

**Review of Safeguarding Practice  
in the Religious Congregation of  
the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary  
(SSCC)  
undertaken by**

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

**Date: November 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, *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 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 in the male Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary* 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 congregation, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the congregation. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the congregation has confirmed this.

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

## **Introduction**

The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSCC) was founded in France in 1800 by a young French priest called Pierre Coudrin. The congregation is represented by the abbreviation SSCC after its Latin name *Sacrorum Cordium*. The Congregation came to Ireland in 1948 and set up a house in the Diocese of Clogher with the permission of the bishop of the day. At that time they established themselves in Tanagh, Cootehill, Co. Cavan where a community still continues to live today. The Congregation charism is based on God's unconditional love for every human being symbolised in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and echoed in the Heart of Mary his mother. Their mission is to contemplate, live and proclaim God's love in the world. The Communities in Ireland - form part of the Ireland – England Province and are part of a worldwide congregation consisting of priests, brothers, sisters and lay associates who collectively make up over 1500 members in over 30 countries. The leader of the Congregation is called the General Superior. He is elected every six years and resides in Rome with his General Council.

One of the best known members of the Congregation is St. Damien known as *the leper priest of Molokai* who selflessly gave his life to working with the outcasts of his time. He was canonised by Pope Benedict in 2009.

This review examines the safeguarding practice of the members of the Congregation based in Ireland. The Congregation members refer to each other collectively as brothers. The numbers of priests in the Irish – English Province is small with only 18 members in total. They live in communities in London, where they are involved in the running of two parishes and a school, Dublin and the Cavan / Monaghan border area. Ten members live in Ireland and are based in three locations. The provincial house in Dublin is home to four members of whom three are retired. The fourth member is involved in retreat work. In the community house in West Dublin there are three members, two of whom serve in Parish ministry and the third member is involved in Mission awareness. In the Cootehill community there are three members. One member is engaged as Curate in an adjacent rural parish. One retired member helps occasionally with the Eucharist and one member also retired (on health grounds) has an ecumenical outreach. The Provincial lives mostly in London but every four to six weeks will spend a number of days visiting the communities in Ireland. There are no men in formation.

In Ireland there are three SSCC members under the age of 70 years. Today the main work of the members in Ireland comprises their parish work in West Dublin where they run the parish on behalf of the Archdiocese and in Rockcorry Parish Co. Monaghan which is in the Diocese of Clogher. The SSCC members are also involved in retreat work, chaplaincy, pastoral care and outreach and the promotion of Missionary Support Programmes. Previously they held a strong presence in Tanagh, Cootehill where they ran a large seminary and novitiate. In recent years the seminary has been run by the local education committee as an outdoor pursuit centre and an adjacent property as a youth ministry centre. The Congregation has no involvement in the running of these projects. Apart from the priests who hold parish ministries no other member of the Congregation has direct ministry with children. Children and young people do not visit the

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community houses. Members who work in parishes are governed by the diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Ireland – England Province holds a Chapter meeting every three years at which the Provincial is elected. Fr. Derek Lavery is Provincial since 2010 and is currently serving a second term as Provincial. He has previously worked in an English parish before spending a number of years as a missionary in Mozambique. Today, as well as being Provincial, he leads a number of retreats each year, mostly in England and Ireland.

In advance of this review taking place, the Congregation announced on their website that the review was planned and invited those with safeguarding concerns to come forward.

## **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's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities that minister on the island of Ireland, including the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The seven standards are:

**Standard 1** A written policy on keeping children safe

**Standard 2** Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

**Standard 3** Preventing harm to children:

- recruitment and vetting
- running safe activities for children
- codes of behaviour

**Standard 4** Training and education

**Standard 5** Communicating the Church's safeguarding message:

- to children
- to parents and adults
- to other organisations

**Standard 6** Access to advice and support

**Standard 7** Implementing and monitoring the standards

Each standard contains a list of criteria, which are indicators that help decide whether this Standard has been met. The criteria give details of the steps that a Church organisation, diocese or religious order, needs to take to meet the standard and ways of providing evidence that the standard has been met.

