



Private and Confidential

Review of Safeguarding Practice
in the
Irish British Province of the Society of the Divine Word
(Divine Word Missionaries)
undertaken by
The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the
Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)

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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 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 within the Irish British Province of the Society of the Divine Word*, 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 by the provincial of the Irish British Province (IBP) of the Society of the Divine Word, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the society's Irish British Province. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers and the provincial has confirmed this.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the provincial of the Irish British Province of the Society of the Divine Word, along with any recommendations arising from the findings.

Introduction

The Society of the Divine Word is a worldwide Missionary Society that was founded in 1875 by a German priest, Fr. Arnold Janssen; he was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2003. It was established as an order of priests and Brothers ‘...devoted to preaching the Gospel in foreign lands’ (as quoted on the Society’s website - www.svdmissions.org). The Society now has somewhere between 6,000 and 7,000 members living and working in over 75 countries, making it the biggest Catholic missionary society in the world. The Society is administered in Provincial units, one of which is the Irish British Province. There had been a British Province until dwindling numbers led to an amalgamation with the Irish Province in 2000.

The Society is known in Latin as *Societas Verbi Divini*, which is shortened to SVD. For ease of writing, in this review report, the Society of the Divine Word, often called the Divine Word Missionaries, will be referred to as ‘the Society’ or as ‘SVD’; and the Irish British Province will be referred to as ‘the IBP’.

The society has a headquarters in Rome and its overall governance is vested in a Superior General, who is elected every 6 years. Each province has a leader, called the Provincial, and in the IBP, this is Fr. Pat Byrne. Fr. Byrne was elected by the members of the IBP in January 2013 for a second three-year term of office. He is assisted in the leadership of the IBP by four members (one of whom is based in Bristol, UK) who together with him make up the IBP Provincial Council.

The society’s provinces are all accountable to the Superior General. However, they operate somewhat independently of each other, so that when an Irish SVD priest goes to work abroad, he becomes a member of his host province, and he has no further link with the IBP, unless he returns to live and work in, or retire to Ireland or the UK. In the wider SVD ‘family’, the IBP is quite a small administrative unit, comprised of 48 members who live in 24 different locations; of these members, 12 men are fully retired. SVD has 4 main houses in Ireland, 2 in Dublin, 1 in Maynooth, Co. Kildare and 1 in Co. Roscommon. One of the Dublin houses on the north side of the city acts as the Provincial House. The house in Maynooth is adjacent to the St. Patrick’s National Seminary and currently there are 3 Chinese seminarians living in that house, along with 8 Irish members, making this the largest SVD community in the IBP.

The society has 3 houses in the UK, in London, Bristol and Liverpool, and these have 3, 2 and 2 members in residence respectively. It is possible that the Liverpool house will close in the near future.

Of the working SVD members in the IBP, 12 live in parochial houses and work in parish ministry. An additional 6 men are semi-retired, in that they are available to undertake supply duties in parishes to allow local priests to take leave.

Any society member who undertakes parish ministry is subject to local diocesan child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices and participates in local diocesan child safeguarding training.

SVD IBP members undertake no specialized ministry to children and young people, in that it does not provide schools or colleges; it does not undertake retreat work with young people; and it does not have a youth ministry. The society does however administer two parishes on behalf of two dioceses, at City Quay in Dublin, and at Kilbegnet in Elphin; while, as already indicated, some members also assist in a number of other parishes in Ireland. This parish ministry includes normal pastoral work with children and young people, such as school visitation.

The only SVD house where young people under-18 years of age visit to take part in organised activities is the Maynooth SVD community house where a media production and training operation is based. This is described on the SVD IBP website (www.svdireland) as follows:

For more than 30 years Kairos has functioned as a media production and training facility. As well as producing high quality programmes for national radio and television, Kairos is also committed to media education and training. Kairos our Media and Training centre is well known in Ireland.

From time to time, Transition-Year students visit the *Kairos* studios for an orientation session on radio and television production.

Where it is clear that individual criteria that are used to measure the performance of a Church authority against the 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* are not relevant to the activities of SVD IBP, then this will be recorded in the appropriate section of the report below.

