

**Private and Confidential**

**Review of Safeguarding Practice  
in the Society of the  
Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)  
undertaken by**

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

**The content of this report is not to be accessed or shared without the consent of  
Fr PJ Cassidy, Provincial Delegate**

**October 2014**

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## **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was asked by the Sponsoring Bodies, namely the Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland. The purpose of the review is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each Church authority is to be reviewed through an examination of case records and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to a diocese or other authority.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Society of the Missionaries of Africa* 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 reviewers by the society, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the society. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the society has confirmed this.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the society, along with any recommendations arising from the findings.

## **Introduction**

At the request of Fr. P.J. Cassidy, Provincial Delegate of the Irish Sector of the Missionaries of Africa, staff from the NBSCCCI engaged in a process of reviewing the safeguarding children policy, procedures and practice of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa on July 30<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup> 2014. Over the two day fieldwork period, case files were examined and interviews were conducted with key personnel, religious and lay, in the Irish Sector's safeguarding structure. The reviewers also read the following documents:

- *Safeguarding Children, Society of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), European Province Irish Sector, November 2010.*
- *Missionaries of Africa – European Province, Code of Conduct (March 2013)*
- *Policy of the Missionaries of Africa on dealing with sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults (Rome December 2012, partially revised 2014).*

These documents, primarily the Irish Sector's safeguarding document, were evaluated against the 2009 NBSCCCI 's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.*

## **Missionaries of Africa – White Fathers**

The Missionaries of Africa are a society, as opposed to an order, founded in 1868 in North Africa. The mission at that stage was to work in the Islamic world in North Africa. After some years they moved beyond the Islamic world and to the rest of Africa. Today, they work in 23 countries in Africa.

In each country that the society works in there is a Sector Superior. This person is responsible for the well-being of the sector in conjunction with the Provincial who is the overall leader attached to the sector of the particular country. There are 25 members for the sector of Ireland and those who work abroad are appointed to their respective sectors and in so doing are governed by that sector and Sector Superior and respective Provincial. If a situation arose in relation to child protection in respect of members abroad, that particular Irish member would be dealt with in their appointed sector along with their respective Province. It would be expected that the Irish sector would be kept up to date but the sector would only act directly if and when that particular member would return to Ireland. The Provincial Delegate in Ireland is responsible for the members who reside in Ireland.

As a result of diminishing personnel, today the society in Ireland is a member of the Province of Europe. They are regarded as a sector within Europe. The society's main base in Europe is Brussels, where the Provincial is based. In each country in Europe, where the society is present, there is a Provincial Delegate who is responsible for their respective countries and who reports to the Provincial.

In Ireland today, the Provincial Delegate of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) is Fr. Peter Cassidy. There are 25 members in the sector of Ireland and they are engaged in different countries of Africa as well as Ireland. There are at present 9 members residing in Ireland. Templeogue is the only official residency in Ireland today. In former years the society had a house of formation in Blacklion, Co. Cavan and a house for promotion work in Longford town.

The Missionaries of Africa's main role in Africa is pastoral ministry. Their aim in Africa is to live close to the people and learn their language and spread the gospel. In their ministry, they are also involved in social justice and development where they try to help people when and where they are challenged most.

The society's main role in Ireland today is to receive the members of the society (White Fathers) who come home on leave. These members are also engaged in promotion work by means of regular contact with their benefactors in Ireland. They make them aware of the society's engagement in Africa and keep them up to date on activities; producing a number of newsletters throughout the year along with a diary and calendar. This is the society's way of communicating the message of their work.

The Missionaries of Africa have never been involved with education of children. The only institution they owned or managed which was engaged in education, was in Blacklion, Co. Cavan where the society had a formation house for missionary priests and brothers in the 1950's and 1960's. The formation house closed in the late sixties and it was at that point that the society set up Templeogue as the main residency in Ireland.

### **Current Situation**

As stated already the Missionaries of Africa's base for their Irish sector is Templeogue, Dublin.