**Standard 1**

***A written policy on keeping children safe***

*Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.*

Compliance with Standard 1 is only fully achieved when The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary 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>1.3</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 Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSCC) currently has in place an interim child safeguarding policy document for the Ireland –England Province published in October 2014. This document supersedes their 2011 policy document entitled *SSCC Policy for Safeguarding Children* which was based on the 2009 NBSCCCI's guidelines *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and on the

guidelines of the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service in England (CSAS) as well as the formal written guidance of the statutory authorities in Ireland and England.

The interim document demonstrates the commitment of the Congregation to revise and update their safeguarding policy on a three yearly cycle, (Criterion 1.4). It is the stated intention of the Congregation to fully revise their policy document, following their Provincial Assembly meeting in June 2015. In doing so, the intention is to take into account the National Board's revised standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland due to be published in 2015 and also feedback from both the HSE audit (2013) and NBSCCCI audit on safeguarding practice. The SSCC Ireland-England Province has one policy document which covers their policies and procedures in both the jurisdictions of Ireland and England as both countries form the one Province of the Congregation. It is broad based, taking into account the standards and guidelines from both jurisdictions.

The SSCC Ireland – England Province have previously published child safeguarding policy documents in relation to their safeguarding practice in 2006 and again in 2010. This indicates an established practice of documenting and updating procedural guidelines for the safeguarding of children.

The global SSCC congregation is governed by a policy document entitled "*General Guidelines of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, (Brothers), on the Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Persons*". This is a guidance document which was published by the Congregation's Superior General in Rome in March 2013. In his letter of presentation of the guidelines to his brothers, the policy is described by the Superior General as being *normative for the whole Congregation*. The Superior General states in this letter that he seeks assurance from the Major Superiors that *they promote organisation of a program of study for all the brothers in which they present the Guidelines* and that *there be an opportunity for dialogue about them*. This document contains a detailed procedure regarding the Congregation's response to any complaint regarding sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by a brother of the Congregation; it also details the preliminary investigation and procedures under canon law put in place by the Congregation in the event of a complaint being received by the Order.

The *Province Interim Child Safeguarding Policy* document is considered by the reviewers to meet all criteria under Standard 1.

The policy has a detailed section entitled *Working Safely with Children* which covers all potential situations and activities not covered by either school or parish safeguarding policies.

Whilst the interim document refers to the management of those who pose a risk to children to some extent the reviewers note that the 2006 *Congregation Safeguarding Policy Document* references this section in greater detail. The Provincial may wish to consider including this relevant section in the new policy document when it is revised in 2015. The procedural process as described in the 2013 '*General Guidelines of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts (Brothers) on Sexual abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults*' document is also comprehensive guidance which merits reference in the revised document.



**Recommendation 1:**

**When revising the policy document the Provincial should include the detailed and clearly stated reference to the management of risk previously used in their 2006 document. The Congregation procedural process in managing complaints should also be included in the revised document.**

## **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 Congregation meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

#### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>2.1</b>	There are clear child protection procedures in all Church organisations that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child (historic or current).	Met fully
<b>2.2</b>	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.	Met fully
<b>2.3</b>	There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.	Met fully
<b>2.4</b>	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.	Met fully
<b>2.5</b>	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.	Met fully
<b>2.6</b>	There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute.	Met fully
<b>2.7</b>	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI.	Met fully

The SSCC congregation meets fully all the criteria under Standard 2. The interim policy document gives good guidance in how to respond to an allegation or concern of child abuse. There is also step by step guidance in the form of flow charts outlining what action to take in specific situations for example what action should be taken following the reception of a complaint of child abuse and how a complaint is dealt with. The flow charts contain all relevant information.