The Society of the Divine Word Irish British Province was late to take up its responsibilities for child safeguarding, when it is considered that it was 1996 when *Child Sexual Abuse: Framework for a Church Response*, the *Report of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Advisory Committee on Child Sexual Abuse by Priests and Religious* was published. Perhaps it was an oversight that the members of the Irish Missionary Union were not involved in the development of that seminal guidance document; however, the publication itself was a significant event in the Irish Catholic Church and should have led to internal reviews by all Church authorities of their situation vis-à-vis child safeguarding at that time. In fact the then Irish province did produce a three page document in 1996 or 1997 entitled *Irish Province of the Divine Word Missionaries: Policy on Child Abuse*, but the reviewers found little evidence of this document influencing the development of effective child safeguarding practices within the society in Ireland.

Again, while there were some difficulties with the subsequent 2005 publication, *Our Children, Our Church: Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, on that occasion the Irish Missionary Union were involved in the

development of that document and this should have been reflected in the internal governance of its members regarding child safeguarding. The third and current guidance document was published in 2009 and was accepted by all Church authorities on the island of Ireland.

It was 2012 before SVD IBP began to develop formal structures and processes to deal with child safeguarding within Ireland and Britain. Before this concentrated initiative, the society had developed a number of appropriate safeguarding responses. These included consideration of safeguarding at community meetings and the display of a child protection notice in each of the community houses. There is also evidence of members about who there were concerns being sent for assessment and treatment, and also of the removal from ministry of one man. Some attempts were also made to engage with complainants. The overall approach of SVD IBP however was inconsistent and uncoordinated, and therefore less effective than it needed to be because of this.

The trigger for a more robust response in late 2012 was that the provincial needed to provide testimonial statements to local ordinaries about society members who had applied for faculties. This required him to read personnel files kept in the SVD IBP headquarters, in the course of which he became aware of problems relating to some men. There is no explanation of why the outgoing provincial did not make the current provincial aware of the existing safeguarding issues in 2010 when a handover took place.

Fr. Pat Byrne, Provincial, once he was alerted to his safeguarding responsibilities, began to plan appropriate measures, guided by the NBSCCCI, from which he sought advice and guidance. This led to his asking two members to step aside from ministry, pending proper investigation of their situations. The NBSCCCI also assisted at this time by providing briefing sessions to SVD IBP members on child safeguarding. He then recruited two lay support staff to assist him in putting structures, procedures and practices in place; their roles and responsibilities are described in the discussion of Standard 1 below.

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 *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 Society of the Divine Word. 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 missionary society meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
1.1	The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Met fully
1.2	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
1.3	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Met fully
1.4	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 *
1.5	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
1.6	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Met fully
1.7	The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.	Met fully
1.8	The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.	Met fully
1.9	The policy should be created at congregational / Society level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the congregational / Society policy and approved by the congregational / Society authority before distribution.	Met fully

* The current policy and procedures is a 2013 document and is the first such document produced by the Society. This criterion is met because there is a commitment to reviewing and revising the document within the required three-year period

The SVD IBP produced a three-page *Policy on Child Abuse* document in 1996 or 1997 (the exact date could not be verified) that makes reference to the Child Sexual Abuse – Framework for a Church Response document issued by the Irish Bishops’ Advisory Committee on January 30th 1996, and to the Child Protection Office of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI). Due to its short length, this document does not provide sufficient detail to be considered in any way comprehensive. It is not clear how widely this document was circulated within the SVD IBP, or the extent to which it was relied on by the predecessors to the current provincial.

The reviewers welcome the development and iteration of the document, *Divine Word Missionaries Irish British Province Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures – Revised June 2013*. This 27-page document was ratified by IBP Council on 20/05/2013; and by the Superior General on 12/06/2013. In submitting the document for ratification, Criterion 1.2 is fully met. It has been presented to all SVD houses in Ireland through a series of one-day workshops in July 2013 provided by the provincial and the designated person for the society. The policy and procedures document is written in an easily accessible and understandable way and avoids unnecessary jargon or complications, so Criterion 1.1 is fully met.