There are 25 members in total comprising the Irish sector. Currently there are 9 members in Ireland. The remainder of the members, totalling 16, are based outside of Ireland, between Africa and the Philippines and they therefore are the responsibility of the respective sector Superior and Provincial in those countries.

None of the current Irish based members have any ministry with children, occasionally they say a Mass for the local parish if requested and in these instances the society members follow the diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures. There are two members "out of ministry" due to allegations of abuse.

The Provincial Delegate is also a part-time chaplain in Tallaght Hospital.

The average age of the members of the society's Irish sector is 66.11 years, with an age range from 42 years to 86 years.

## **NBSCCCI Review**

The purpose of this NBSCCCI review is set out within the terms of reference that are appended to this report. It seeks to examine how practice conforms to expected standards in the Church, both at a time when an allegation is received and in the present time. It is an expectation of the NBSCCCI that key findings from a review will be shared widely so that public awareness of what is in place and what is planned may be enhanced, as well as increasing confidence that the Church is taking steps to safeguard children.

The review was initiated through the signing of a data protection deed, allowing full access by staff from NBSCCCI to all case management and relevant records held by the Irish Sector of the Missionaries of Africa. The access does not constitute disclosure as the reviewers through the deed were deemed to be nominated data processors of the material for the province leader.

The review involved the fieldwork team reading all case management records of living members of the Missionaries of Africa Society, Irish Sector, against whom a child safeguarding allegation of sexual abuse had been made, or about whom a concern of a similar nature had been raised. There were no cases in respect of deceased members or members who had left the society during the relevant time period.

Interviews were held with Fr. P.J. Cassidy, Provincial Delegate, the Designated Person, plus the Chairperson and the Vice-chairperson of the Safeguarding Committee. Contact was also made with two members of the society who act in a victim liaison role and in a support role to accused members. The former Provincial Delegate was also interviewed.

The views were sought of An Garda Síochána, HSCT and TUSLA. There were no concerns expressed by any of these agencies in relation to notification of allegations or co-operation with them. From the interactions noted in the case management files between the Missionaries of Africa, the Gardai and TUSLA, it is the view of the reviewers that the society's interaction with these statutory authorities shows a clear commitment to safeguarding children both currently and into the future. Views were also sought from the PSNI, but as the Missionaries of Africa do not have a presence in Northern Ireland, and in the absence of a written agreement around information sharing, their views were not shared.

To date the society has accessed the NBSCCCI for advice. During this review they were made aware that in order to designate the NBSCCCI as their advisory board they should make a formal request. They are now committed to doing this.

The review team conducted an assessment of the Missionaries of Africa's safeguarding policies and procedures against the standards set down in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. All other written material provided to the NBSCCCI reviewers was evaluated for relevance and accuracy, as was the child safeguarding information on the website of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers).

Reviews into safeguarding have two objectives, to establish how concerns (complaints, allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns) of child sexual abuse have been managed in the

past and to evaluate the efforts that have been made to create safe environments for children to ensure their current and future safety. In order to achieve these two key objectives the review process employs seven standards outlined within *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* as an assessment framework. The report below discusses the findings of the reviewers under each standard. Conclusions are drawn regarding both the effectiveness of the Missionaries of Africa's policies and practice in the prevention of abuse and the ability of the relevant personnel within the Missionaries of Africa's structure in the Irish sector to assess and manage risk for children. Recommendations for future practice have been made where it is considered appropriate.

It should be noted that in carrying out this review, the reviewers acknowledge that the NBSCCCI's standards, consisting of seven standards, subdivided into forty-eight criteria, is a detailed framework. The Terms of Reference for the review is aimed towards shaping the Roman Catholic Church's safeguarding structure primarily in dioceses and the larger congregations, where there is direct ministry with children. The profile of the Irish Sector of the Missionaries of Africa, as already stated, is that of a mainly retired group in Ireland, with no ministry involving children and not providing any services to children. The Missionaries of Africa's pastoral and community-based works takes place in Africa, where local Church safeguarding policies and local legislation in relation to children applies. The reviewers recognise that the Irish members working abroad do not fall under the care or jurisdiction of the Irish Provincial Delegate. In the context of any concerns about child protection relating to members working abroad, are dealt with by the respective Superior or Provincial in that country who has full jurisdiction over their activities.