The Provincial safeguarding structure within the SSCC is led by the Provincial with a Safeguarding Manager who reports to the Provincial. The Congregation has aligned itself since 2009 with a group of similar smaller congregations for the purposes of consolidating and sharing safeguarding information and resources so as to ensure best practice in safeguarding children. This grouping of small Congregations is called the *Merger Group*. Presently the Safeguarding Manager role and Designated Liaison role are held by the one person but there are plans in place to separate the roles. Under the auspices of the merger group it is envisaged that the dual roles of safeguarding Co-ordinator and training co-coordinator will be expanded and developed to handle risk management and training/prevention respectively. It is anticipated that the safeguarding committee will oversee this work.

The SSCC Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is not a member of the SSCC Congregation. This person is based in Ireland and is DLP for the Province in both Ireland and England. She fulfils this role also for other congregations within the merger group. A member of the Congregation holds the Deputy DLP role and he is based in England. The DLP spoke with clarity of the role held and displayed a detailed knowledge of case management and risk management structures and requirements.

The Provincial Safeguarding Committee is chaired by a member of the Congregation and who also presently fulfils the role as safeguarding coordinator. This priest has extensive background knowledge in the area of child safeguarding and practice. There are three other members of this committee, a religious sister, a parishioner in Co. Monaghan and a parishioner from one of the parishes ministered by the Congregation in London. This committee first came together in 2010 and has met on only a couple of occasions since then. It has developed an internet policy and a social media policy as its most recent outputs. The reviewers met with two of the members of this committee and spoke by telephone with the other two members for the purposes of this review. They were struck with the enthusiasm and knowledge of all members. Although they have only come together as a committee on an infrequent basis they spoke of their communication and information regularly disseminated through the chairperson and through their informal links with each other through e-mail communication. As a group they have all attended training for their role. They have looked at child protection policy and practice within their areas and recently administered a self-audit within the Congregation. They see their role as one of monitoring and promotion of safe practice in their communities. Amongst their roles, they ensure that the proper safeguarding signage is in place in the community houses. The reviewers consider that this small group of committee members is an invaluable and underutilised resource within the congregation safeguarding structure. It is acknowledged that there are practical difficulties taking into account that this one

committee is Province- based and therefore covers two countries. However bringing together on a more frequent basis the different members of this group with their background knowledge and obvious interest to ensure best safeguarding practice would yield great benefit to the SSCC overall safeguarding practice. It is understood that the new role of training coordinator will be answerable to the safeguarding committee. In this way the committee will assume an added focus. The reviewers recommend that the Provincial safeguarding committee be convened on a more frequent basis than at present in order to allow for greater cohesiveness and strength within the safeguarding structure.

**Recommendation 2:**

**The Provincial should ensure that the Safeguarding Committee is convened on a more regular basis than heretofore and request that it produces an annual plan to guide its activities.**

Each of the three communities in Ireland have a local lay person who are seen by the community as the person responsible for assisting them and the local community coordinator with any local issues around child safeguarding practice. The individuals who are the members of the SSCC Safeguarding committee, have an important role in training and educating their members in child safeguarding issues through information sharing and one to one contact. Added to this, the brothers themselves come together throughout the year for monthly area meetings. These monthly meetings held in both Ireland and England attended by all members, provide an opportunity for discussion of on-going child safeguarding matters.

There are parish safeguarding representatives in the two parishes ministered by the SSCC. In this role they follow the diocesan child safeguarding policies. One of the SSCC Safeguarding committee members is also a parish safeguarding representative and spoke of his role in that capacity. This person, who lives in the Diocese of Kilmore, monitors all SSCC activities related to the community in Tanagh, Cootehill as well as activities in the parish of Rockcorry, both of which are located in the Diocese of Clogher. In Tanagh, there is a chapel attached to the community house as well as a smaller oratory in the community house both of which are attended from time to time by members of the public. The safeguarding representative oversees the register and signage in each location. A children's playground on the property in Tanagh is now only allowed to be in use under parental supervision in line with good safeguarding practice.