The document includes the following Divine Word Missionaries Child Protection Policy Statement:

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

Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected. Children have a right to enjoy their childhood free from violence, injury or abuse at the hands of adults. This right is enshrined in law, from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child down to national laws and guidelines.

These guiding principles inform this policy. The policy has been written to ensure that the Society of the Divine Word take every possible measure to prevent abuse. It aims to ensure that none of its personnel or volunteers engage in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur, or actions that could be misinterpreted by children, their family or other adults as constituting, or leading to abuse. [Page 4]

In meeting Criterion 1.3, the document contains a clear statement about expected adherence with it by members on page 3:

The following policies and procedures are required to be adhered to and followed by all members residing in Ireland or visiting Ireland. This policy document with an addendum is applicable to members of the Irish-British Province living in England.

The policy and procedures has not yet been printed and distributed; however, it is available on the society’s website Child Safeguarding page. The policy and procedures

was distributed to all members of SVD IBP for consultation, and it was then discussed with them at the July 2013 workshops facilitated by the provincial and the designated person. All SVD IBP members are now expected to sign a form stating that they have read the document, understand their responsibility to adhere to it, and undertake to do so.

Recommendation 1

That the provincial ensures that the society's child safeguarding policy and procedures complies with the requirements of the statutory agencies and is then printed and distributed within the IBP and circulated to all stakeholders and partners in the society's work within the IBP. The provincial further needs to ensure that all members sign the document stating that they have received, read and undertake to adhere to and follow the child safeguarding policy and procedure of SVD IBP.

The provincial and the designated person have already begun to visit SVD houses in the UK and to make contacts with the British statutory authorities, and these contacts will facilitate communication about the UK statutory child safeguarding requirements of the society.

As the society's policy and procedures document was only published in June 2013, no review or revision of it is required for a three-year period; but there is a commitment to do so. Indeed, the designated person has undertaken to keep the document under constant review and to produce addendums that may be required to ensure that it is comprehensive and up to date. The reviewers are satisfied therefore that Criterion 1.4 is fully met.

A close reading of the SVD IBP child safeguarding policy and procedures provides evidence that Criteria 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 are fully met. The descriptive clarity of the procedures to be followed by members of the society is excellent and is commended.

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 missionary 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.	Met partially
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.	Met fully
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.	Met partially
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.	Met partially
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.	Met fully
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.	Met fully

Table 1

Incidence of safeguarding allegations received within SVD IBP from 1st January 1975 up to the time of the review.

Society of the Divine Word		
1.	Number of SVD IBP priests / brothers against whom allegations have been made since the 1 st January 1975 up to the date of the review.	6
2.	Total number of allegations received by the SVD IBP since 1 st January, 1975	8
3.	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána / UK police involving priests / brothers of SVD IBP since 1 st January 1975.	7
4.	Number of allegations reported to the HSE (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE,) involving priests / brothers of SVD IBP since 1 st January 1975.	5
5.	Number of priests/ brothers (still members of the Society) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.	5
6.	Number of priests/ brothers (still members of the Society) against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.	1
7.	Number of priests / brothers against whom an allegation has been made and who are in ministry.	1
8.	Number of priests / brothers against whom an allegation was made and who are “Out of Ministry, but are still members of the society.	4
9.	Number of priests / brothers against whom an allegation was made and who are retired	0
10.	Number of priests / brothers against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Society	0
11.	Number of SVD IBP priests / brothers who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since the 1 st January 1975.	1

Footnote: The term allegation in this table includes complaints and expressions of concern, as well as admissions of the abuse of a child / children where no allegation or complaint has been received.

In total, the reviewers read case files on seven men. One of these men had spent some of his formation period in an SVD seminary, but he transferred to a diocesan seminary, from which he was ordained. He was subsequently found to have abused children as a diocesan

priest, but no information suggesting that he had abused while an SVD seminarian was found. In a second case the SVD member against whom an allegation of historical child sexual abuse had been made was deceased for a number of years before the allegation was received and so no current risk exists. The provincial of SVD IBP contacted the alleged victim in this case once it was brought to his attention.

Of the remaining five SVD IBP members who are of concern, in one case the complaint received is by a third party and the alleged victim has not made a complaint. In these circumstances while the allegation was reported to the statutory authorities, no statutory or canonical investigation can be initiated. Despite this the society has provided counselling support for the alleged victim and their relative who made the third party complaint.