A review of the Irish Sector's safeguarding document is to take place in the last quarter of 2014 and will reflect any findings and outcomes from this review. It will also take into consideration the implication of the revised safeguarding document of the society internationally (partially revised in 2014) and *of Children First 2011* guidelines.

## **STANDARDS**

This section provides the findings of the review. The template employed to present the findings are the seven standards, set down and described in the Church guidance, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities that minister on the island of Ireland, including the Missionaries of Africa. 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 a society meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

**Criteria**

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

The safeguarding policy of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) is titled *Safeguarding Children, Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), European Province, Irish Sector*. It was endorsed by the Delegate Superior of the Irish Sector in November 2010.

In the mission statement at the start of the safeguarding policy document it states that *The Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) affirms the special place that children and young people hold in the life of society and is committed to making every effort to enhance and encourage their safe involvement in Church life in all its facets and in helping them grow towards a mature spiritual reflective adulthood.*

The society also commits in their mission statement to the development of effective structures for safeguarding children, for responding to suspicions or allegations of child abuse and for providing pastoral support and training.

The safeguarding children document of the Irish sector of the Missionaries of Africa is well-structured, clear in its intent and readable. The Overall Society's "Safeguarding policy on dealing with the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, December 2012" (partially revised in 2014) is more an overarching document to be referenced by each sector as they develop their own safeguarding documents.

A copy of the Irish safeguarding policy is available on the society's website and it can also be provided in hard copy if requested.

The reviewers are of the view that Criteria 1.1 and 1.9 are fully met based on an examination of the written documentation.

With regard to Criterion 1.4 there is a plan in place to review the Irish Sector's safeguarding document later this year, as such this criterion is fully met. This review will take into account the changes made in the society's main safeguarding document (December 2012), the adjustments that may be required in respect of *Children First (2011)* and any recommendations resulting from this review. It is the understanding of the reviewers that the Safeguarding Committee, the Designated Person and the Province Delegate will take the lead in this review process.

Criterion 1.5 is fully met. There is a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers in place, which emphasises the need for robust child protection practices in all locations where the society is involved.

Criterion 1.6 is also fully met. The documentation clearly outlines the protection measures that may need to be put in place via protection plans and the use of precepts in respect of the management of individuals who may pose a risk to children. There is however a variety of terms used to describe the various tools that are listed for managing such individuals between the Irish Sector and the society's safeguarding documentation. These terms range from Safety Plans to Covenants of Care, to Supervision Agreements to Protection Plans.

Criteria 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 are all fully met. In respect of 1.8 in particular, the Irish Sector's safeguarding policy is explicit in respect of reporting protection concerns without delay – reference, page 4 of the Irish Sector's safeguarding document - *We are committed to working in partnership with the civil authorities to ensure that all aspects of child welfare are managed promptly, professionally and justly. This means that all child protection concerns will be reported to the civil authorities without delay.*

## Standard 2

### *Management of allegations*

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

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

### Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
2.1	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
2.2	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.	Partially met
2.3	There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.	Fully met
2.4	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.	Fully met
2.5	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.	Partially met
2.6	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.	Fully met
2.7	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.	Fully met

Standard 2 focuses on the management of allegations/concerns received by the Society of Missionaries of Africa and how appropriately they have been responded to during the relevant time period for this review (1975 to date). As advised in the section dealing with Standard 1 there is clarity in how the procedures are set out within the safeguarding procedures documentation but the practice should also reflect the written guidance.

Based on the written documentation reviewed, Criterion 2.1 is fully met. It is worth noting at this point that the safeguarding children document (2010) on page 20 states as follows, *if any person holding a position within the structure envisaged below is himself or herself accused of child abuse, steps will be taken to appoint a substitute or otherwise alter the procedures as appropriate.* This is an example which reflects a level of transparency and commitment to the welfare of children which is emphasised throughout the Irish Sector's safeguarding children document.

