



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**  
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Review of Child Safeguarding Practice**  
**in the religious congregation of**  
**The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit**

**undertaken by**

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

**July 2015**

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## **Background**

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

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

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

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Child Safeguarding Practice in the religious congregation of The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit*, 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 Regional Superior, Sister Sujata Motcha Rakkini Mary 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 congregation 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 congregation. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

## **1. Introduction**

Arnold Janssen founded the women's mission congregation, Servants of the Holy Spirit in 1889 in the village of Steyl in the Netherlands. In 1893 the Bishop of Roermond approved their constitution and on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1894 the first twelve sisters took their vows.

The co-foundresses of the congregation, Sr Maria ( Helena Stollenwerk) and Sr Josepha ( Hendrina Stenmanns) were entrusted with the main leadership responsibilities, introducing new members to religious life and organising the practical work. The congregation grew rapidly and many young women applied to join as missionary Sisters. In 1895 the first Sisters were sent to Argentina and in 1897 a group went to Togo. In 1899 they went to New Guinea, in 1901 to the United States and in 1902 to Brazil.

After the premature death of Sr Josepha (1903), Arnold Janssen appointed Sr. Theresia Messner as the first Superior General. The First General Chapter took place in 1910 and Sr. Theresia was confirmed in that office for a further twelve years. During this time the congregation developed significantly. Sr. Theresia initiated the legal separation from the Divine Word Missionaries and with that its independence as an international congregation.

After the Second Vatican Council, the congregation initiated a period of profound renewal. General Chapters worked out new constitutions, confirming the religious-missionary life of the congregation firmly in the sharing of life and mission with the Lord

After 1980, new foundations grew up in Angola, Botswana, Bolivia, Mexico, Korea, Portugal, Ukraine, Russia and Romania, Ethiopia, Cuba, Zambia, Antigua, south Africa, Benin, St Kitts, Moldova. There was a shift from institutions and large communities to living with the poor and underprivileged in small communities on the outskirts of cities or in remote area of specific countries. The priority ministries today are women and people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as marginalized people in general. There are currently about 3000 Sisters working in more than fifty countries around the world.

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

Historically the number of Sisters living in Ireland has been small and there has been a limited ministry with children, mainly pastoral catechesis.

## **3. Profile of Members:**

There are currently six members of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit living in Ireland. The Sisters reside in two private houses that they refer to as Convents in the Raheny and Fairview areas of Dublin.

Sisters aged seventy, sixty, and fifty eight years reside in one convent. Currently, two international Sisters reside in the second house, aged thirty one and forty four years. The number of international Sisters in Ireland can vary and some stay in the convent as students to learn English.

Of the Irish Sisters, one is a carer with the HSE (Drumcondra Home Care/Help Services) and visits adults in their homes. The other two Sisters minister as hospital chaplains in various

Dublin adult hospitals. While in Beaumont Hospital, they visit the Children's Ward and provide Holy Communion. During these times they are always accompanied by nursing staff and are governed by the child protection policies and procedures of Beaumont Hospital. They participate in monthly training with the hospital in relation to child safeguarding best practice and have attended a one day course provided by the hospital relating to child safeguarding matters. Both Sisters have been Garda vetted.

One of the international Sisters is Indian and provides catechism to children from the Indian community in a room in Beaumont Parish Hall on a monthly basis. This Sister had clearance from the Indian Embassy when she came to Ireland and was Garda vetted in Ireland. While providing the catechism, the door to the room is left open, and parents are within the vicinity. The other international Sister is from Indonesia and has resided in Ireland for ten years. She has no ministry with children and has also been Garda vetted.

#### **4. Policy and Procedures Document:**

The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit have a lengthy and comprehensive child safeguarding document that they have adapted from the policy of another female religious congregation. At the Regional Assembly in Birmingham on 28th February 2015 it was agreed that this policy would be adopted by all members in Ireland of the English/Irish Region of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit. It was also approved by the General Leadership Team. It meets all the requirements of the Catholic Church in Ireland's standards.

#### **5. Structures:**

The Regional Leader is Sister Sujata Motcha Rakkini Mary who is based in England. To assist her in all matters relating to child safeguarding she has appointed a Designated Liaison Person for Ireland who resides in Ireland.

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

There have not been any allegations of abuse against any member of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit in Ireland, and as such there has been no contact between this congregation and the civil authority agencies, An Garda Síochána or TUSLA.

## **7. Conclusion:**

The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit have some ministry with children, mainly with a hospital setting and in addition to their own child safeguarding policy; those sisters are required to follow the policies and procedures of the hospital in which they work. There have not been any child safeguarding allegations, suspicions or concerns and consequently there was no case management material examined during this review.

The congregation has a very extensive child safeguarding policy which they have adapted from the policy of a larger female congregation. This policy is comprehensive and follows the seven standards as outlined by the NBSCCCI. It is more than adequate given that the Sisters have a limited role with children in Ireland.

Given that the congregation houses Sisters from their international congregation who do have some level of contact with children it would be appropriate that members complete the declaration form, Resource 4 on Page 67 of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, as a safeguard in addition to any vetting that may have been conducted abroad and/or through the Garda Vetting Unit..

**Recommendation 1: The Regional Superior must ensure that members of the congregation complete declaration, Resource 4 on Page 67 of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, stating that there are no concerns of a child safeguarding nature which would prevent them from working with children.**

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

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

### **Small Religious Congregations**

#### **Introduction**

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

This Review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small Religious Congregations /Orders, and Missionary Societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the 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 matches up to the standards set down in the Safeguarding Children Guidance published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church 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;
- (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 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. In 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.