The reviewers also had an opportunity to speak by phone with a safeguarding representative for the second parish in west Dublin ministered by two members of the Congregation. This person also demonstrated clarity and purpose of his role and follows the diocesan safeguarding guidelines. He has received diocesan safeguarding training and spoke of his good relationship with the parish priest. This parish representatives acts as sole parish safeguarding representative in his parish despite actively looking for a second volunteer. In this regard the NBSCCCI recommends that for good safeguarding practice, each parish should have at least two parish safeguarding representatives fulfilling this important role. The SSCC safeguarding representative in Cavan /Monaghan has limited

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contact with diocesan safeguarding personnel in either diocese and it may be of benefit to develop closer links in terms of training and support.

The SSCC have in role a support person for the complainant and also a priest advisor. The support person is a religious sister who has not yet been called upon to act as a support for a complainant. She was invited earlier in the year to take on this role. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the area of child safeguarding and the reviewers consider that she is eminently well prepared for and capable of performing the duties that this roles entails.

The priest advisor is a member of the Congregation and is presently carrying out the functions of his role. He is knowledgeable about his role as priest advisor and has been in role for several years. He informed the reviewers that he is happy to continue for a time yet in that role.

As part of the merger group, the Congregation had access previously to an advisory panel. The Congregation is now a signed up member (since 2013) of the National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG) chaired by the National Board of Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, (NBSCCCI).

**Table 1**

**Incidence of Safeguarding allegations received within SSCC Congregation from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to date of the review.**

1	Number of Order priests against whom allegations have been made since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the Review	3
2	Total number of allegations received by the Order since 1st January 1975	5
3	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Siochana/PSNI involving Priests/religious of the order since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975	5
4	Number of allegations reported to TUSLA/ HSC/HSE( or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE) involving priests of the Order since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.	5
5	Number of priests (still members of the Order) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of review	1
6	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.	2
7	Number of priests against whom an allegation has been 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 order.	1
9	Number of priests against whom an allegation has been made and who are retired.	1
10	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who have left the order.	0
11	Number of priests of the order who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.	0

**Footnote:** The term allegation in this table includes complaints and expressions of concern, where there are reason grounds..

The table indicates that there have been five allegations made against three priests of whom two are deceased. The case file records indicate well documented practice by current and past provincials.

Files are generally well structured and arranged in chronological order which can sometimes give rise to duplication, with some overlap of some sections. The reviewers examined all files in relation to all three priests and are confident that current practice adheres to good procedural process.

However in the case of Fr. A (deceased), there was a crucial lapse in the line of communication between a complaint made to a diocese and the subsequent referral being received by SSCC. This had unnecessary consequences for the complainant. When the complainant contacted the Congregation in 2013 to discuss a matter to do with sexual abuse, he discovered that an initial complaint he had made to his diocese in 2006 had not been communicated to SSCC.

When the complainant came forward in 2013 there is clear evidence that proper process was put in place and the complainant was responded to in a positive way. Notifications were made to the civil authorities, the NBSCCCI and to the diocese where the original complaint was made. The complainant met with the SSCC DLP and the Provincial and the correspondence communicates a satisfaction with the support and guidance which he received from SSCC.

This case is not straightforward in that clearly there were general concerns about Fr. A for quite some time. These concerns were around his overall character, maturity and his manner of relating to adults and to young adults. No allegation of abuse was ever made against Fr. A while he was alive. He was placed on administrative leave from his parish by the Provincial in 1999 showing clear guidance was initiated by the Provincial of the time. This action followed on some general concerns expressed by responsible people about Fr. A's attitude and manner of relating to people, adults and young people.

In the case of Fr. B (deceased), a complaint was made in early 2000's in relation to alleged sexual abuse of a young girl in the early seventies when the priest was in ministry outside of the Province. Once the complaint was made known to the Provincial, the priest was immediately stepped aside and his faculties revoked by the local bishop. The matter was notified to the civil authorities. The allegation was denied by Fr. B and he refused to make himself available for assessment and counselling. The Provincial commenced a preliminary investigation and sought to establish whether there had been other complaints regarding this priest and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) was informed.