Four SVD IBP members are out of ministry as a result of concerns about child sexual abuse, one of whom has already served a prison sentence for abuse committed in Ireland. Two of these men made admissions of having abused children, although no allegations against them have been received; and in the case of the other two, sufficient evidence of concern exists to justify their being asked to step aside from ministry while appropriate investigations are being conducted. In all four cases the men involved are living in an SVD IBP community house, and in the case of three of them, supervision arrangements and restrictions are in place. Two of these men were required to move to SVD IBP community houses where they would have no access to young people or vulnerable adults.

The reviewers were very concerned about the potential risks involving one SVD IBP member who has admitted to extensive abuse of children in mission countries over a 20-year period, but against whom there are no complaints or allegations. It needs to be noted that this man only became a member of SVD IBP when he returned to the province from overseas, and that the Irish Provincial had no authority over him while he served abroad. Unfortunately this man's situation was very poorly managed by the international leadership of the society at Generalate level since concerns about his ministry were first raised. He was moved from one country where the local bishop did not want him, to another country, where it would have been much more appropriate to withdraw him from ministry until his personality and behavioural problems were dealt with. However, recent evidence indicates that he abused children until he was returned to Ireland; there have been no admissions or allegations relating to him having abused in Ireland. All admissions were reported to the civil authorities by the Irish designated person.

While there had been three specialist assessments of this priest, in 1985, 1997 and 2004, previous provincials had not kept assessment reports on file, if such reports were ever requested by them and the current provincial was not briefed about this man's problems when he was taking over the leadership from his predecessor. Matters were further complicated by the fact that despite a lengthy list of admissions during the most recent specialist assessment, the author of the Assessment Report (which the current provincial had in 2013 to specifically seek from the UK assessment service from which it had been commissioned in 2004) concluded that the man should be considered as being 'low risk'

of abusing children. The reviewers cannot understand how such a determination was made. It needs to be said that no complaints or allegations of child abuse have been made against this priest since he returned to IBP in 1997.

The provincial and designated person have been advised to develop a risk management plan regarding this man as a matter of urgency, which plan will involve a change of residence for him. It is difficult to comprehend how this situation was tolerated and ignored for almost 30 years. The full details of the case only came to the attention of the current provincial this year. However, it would have been prudent for him to have read the personnel files of living members in the IBP over a period of time when he became provincial. It is also essential that if the current leadership structures and practices are retained, an outgoing provincial should undertake a due diligence process and conduct a comprehensive handover to his incoming successor, which handover should include full sharing of all information about members who are a concern in relation to the safety and welfare of children.

Recommendation 2

That the Provincial Council develops a system for a formal and comprehensive handover from an outgoing provincial to an incoming new provincial that includes a full sharing of all information in relation to members about whom there are child safeguarding concerns.

The reviewers are unhappy that in the case of another member, no real attempts were made to supervise him or restrict his access to children between 1988, when he was sent for assessment, and his removal from ministry in 1995. Once removed from ministry, he was required to sign an undertaking to not have contact with children and young people, and he had to sign in and sign out of his community house. He was imprisoned in 2003 for child abuse offences in Ireland. In this case and in others, written reports of assessments undertaken are not on file. Efforts should now be made to obtain these reports.

Recommendation 3

That the provincial actively seeks and ensures a review of all relevant case file material that needs to be on the society's case management files, from whatever sources both within SVD IBP and elsewhere.

Recommendation 4

That the provincial as a matter of urgency ensures that detailed risk assessments and risk management plans are conducted, put in place and implemented for all SVD IBP members about whom there are child safeguarding concerns. These plans should be implemented with the knowledge, agreement and support of the relevant police and child protection social service departments.

It is truly unfortunate and a great injustice that it is almost impossible to identify the victims of historical child sexual abuse who live in developing countries and whose abuse took place many years ago. The behaviour of the few SVD members who perpetrated this

abuse has severely undermined the integrity of a Christian brotherhood that aspires to bring the Good News to people who have not yet heard it; “...to live among the people, listen to their needs and help everyone hear the voice of God” (<http://www.svdmissions.org>). The SVD IBP is now working to ensure that all other SVD provinces are informed of allegations and concerns about abuse perpetrated abroad by men who are now members of the Irish British Province. It is hoped that these contacts will be instrumental in identifying victims in other countries to whom the society can provide appropriate outreach responses.