Criterion 2.2. is partially met. As noted earlier the safeguarding policy document will be subject to a review process in 2014, which will take into account the implications of implementing *Children First (2011)* and of any new child care legislation.

Criterion 2.3 is fully met. The role of the Designated Person is set out clearly in the safeguarding policy document of the Irish Sector of the society.

Criterion 2.4 is met fully. Case files, when created, are kept securely by the Provincial Delegate. It was noted that, in reviewing the society's overarching safeguarding documents that duplicate case files are held by the society's headquarters in Rome. Any evaluation of the security status of such files is beyond the parameters of this review.

Criterion 2.5 is partially met. The safeguarding policy document deals with the processing of a complaint but does not delineate clear timescales for the process.

Criterion 2.6 is met fully. The guidance in respect of confidentiality and information-sharing in the best interests of children is clear in both the Irish Sector's safeguarding document and that of the society.

Criterion 2.7 is met fully. The civil authorities are referenced in the safeguarding policy and procedures. The reviewers noted that the child protection policy statement, in a number of locations in the society's Dublin headquarters, does set out the contact details for the relevant civil authorities in the Republic of Ireland.

### **Recommendation 1**

**The Provincial Delegate should ensure that during the review of the safeguarding procedures document the society should address the following issues:**

- **The revisions to *Children First*.**
- **Timescales for processing complaints about unacceptable behaviour towards children.**

**Table 1**

**Incidence of safeguarding allegations received within the Missionaries of Africa from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to time of review.**

1	Number of priests incardinated into the Society against whom allegations have been made since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the Review	2
2	Total number of allegations received by the Society since 1 <sup>st</sup> January	10
3	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána/PSNI involving priests of the Society since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975	10
4	Number of allegations reported to the HSE (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE) involving members of the Society since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975	10
5	Number of priests (still members of the Society) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the Review	2
6	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased	0
7	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are in ministry	0
8	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are “Out of ministry, but are still members of the Society”	2
9	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are retired.	0
10	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are out of ministry or who have left the Society	0
11	Number of priests of the Society who have been convicted of an offence against a child/young person since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975	2

*Footnote: The term allegation in this table includes complaints and expressions of concern. One of the 10 allegations is in respect of an unidentified male religious who may or may not be a member of the Society. The complainant subsequently denied that abuse took place and withdrew the complaint with An Garda Síochána.*

**Table 1 Analysis**

The management of child abuse allegations in the Society of the Missionaries of Africa is undertaken by the Designated Person. The Designated Person reports to the Provincial Delegate for the Irish Sector. There is a Safeguarding Committee in place and the reviewers met the Chair and Deputy Chair of this Committee. It was evident from these discussions that it would be useful for the review of the safeguarding children procedures document in 2014 to include clear roles for this committee. There was some suggestion that this committee may have been involved in case management advice, which would not normally fall within the terms of reference for the

Safeguarding Committee. Neither of the two men from the committee who were interviewed had received any safeguarding training at the time of this review.

### **Recommendation 2**

**The Provincial Delegate must ensure clarity of role for the Safeguarding Committee and ensure that the committee should receive training relevant to the functions they are undertaking.**

Advice on case management, when required, is sought from the National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG) under the auspices of the NBSCCCI. This relationship, as previously noted, would need to be formalised, and the reviewers note that the Society is in the process of doing so.

The information in Table 1 records a total of 10 allegations of suspected child sex abuse received by the Society of the Missionaries of Africa from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 to the date of this review. These 10 allegations were made in respect of 2 members of the society and 1 unidentified male religious who may or may not be a member of the society. The time period covered by these allegations runs from 1962 to 1996.

The majority of the identified allegations relate to abuse which took place in Ireland.

In the time period under review, there have been two members of the society convicted of crimes of a sexual nature.

When reviewing the pattern of notifications of the statutory authorities, there has been a significant improvement in the timelines relating to the process from 2008 onwards. It is evident however, that for period of time the society understood that a notification to An Garda Síochána would automatically mean that this notification would be passed on to the health services by An Garda Síochána. This was due to a protocol which unfortunately was not processed by the two statutory civil agencies. This meant that the Society of Missionaries of Africa, in the case of some allegations, notified the HSE some months after notifying An Garda Síochána.