The file indicates that this was a well-managed situation and is very well documented chronologically and narratively. There is also clear evidence of good safety planning and liaising with appropriate agencies to ensure a sharing of relevant information on Fr. B's situation in the interests of public safety. Fr. B was presented with a supervised regime which was evaluated continuously both internally and with the HSE. There is also evidence on file to show that the complainant was supported.

Fr. C is currently being well managed by the Order. The file refers to a letter of complaint made in the early 1990's in relation to an allegation of abuse in late 1960's and which took place in another country. At the time of the complaint, the priest was being assessed and receiving treatment for behaviour not related to child sexual abuse. On advice of the treatment centre the priest was admitted back to ministry the following year. The complainant expressed further concerns in 1993 and again in 1995, although there were no new allegations made. In 1995 the file indicates that Fr. C was removed from all public ministry. The file indicates that the civil authorities were informed in 1996 and An Garda Síochána a month later. There is evidence on file to suggest that the

complainant received much pastoral support and also financial support to help with counselling.

Since his withdrawal from all public ministry in 1995, clear documentary evidence on file indicates that all appropriate actions were taken in respect of support for the complainant and in respect of the safeguards put in place to ensure there was no further risk to children.

In late 2002, two further related allegations were made against Fr. C and related to abuse allegedly predating the first complaint. The file in these cases shows a much improved procedural process being followed and notifications being made to civil authorities in a timely manner. The complainants were met with and offered support and risks to other family members were investigated by the appropriate authorities. No risk was noted.

Fr. C continues to be subject to restrictions and supervision and is subject to a covenant of care. The covenant of care is very well documented on file. The priest has a priest advisor allocated to him. The covenant of care is subject to six monthly reviews which are retained on file, as is the liaison with and reporting to HSE which is a role carried out by the DLP.

This case demonstrates a proactive response to the later allegations which was not immediately forthcoming in relation to the earlier complaint. The Provincial has kept a sustained and positive and well managed approach to risk management in place in this case.

The close review of these cases shows that recent Provincials have had an understanding of how to manage a complaint in a compassionate and effective way by providing outreach to the complainant and reporting and subsequently liaising with the civil authorities. Safety planning, risk management and monitoring in their current case management indicate a thorough understanding and commitment to these essential areas of child safeguarding.



### **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 Congregation 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).	Not Met*
<b>3.6</b>	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.	Met fully

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

**Criteria – Operating safe activities for children**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>3.10</b>	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Met partially
<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

\*While not met, the reviewers accept there is limited or no applicability.

Under this standard, Criteria 3.1 - 3.6 are considered to be met fully. The SSCC Congregation has excellent administrative support in terms of their Administrative Secretary based in the Provincial house. Amongst her tasks are organising the vetting applications which are channelled through the offices of the Irish Missionary Union and annual renewal of celebrets.

The Congregation employs a very small number of household staff who sign declaration forms and are vetted. A spread sheet containing lists and dates of those vetted was supplied to the reviewers.

Visiting priests must produce celebrets from their Provincials and records are kept of all priests, students etc. who visit the Province. There are two forms in use by the congregation in this regard. The Testimonial Form and the Episcopal Bishop's Forms are

used for priests/students who wish to live in the Province for a time in the first case, or in the second case for those staying in the area for a shorter period.

The Congregation has a detailed recruitment policy which details requirements for admission to the pre-novitiate as part of its *Formation Policy for the Ireland England Province 2010*. This is a detailed 12 point document and under its child protection guidelines it states the following:

*As a Congregation and in line with the church we are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is expected that the candidate will familiarise himself with the Child Protection Guidelines that are in place in the Province.*

There is detailed guidance in relation to safe recruitment and the vetting procedure in the SSCC policy document.