The joint focus of the review is on what has happened historically and on what has been put in place to ensure that children are safe in the present and in the future. While SVD IBP has been slow to address the needs for structures and processes required for child safeguarding, the reviewers found evidence of a strong commitment to quickly build a robust and effective system now. This is what is examined under Standard 2.

Criterion 2.1 is met fully through the June 2013 policy and procedures, which are clear and detailed. SVD IBP appointed a part-time professional lay designated officer in March 2013 and by doing so, Criterion 2.3 is fully met.

The June 2013 policy and procedures document has been written to be in compliance with the national Republic of Ireland guidance document *Children First*, 2011 and with the 2009 Irish Church document, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is to audit SVD IBP in September 2013 and in advance of this the society has submitted its June 2013 policy and procedures document for evaluation by HSE. The society also needs to check the adequacy of its June 2013 document to meet the child protection requirements of the UK. When these various checks are completed and any revisions made, SVD IBP will be in full compliance with Criterion 2.2; and until then this criterion is only met partially.

The fact that no child safeguarding case management files existed in SVD IBP prior to 2013 is of great concern and indicates a lack of any focus on child protection within the society over the last 20 years. Case files were constructed by the society in advance of the review taking place. An experienced administrator was employed in January 2013 who examined all personnel files in the society’s archives for any material that related to potential clerical child sexual abuse. This material was then brought together to construct the seven case files that the reviewers examined. These files are well constructed and very accessible, with good chronologies and narrative. Criterion 2.4 is only met partially because not all of these files are complete, as further information is required from other provinces and from assessment services in some of these cases.

The SVD IBP policy and procedures document does have a section on complaints, on page 12. In order to fully meet the requirements of Criterion 2.5, this needs to be expanded and guidance on timelines needs to be included in it.

Criterion 2.6 is well met. It is the intention of the society to have full and accurate contact details of the two statutory child protection agencies on the child safeguarding posters to be prominently displayed in all SVD IBP houses. However, the NBSCCCI would also require that there is a space in the printed policy and procedures document where these local contact details can be inserted and Criterion 2.7 can only be met fully when the June document is printed and distributed.

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 missionary 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.

It has been noted above that outside parish work that SVD IBP does not have a specialist ministry to children and young people, and the only application of this standard is to the *Kairos* communications unit in SVD Maynooth. The reviewers were assured that all *Kairos* Communications staff sign up to child protection and health and safety policies, and they have all signed a declaration saying they have no conviction or disciplinary action regarding offences against children. When Transition Year students attend for media orientation sessions it is a requirement that they are accompanied by two teachers. All parish ministry engaged in by the SVD IBP is governed by the specific Diocesan standards in relation to safeguarding.

Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.1	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.	Met fully
3.2	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.	Met fully
3.3	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

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.4	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.	Met fully
3.5	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).	Met fully
3.6	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 partially
3.7	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 applicable
3.8	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
3.9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Not applicable

Criteria – Operating safe activities for children

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.10	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Met fully
3.11	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.	Met fully
3.12	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

The June 2013 SVD IBP policy and procedures document contains most of the guidance required under this standard, even though in many cases it is unlikely that an SVD IBP member would be in a situation governed by this guidance, e.g. being on an away trip with young people. While the designated person is working on a whistleblowing policy, this was not complete at the time of the review. However, the reviewers have been assured that all members are aware of how to deal with any concern they might have about a confrere and who to speak to in such circumstances. The reviewers were provided with an example of this having happened in the recent past. Once the policy on whistleblowing is written and distributed among the membership, Criterion 3.6 will be fully met.

The reviewers are of the view that Criteria 3.7 and 3.9 are not applicable to any situation involving SVD IBP members.

All other criteria required under Standard 3 are met fully.

SVD IBP members who undertake ministries in diocesan parishes are governed by the child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices of the host dioceses, and they attend diocesan Child Safeguarding Training.