The review found significant delays in a number of statutory authority notifications in respect of one of the convicted members and these will be addressed in the report.

Over the course of this review, reviewers read the case files relating to the two convicted members who are 'out of ministry'. These members reside in the society's main house in Dublin.

The file in respect of the unidentified person was also read; the identity of the priest was not given by the complainant, and it is not clear if the respondent priest was a member of the Missionaries of Africa. The allegation was passed onto the civil authorities for their investigations.

With regard to Case 'A' (unidentified), there was a timely notification of the allegation received to both the HSE and An Garda Síochána. The complainant did not identify the alleged abuser and neither the Missionaries of Africa nor the civil authorities were able to conduct any further inquiries following the initial notification as the complainant did not engage.

The allegation in respect of 'Member B' was received by the society's Generalate (Headquarters) in Rome in 2006. They took immediate action and 'Member B' was removed from Africa to the USA for risk assessment and subsequent treatment. The complainant was offered counselling support but did not avail of it. There are no records on file of statutory notifications having been made by the society's Headquarters, nor is it clear what information was provided to the USA sector or the civil authorities in the USA. It is also unclear, from the case files as to whether the Irish Sector was kept up to date regarding what was happening with their member. The Irish sector only took over the management of this case, when the respondent moved to Ireland.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Provincial Delegate should liaise with the Superior General to develop a written protocol which allows for exchange of information in relation to allegations of abuse and that ensures that the civil authorities in the appropriate country are notified.**

Member 'B' returned to the Irish Region in 2010 and prompt notifications were made to the statutory authorities and Church authorities by the Irish Province Leadership. Subsequently member 'B' was found guilty of indecent assault of a minor on 21.9.11 and was sentenced to 9 months in prison, suspended for two years on condition he remained in treatment. He was also placed on the sex offenders register for five years.

Since returning to Ireland member 'B' has remained out of ministry and has resided in the society's House in Dublin governed by a precept and a supervision agreement. He has an advisor from within the society. To date he has kept to the terms of both the precept and the supervision agreement, in spite of his reluctance to sign the supervision agreement. The reviewers are concerned that a critical document such as a supervision agreement should be signed off in all cases.

### **Recommendation 4**

**The Provincial Delegate must ensure that supervision agreements must be signed by all relevant parties, in particular by the subject of the agreement.**

The case file of member 'C' was also read by the reviewers. Member 'C' has been out of ministry since 2008 when child sexual abuse allegations were first made against him. On receipt of the allegations he voluntarily stepped down from ministry. There were timely notifications

made to the relevant police authorities and diocesan authorities, on receipt of these allegations, by the society. There was a delay in notifying the HSE.

Member 'C' was subsequently convicted in 2010 of sexual offences and was sentenced to four years in prison. He was put on the sex offenders register for an indefinite length of time after he was released, this followed an appeal on his part to the court.

The complainants / survivors were offered pastoral support from the Society via An Garda Síochána and there is an identified society member to support them if they wish to engage. To date, the offer of support has not been taken up. Three of the four complainants have initiated civil proceedings for personal injury against member 'C' and the Missionaries of Africa.

Member 'C' was also offered counselling by the society but he declined this offer. He has consistently denied the allegations made against him and is appealing his conviction. He has an identified support person from within the society membership. Since 2008 precepts and supervision agreements have been in place in respect of member 'C'. According to the society, he has kept to the requirements of these restrictions. It was noted however that the supervision agreement does not explicitly state that he must not have any unsupervised contact with children; it does however state this in the Precept.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**The Designated person should amend the supervision agreement so that it explicitly states that the respondent is not allowed unsupervised contact with children.**

The society has sought to initiate canonical action in respect of member 'C' but this has been set aside pending the outcome of the civil proceedings and member 'C''s appeals against his convictions.

