress Board or Ryan Commission, this review cannot access these records and that will be stated in the report.

4. If the order has received complaints which have not been processed through Redress or Ryan these cases will be thoroughly examined as detailed above.

Review of Policy and Procedures

- **1.** It is recognised that not all Orders will have any ministry with children and therefore their policies and procedures should reflect the work that they do with children.
- **2.** If the Order only works through other organisations, example in Diocesan work or in schools, they are required to follow the policies of those organisations.
- **3.** If there are gaps in the policy document an assessment should be made as to whether the ministry engaged in requires full compliance with all criteria attached to the seven standards
- **4.** Where it is clear that the criteria do not apply a reference should be made at the beginning of the review report that the Order's ministry is not directly with children and therefore adherence to particular criteria do not apply.
- **5.** 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.