Standard 4

Training and Education

All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
4.1	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
4.2	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.	Met partially
4.3	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
4.4	Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Met partially

The reason that the society cannot be considered to fully meet any of the four criteria by which compliance with Standard 4 is measured, is that child safeguarding has only really been actively taken up by the SVD IBP within the past year and much remains to be done.

In January and February 2013, a staff member from the NBSCCCI was invited by the SVD IBP provincial to conduct child safeguarding awareness raising workshops for all SVD IBP members in Ireland and this was a good first step.

Introductory workshops have been held to acquaint members with the June 2013 policy and procedures document and this is commended. These were undertaken by the provincial and designated person and attendance of members was mandatory.

It is also clear that the designated person sees training as important and the SVD IBP Child Safeguarding Plan that she has drawn up does contain a number of training initiatives already underway and further training targets and suggested methodologies yet to be instituted. This plan also includes the conduct of a Training Needs internal audit, which the administrator is completing. The results of this audit will inform further

training activities. The designated person informed the reviewers that some of the planned training will be outsourced, while she will provide some herself. However, the risk must be avoided of charging this staff member with all child safeguarding tasks and responsibilities and diluting her impact as designated person, especially as she is a part-time employee.

SVD IBP, through the provincial and the designated person has forged good working relationships with the NBSCCCI and advice and guidance on training will be made available to the society on an ongoing basis, as required.

Recommendation 5

That the provincial ensures that the training needs identified in the ongoing internal audit are quickly met and that the training goals included in the Child Safeguarding Plan drawn up by the designated person are resourced and achieved within the identified timeframes.

Much needed support could be provided to the provincial and the designated person through the operation of an SVD IBP Safeguarding Committee. Such a group could undertake much of the work involved in the development and promulgation of policies and procedures, take a role in the development and provision of training and generally to act as an information and support resource on aspects of child safeguarding for the province.

Recommendation 6

That the provincial, in consultation with the Provincial Council, designated person and the NBSCCCI select and appoint a group of knowledgeable, skilled and motivated people who will act as a safeguarding committee for the SVD IBP for an initial period of three years.

The society needs to draw up plans for the orientation of Irish SVD priests and brothers who return to Ireland for a three-month holiday every three years and for those members who will eventually retire to Ireland. Many of these men left Ireland decades ago and have not been party to the gradual awakening of societal consciousness of clerical child sexual abuse that has taken place over the last 20 years or so. They may be ministering in societies where clerical child sexual abuse has not arisen as an issue and where awareness raising of good child safeguarding practices has not happened. These men are arriving / will arrive back to a very different society than the one they left when they went on the missions. They will need information, guidance and support in adjusting to the expectations that now exist about the behaviour of clerics in relation to children and young people and about the requirements of the Irish Church's child safeguarding procedures and practices.

Recommendation 7

That the provincial and the Provincial Council put plans in place for the orientation and briefing of SVD priests and brothers who return to Ireland for holidays or to retire.

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

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
5.1	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.	Met fully
5.2	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.	Not applicable
5.3	Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Met fully
5.4	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
5.5	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.	Met fully
5.6	Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.	Not met

Each SVD IBP community house has the child safeguarding policy prominently displayed, with the relevant contact details for the statutory child protection agencies and for the designated person, and therefore Criterion 5.1 is met fully, as is Criterion 5.4. Some SVD IBP residences have supplemented the policy statement poster with a second poster that details the local agreed guidance on children and young people who occasionally visit the houses as relatives of members, or with their parents who are visiting for any other reason. This practice is commended.

SVD IBP undertakes no specific ministry with children and young people outside parish work on behalf of a diocese and so Criterion 5.2 above is governed by the requirements within the diocese in which they work. The reviewers were assured that very adequate child safeguarding measures are in place for Transition Year students who undertake one-day media orientation sessions at *Kairos* in Maynooth.

The workshops that were conducted by the provincial and the designated person in July 2013 ensured that Criterion 5.3 is met fully.