The Criteria 3-5 3.7 3.8 and 3.9 are considered not met, but are also not applicable in relation to this Congregation due to the fact that the Congregation has no direct ministry with children. Their guidance document does not take account of those situations outlined in the criteria. If circumstances do arise such as those outlined in the criteria in, for instance a parish context, the Congregation follows the diocesan safeguarding guidelines.

There is especially good guidance on whistleblowing and for the appropriate use of social media, data technology and the use of the internet. Criteria 3.10 is deemed partially met as the guidance in the policy does address assessing all possible risks in working with children but does not address activities away from home. In this respect the reviewers are satisfied that this is a situation most unlikely to occur, taking into account that the SSCC have no direct ministry with children.

#### **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 fully
<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 fully
<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 fully
<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

All staff are fully inducted into the child safeguarding policy document. In the Provincial's introduction to the recent Interim Policy Document he states that:

*The Provincial Council has unanimously approved the policies and procedures contained in this document. Each brother, community and worker is bound to adhere to and engage with this document in a concerted effort to protect children and to cherish the gift that they are for our future.*

Both the Provincial and the safeguarding co coordinator in particular have done extensive child safeguarding training in the last number of years. This information along with safeguarding notes and updates are discussed in each area meeting which take place on a monthly basis during school terms. The provincial council meets four to six times yearly and safeguarding is a live topic on the agenda. Again this information is disseminated regularly to the area meetings. The Province as a whole comes together each June for a week when again safeguarding is a live topic. Because the number of priests is so small and their interaction is relatively high the advantages of this 'informal' training are obvious.

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The reviewers spoke with several key role holders including non-congregational personnel such as safeguarding committee /parish representatives who have received training. The safeguarding co-coordinator reflected that for a very small congregation like the SSCC, the costs of training can sometimes be prohibitive. Notwithstanding that management has placed training needs on their safeguarding agenda.

The SSCC have in the past accessed training from the NBSCCCI. As part of planned changes in the merger group it is anticipated that there will be a safeguarding manager employed with full responsibilities for training and education. The reviewers were impressed with the degree of knowledge, enthusiasm, and familiarity of safeguarding policy which key personnel possessed.

**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.	Not Met*
<b>5.3</b>	Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Met fully
<b>5.4</b>	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts / Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person.	Met fully
<b>5.5</b>	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.	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

*\*No/Limited applicability*

The safeguarding policy is openly displayed in SSCC community houses and SSCC ministry sites and is displayed on the SSCC website. Information on the website is regularly updated. The SSCC safeguarding statement states that:

*The Province is committed except 5-2 are to .....making this Safeguarding Policy widely known, accessible and understood, and implementing procedures and protocols that contribute to keeping children safe in all our SSCC gatherings and activities.*

All criteria under this standard seem to be met fully. The reviewers consider that because the ministry of the SSCC does not include direct contact with children the opportunities to meet with children and to make them aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns, are limited. The proper signage and safeguarding statement is openly displayed in community houses and contain contact details for those who may wish to make a complaint. Members of SSCC who may come into direct contact with children through parish or school work are aware of and governed by the safeguarding policy put in place by either the Department of Education and Skills, or the diocese

There is an excellent working relationship with the civil authorities. In coordination with the Provincial, the DLP is the lead person in all the SSCC relationships with the statutory authorities. This was evidenced in all case files where the movement of accused members for holidays or visits was monitored and good relationships developed with local child care statutory authorities.

An Garda Siochana informed the reviewers that they have no concerns or issues held in relation to this congregation.

**Standard 6**

***Access to Advice and Support***

*Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.*

*Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.*

**Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Met fully
<b>6.2</b>	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Met fully
<b>6.3</b>	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Met fully
<b>6.4</b>	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Met fully
<b>6.5</b>	Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.	Met fully

The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSCC) became part of a merger group of other smaller congregations in 2009/2010. The SSCC safeguarding team spoke of the advantages of being a part of a larger group with a shared focus, knowledge and structure.

There is excellent guidance in the SSCC safeguarding document on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused.