There was a complainant who came forward and initially named member 'C' as an abuser. After investigation by An Garda Síochána, this was deemed to be a case of mistaken identity. In responding to this allegation in 2010, the society notified all relevant authorities within days and offered further counselling support to the complainant.

In conclusion, the reviewers are satisfied that the Missionaries of Africa understand their obligations to report and respond to allegations of child sex abuse made against members of the society. The use of precepts and supervision plans to risk manage the two convicted members is noted as a critical example of safe practice in the society's overall safeguarding response. The need to maintain continuous assessment of risk posed is also recognised by the society. The recommendations made should improve their practice further, once implemented.



**Standard 3**

***Preventing Harm to Children***

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

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

**Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting**

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

**Criteria – Codes of behaviour**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>3.4</b>	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.	Met Fully
<b>3.5</b>	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).	Met Fully
<b>3.6</b>	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.	Met Fully

<b>3.7</b>	There are processes for dealing with children’s unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.	Met Fully
<b>3.8</b>	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.	Met Fully
<b>3.9</b>	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Not Met*

\*This aspect is not referenced in the policy document as the Missionaries of Africa do not have ministry with children and therefore this criterion could be deemed to have limited or no applicability.

**Criteria – Operating safe activities for children**

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

**Safe Recruitment and Vetting**

The reviewers examined existing policies that related to safe recruitment and vetting. They also took into account the responses of key safeguarding personnel. On the basis of the above, Criteria 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 were met fully.

The reviewers noted, in particular that Garda vetting is initiated for potential applicants to the society. In addition all applicants are required to undergo a psychological assessment. Visiting priests to the society’s Dublin location are also required to have ‘letters of good standing’ from their bishop or congregation before they can minister in Ireland. If a member is returning from a sector outside Ireland they are also required to have a letter of

‘good standing’ from the sector they are returning from. This requirement should be applied to all members returning for 3 months planned leave in Ireland.

The overall response to this area of safe recruitment and vetting would be enhanced by an annual audit of Garda vetting status and ministries involved in for all members and staff/volunteers involved in any work with children/vulnerable adults. This would enable the General Council of the Irish Sector to review the status in respect of the Irish Sector and the level of safe practice in this area.

**Recommendation 6**

**The Provincial Delegate should initiate an annual audit of ministry and Garda vetting status of its relevant members, staff and volunteers to enhance governance in this area.**

**Codes of Behaviour**

The society has an existing Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers. This sets out in a clear and comprehensive manner the expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children. The code is signed by every staff worker and volunteer prior to starting in their role. On the basis of the above information, Criterion 3.4 is fully met.

Criteria 3.5 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 are met fully. They are addressed in both the Irish Sector and the Society’s Safeguarding Document as well as within the Code of Conduct.

Criterion 3.9 is not met, and the reviewers accept that it has no applicability. However it was noted that the Safeguarding documentation and the Code of Conduct address the issues of care and contact with children in general.

**Operating Safe Activities for Children**

Criteria 3.10 and 3.11 are met fully. The Irish Sector’s Safeguarding Children document and the Code of Behaviour provide clear guidance for ant pastoral workers when working with children, particularly when the children are away from home.

Criterion 3.12 is also met fully. Clear guidelines are contained within the Irish Sector’s safeguarding children document and within the appendices of this document. This is in respect of the appropriate use of information technology to ensure children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation.

**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

The reviewers examined all relevant materials relating to training and held discussions with all society members that were interviewed.

Criterion 4.1 is met partially. The societies 'safeguarding children document refers to induction with respect of Children First 2009, therefore this needs updating. The society does need to ensure that any people involved in the pastoral work of the society receive induction in the expected Irish safeguarding standards and the Irish Sector's policy and procedures.

Criterion 4.2 is also met partially. The Province Delegate and the Designated Person attend relevant safeguarding training provided by the NBSCCCI. However the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Safeguarding Committee have never received training in respect of their specific roles in the safeguarding process. This is also the case for Criterion 4.3, as not all members and staff linked with safeguarding processes have received appropriate training to date.

Criterion 4.4 is met fully as the training accessed by the society, to date, has been primarily provided by the NBSCCCI.