The reviewers contacted a senior manager in An Garda Síochána and in HSE Child Protection services to establish what their experience has been of communication and working relationships with SVD IBP Child Safeguarding personnel. An Garda Síochána is satisfied that there are good communications and working relationships with the society. The HSE manager interviewed provided examples of two cases in which the society had worked openly and effectively with HSE services towards the better protection of children. She stated that HSE is confident that SVD IBP is aware of its responsibility to report all child abuse allegations and concerns.

One of the stated commitments and strengths of the Society of the Divine Word is to good communications and the society has developed excellent communications skills and vehicles over the years. It has to be noted however that it has not brought these into the service of its child safeguarding activities. The reviewers saw evidence on the files they examined of very poor or non-existent communication between SVD IBP leadership and the leadership of other SVD provinces about child safeguarding concerns that had arisen about particular members. However, in order for the society to rectify this historical weakness, the Generalate will need to provide leadership for all of the provinces in developing a real commitment to two-way communication and protocols to guide this. Fr. Pat Byrne, as the SVD IBP Provincial, has already raised this matter at the last General Chapter of the society and the Superior General now needs to take charge of and advance the matter. The closing of obvious loopholes will be a significant contribution to improved child safeguarding across the whole society.

SVD IBP communication with assessment services and other agencies have also been weak historically.

Of particular importance is the communication between the outgoing provincial leadership and the incoming one. The provincial of SVD IBP can be recently returned from years abroad, with no real sense of what are the significant issues in Ireland. There needs to be a detailed and comprehensive due diligence exercise undertaken by the outgoing provincial in order that he can then provide a full handover to his colleague who is replacing him. The Provincial Council would have an important role in this matter.

Recommendation 8

The provincial should convene a small working group to examine how child safeguarding communications can be developed, strengthened and supported within the SVD IBP and the wider society, and to develop an appropriate, comprehensive and effective Child Safeguarding Communications Policy.

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 partially
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 partially

This standard encompasses both the awareness of and response to the needs of victims of clerical child sexual abuse and the provision of appropriate assessment and rehabilitative services to perpetrators of abuse.

Comment has been made previously to the difficulty of tracing victims who were abused in far away countries many years ago. Where it has been obvious from case files that the society has reached out to victims, this has been acknowledged in this review report. The society did place a notice on its website announcing this NBSCCCI review and inviting anyone who had a child safeguarding concern to make contact. There was no response to this notice during the review. What is seen to be missing in the approach of SVD IBP is a clear and systematic consideration of the potential to identify victims of members, in the

Irish British Province and elsewhere, to make contact with them, to assess their needs and to respond justly and effectively to them. The reviewers raised this matter with the Provincial Council members when they met during the course of the review. Other Irish Church authorities have already given much consideration to this challenge and have developed methodologies for responding to it. SVD IBP cannot fully meet the requirements of Criterion 6.4 without making significant efforts to identify and contact victims. SVD IBP continues to make an annual contribution to the *Towards Healing* counselling and support service.

Recommendation 9

That the Provincial Council of SVD IBP request the assistance of other Church authorities and of the NBSCCCI in developing a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of victims of clerical child sexual abuse by members of the society.

The June 2013 SVD IBP policy and procedures document contains sufficient information and guidance to allow the society to fully meet the requirements of Criteria 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, while the designated person has been developing links with agencies and services that are of support to victims and to the society.

The reviewers found evidence on the files of some attempts to assess the risks posed by members about whom there were child safeguarding concerns. However, this approach was hit and miss, and it did not lead to any systematic approach to managing these men subsequently. Indeed, most of the assessment reports that had been commissioned are not on file within SVD IBP, a matter that needs to be rectified.

SVD IBP now needs to complete its work in risk assessing the four members who are out of ministry due to a child safeguarding concern, and in developing comprehensive risk management or safety plans based on such assessments. These plans should be implemented by named persons and should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis, with the assistance of the relevant police and statutory child protection social services. Recommendations 2 and 3 under Standard 2 above address these issues. This work is underway and the designated person has already met three of these men and is active in putting in place appropriate safety plans based on up to date assessment of risk. In the case of the fourth man, as the preliminary inquiry is ongoing and child abuse has not been established, the designated person cannot become involved in risk assessment and safety planning. However, the provincial has in this case outlined in writing clear restrictions on the ministry and behaviour of the priest member about whom concerns have arisen.