The SSCC have documented in their case files their use of specialist support in seeking advice in relation to safeguarding issues. The files show that when it came to the attention of the Provincial that there may have been a risk to other children apart from the



children implicated in the original allegation, the Provincial sought the advice of a child protection specialist regarding how best to ascertain the level of risk.

In the other cases the reviewers saw documented evidence that the Provincial had no hesitation in providing support to those who had been abused both in a pastoral sense and in the form of financial support towards counselling. In each of the cases there was a common theme of reaching out to the complainant by the different Provincials at the time. It was noted that the Provincial in his discussion regarding support, demonstrated an understanding that families of victims can also be in need of support and support has been extended in the past to families of complainants also.

In relation to the respondent priests the SSCC safeguarding team have consistently put in place therapeutic, personal and supervisory supports.

In relation to this standard the SSCC is considered to have met all criteria

## **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>
<b>7.1</b>	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.	Met partially
<b>7.2</b>	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Met fully
<b>7.3</b>	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Met fully
<b>7.4</b>	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	Partially Met
<b>7.5</b>	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met fully

The SSCC safeguarding team take their responsibility towards child safeguarding seriously. In their discussions with the reviewers, they spoke of their plans for the future, including the plan for the revision of their policy document following their Provincial Assembly Meeting in June 2015, their on-going dialogue/training about safeguarding matters with the brothers at the monthly area meetings and the planned restructuring within the merger group itself. The SSCC safeguarding team have also discussed the possibility of the local community leaders taking on the role of safeguarding representatives. These are all relevant plans but in order to fully meet with the Criterion 7.1 under this standard, the SSCC safeguarding team should produce a written plan outlining what they hope to achieve, by whom and within the anticipated timeframe. The SSCCs advised that a process has been put in place but not yet activated whereby parishioners will be asked about their views.

### **Recommendation 3:**

**The Provincial along with his safeguarding team should develop a safeguarding plan in line with Criterion 7.1 under this standard.**

The safeguarding committee members commenced a process of self-auditing in 2013 and several members spoke of the usefulness of this exercise in creating a focus on

accountability. This is a welcome development which ensures that a monitoring and accountability function takes place.

The reviewers accept that Criterion 7.4 is not applicable in the case of all SSCC members, as not all roles bring them into direct contact with parishioners. However, the Congregation is responsible for the operation of two parishes and therefore some processes need to be developed to garner feedback directly from parishioners and perhaps a start can be made with adults who attend parish liturgies. Informally, the SSCC safeguarding team, through their area community meetings and the work of local community leaders, seek this feedback from service users.

The reviewers are satisfied that all incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely and this criterion is fully met.

Taking into account its low personnel numbers and its age profile, and the challenges that situation can pose for any organisation, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (Brothers) has achieved in maintaining and operating a child safeguarding structure which has allowed for both a compassionate and practical approach to those who have come forward with a complaint.

In addition, the reviewers consider that historically and currently risk has been well assessed and well managed.

The Congregation has had a focus in the past on good safeguarding practice which is evidenced in their different policy documents created over the years. It is evident to the reviewers that this focus continues into the present day and into the future. The reviewers were impressed with the transparency, enthusiasm and genuine desire by the SSCC to ensure that their practice and standards in child safeguarding is best practice.

Under the guidance of the Provincial the reviewers consider that the child safeguarding practice of the SSCC Congregation is seriously addressed and managed to a high standard.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**When revising the policy document the Provincial should include the detailed and clearly stated reference to the management of risk previously used in their 2006 document. The Congregation procedural process in managing complaints should also be included in the revised document.**

### **Recommendation 2:**

**The Provincial should ensure that the Safeguarding Committee is convened on a more regular basis than heretofore and request that it produces an annual plan to guide its activities.**

### **Recommendation 3:**

**The Provincial along with his safeguarding team should develop a safeguarding plan in line with Criterion 7.1 under this standard.**

**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 *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.