**Recommendation 7**

**The society's safeguarding committee should carry out an assessment of safeguarding training needs and requirements. This assessment should inform the compilation of a safeguarding training plan for all relevant members, staff and volunteers.**

## Standard 5

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

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

#### **Criteria**

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

Criterion 5.1 is met fully via the use of posters and via the society's website. The website in particular highlights the safeguarding message and the relevant documents.

Criteria 5.2 and 5.3 are fully met. They are addressed in the hard copy of safeguarding documentation and on the society's website.

Criteria 5.4 is met fully. The Designated Person's contact details are made available via posters, in documentation and on the society's website. There are specific contact details

for Child Protection Services within the Republic of Ireland ( TUSLA ) and An Garda Síochána.

Criterion 5.5 is met fully. From the review of the case files, it is evident that the society has developed working relationships with TUSLA and An Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland and in recent years with the PSNI in respect of safeguarding children. The liaison with local Gardaí has been a significant support in ensuring the supervision plans in place for the two members on the sex offenders register are maintained in a safe manner. TUSLA have advised the NBSCCCI that the Society in Ireland and abroad appears to have a good insight and understanding of child protection and its processes. The Provincial demonstrated a clear commitment to engaging with the process at all times. The Society is proactive in maintaining good practice in ensuring a level of child protection is maintained at all times.

As noted already in this review, the Missionaries of Africa have an open and transparent approach to safeguarding. This is reflected in their response to allegations dealt with to date and in the guidance for members and others contained within the Irish Sector's safeguarding documentation. Meetings, at Sector level and at European level, always have safeguarding on their agendas. Within the Irish Sector the Safeguarding Committee is also integrated within the General Council of the Sector.

## 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

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
6.1	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Met Fully
6.2	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Met Fully
6.3	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Met Fully
6.4	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Met Fully
6.5	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 Irish Sector of the Missionaries of Africa has sought advice when necessary from the NBSCCCI. As noted previously in this review report, they will now be formalising this arrangement in terms of joining the NBSCCCI's National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG). In addition, when it has proven necessary they have accessed specialist clinical advice and have acted on this advice. The society has also established national contacts with the relevant services for victims and nationally with An Garda Síochána and more recently with the PSNI. On the basis of the above, Criteria 6.1 and 6.2 are met fully.

The current version of the safeguarding children document sets out clearly the guidance for responding to a child's allegations that she/he has been abused. This response is set out within Pages 10-13 in the 2010 safeguarding children document. Criterion 6.3 is



therefore met fully. It is noted however that on Page.26 of the safeguarding policy document, it states that *the person (either a child or an adult) making the allegation will be offered a choice between a male or female support person*. To date the support person has been a society member only. The society may wish to give consideration to establishing a victim support panel both from a male and female and a lay and religious perspective.

Criterion 6.4 is met fully. The primary source of pastoral support offered to complainants who present to the Irish Sector is through the counselling and support agency *Towards Healing* as well as the appointment of a support person. This information is accessible in hard copy and on the society's website in the safeguarding section.

Criterion 6.5 is also met fully. The case files reviewed displayed the structural response of the Irish Sector to members accused of sexual abuse. In both cases an advisor was appointed. The society is also committed to offering accused members risk assessment, treatment if deemed necessary and counselling. It should be noted that engagement in these clinical and therapeutic responses is dependent on the cooperation and consent of the member concerned.

**Standard 7**

**Implementing and Monitoring Standards**

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

**Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
7.1	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
7.2	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Met Fully
7.3	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Met Fully
7.4	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	Not Met*
7.5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met Fully

**\*Has no current applicability in Ireland**

The safeguarding children document (2010) states that the society will *ensure that the Society has a written plan showing:*

- *What steps will be taken to keep children safe*
- *Who is responsible for implementing these measures*
- *When these will be completed'* (ref p.32)

The reviewers did not find evidence of this safeguarding action plan and therefore Criterion 7.1 is not met. The Provincial Delegate has made a commitment to rectify this in their review of their policy and procedures.

**Recommendation 8**

**The Provincial Delegate must ensure that a safeguarding action plan is developed. This should include how the recommendations of this review will be implemented.**

Criterion 7.2 is met fully. The reviewers were assured by the Provincial Delegate that there was no limit on ensuring that any necessary activities linked with safeguarding would be financed.

Criterion 7.3 is met fully. However, the monitoring of compliance with child protection policies and procedures is currently carried out primarily by the Province Delegate and the Designated Person. It may be useful if this monitoring role became a function of the Safeguarding Committee of the Society's Irish Sector, supported by the Designated Person. The group could then provide an annual report for the Provincial Delegate to consider.

Criterion 7.4 is not met in the policy document of the Irish Sector, the reviewers accept that this has no applicability in Ireland. Where members of the society conduct parish ministry, they do that on behalf of the diocese, whose responsibility it is to consult children and parents/carers regarding the diocesan safeguarding policies and practices for keeping children safe. It is the responsibility of the parish priest and the parish safeguarding representatives to ensure that the "visiting" priest is made aware of the parish /diocesan safeguarding policies and expected codes of behaviour. The Missionaries of Africa do not have pastoral care of any parish in Ireland.

Criterion 7.5 is met fully. The case files held by the Irish Sector are stored within the control of the Provincial Delegate in a secure location.

The reviewers acknowledge the cooperation received from the Provincial Delegate and other key members involved in safeguarding children during the time of this review. It is hoped that this report and the recommendations contained within it will further strengthen the safeguarding responses to children of the Missionaries of Africa, Irish Sector.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Recommendation 1**

The Provincial Delegate should ensure that during the review of the safeguarding procedures document the society should address the following issues:

- The revisions to *Children First*.
- Timescales for processing complaints about unacceptable behaviour towards children.

### **Recommendation 2**

The Provincial Delegate must ensure clarity of role for the Safeguarding Committee and ensure that the committee should receive training relevant to the functions they are undertaking.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Provincial Delegate should liaise with the Superior General to develop a written protocol which allows for exchange of information in relation to allegations of abuse and that ensures that the civil authorities in the appropriate country are notified.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Provincial Delegate must ensure that supervision agreements must be signed by all relevant parties, in particular by the subject of the agreement.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Designated person should amend the supervision agreement so that it explicitly states that the respondent is not allowed unsupervised contact with children.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Provincial Delegate should initiate an annual audit of ministry and Garda vetting status of its relevant members, staff and volunteers to enhance governance in this area.

### **Recommendation 7**

The society's safeguarding committee should carry out an assessment of safeguarding training needs and requirements. This assessment should inform the compilation of a safeguarding training plan for all relevant members, staff and volunteers.

**Recommendation 8**

**The Provincial Delegate must ensure that a safeguarding action plan is developed. This should include how the recommendations of this review will be implemented.**

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

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

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

As well as examine

- Communication by the Church Authority with the Civil Authorities;
  - Current risks and their management.
5. To consider and report on the implementation of the 7 safeguarding standards set out in the NBSCCI's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2009), including the following:

- a) A review of the current child safeguarding policies and guidance materials in use by the Church Authority and an evaluation of their application;
- b) How the Church Authority creates and maintains safe environments.
- c) How victims are responded to by the Church Authority
- d) What training is taking place within the Church Authority
- e) How advice and support is accessed by the Church Authority in relation to victim support and assessment and management of accused respondents.
- f) What systems are in place for monitoring practice and reporting back to the Church Authority.

## **Accompanying Notes**

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

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

“While definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to context, probably the most useful definition and broadest for the purposes of this Report was that which was adopted by the Law Reform Commission in 1990<sup>1</sup> and later developed in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children, 1999) which state that “child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or that of others”. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

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

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<sup>1</sup> This definition was originally proposed by the Western Australia Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, 1987 and is adopted by the Law Reform Commission (1990) *Report on Child Sexual Abuse*, p. 8.



**Note 2: Definition of Allegation:**

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

**Note 3: False Allegations:**

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

**Note 4: Random sample:**

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

**Note 5: Civil Authorities:**

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