The reviewers met a very impressive priest adviser who has been allocated to one of the society's members about whom there are child safeguarding concerns. This man, who is also an SVD IBP priest, showed a clear understanding of his role and responsibilities and he considers that he plays an important part in overseeing the priest to whom he has been allocated as an adviser. The reviewers recommended to the designated person that the provision of priest advisers to any of the other three men about whom there are child safeguarding concerns and who currently do not have such a support should be made.

It is possible that in the future some few SVD priests and brothers will return to SVD IBP about whom there are child safeguarding concerns that arise from their ministries elsewhere. It is essential therefore that the leadership of SVD IBP has structures, systems and processes in place to manage the risks that these men may pose and it would be important to develop these now rather than wait until problems arise in the future. Any SVD member coming into the IBP from another SVD province should have a letter from his provincial that states that he is in good standing.

Recommendation 10

That the provincial and Provincial Council members, with the assistance of the designated person, other Irish Church authorities and the NBSCCCI plan and resource structures, systems and processes to deal with the challenges that will be posed in the future by returning SVD priests and brothers about whom child safeguarding concerns have arisen in other countries.

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

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
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.	Met fully
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.	Not met
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 applicable
7.5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met partially

The designated person has authored a comprehensive written plan for incremental developments in the overall SVD IBP child safeguarding enterprise. Her efforts in this regard are to be commended, as she has produced an achievable and integrated programme with clear timeframes and allocated responsibilities to named individuals or groups. The plan was activated prior to this review and some of the targets have already been achieved. The provincial has made it clear that the society will make available whatever resources are required to support the development of a fit for purpose child safeguarding approach within the society, and the evidence is that this is being done. Therefore Criteria 7.1 and 7.2 are being met in full.

While the Child Safeguarding Plan of SVD IBP has targets for internal audit of compliance with its own policies and procedures, these were not achieved by the time the review fieldwork took place, and as a result, Criterion 7.3 is not met.

The reviewers consider that Criterion 7.4 is not applicable within SVD IBP.

The existence of child safeguarding case management files within SVD IBP can only be traced back to the beginning of 2013. While the administrator has done excellent work in creating the files that the reviewers examined, from her reading of the whole archive of

society members' personnel files, she could only import documents that she found. A lot of documentation was either never generated, or was removed or destroyed by parties unknown, or was kept in some file or files the existence of which has not yet been discovered. There is evidence that the provincial has been seeking missing reports and information and the reviewers encourage him to continue to do so. SVD IBP is starting from a very low base in relation to the keeping of comprehensive case management files. The reviewers are satisfied that the new files are properly assembled and stored.

Recommendation 11

That the provincial request the designated person to develop a written case management filing policy and methodology with the assistance of the NBSCCCL.

Concluding comments

It is not acceptable that any Church authority in Ireland would have waited until 2012 to begin the process of implementing accepted and agreed Church child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices and while there may be explanations offered for this state of affairs, there are no excuses for it.

The reviewers are impressed with the professional approach to her task that has been applied by the new designated person for the Society of the Divine Word Irish British Province and there is evidence that however belatedly, the society has now committed itself to implementing comprehensive and effective child safeguarding across the province. The reviewers had a lengthy meeting with the provincial and members of the Provincial Council at which undertakings were given that child safeguarding will now receive priority within the society.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the provincial ensures that the society's child safeguarding policy and procedures complies with the requirements of the statutory agencies and is then printed and distributed within the IBP and circulated to all stakeholders and partners in the society's work within the IBP.

The provincial further needs to ensure that all members sign the document stating that they have received, read and undertake to adhere to and follow the child safeguarding policy and procedure of SVD IBP.

Recommendation 2

That the Provincial Council develops a system for a formal and comprehensive handover from an outgoing provincial to an incoming new provincial that includes a full sharing of all information in relation to members about whom there are child safeguarding concerns.

Recommendation 3

That the provincial actively seeks and ensures a review of all relevant case file material that needs to be on the society's case management files, from whatever sources both within SVD IBP and elsewhere.

Recommendation 4

That the provincial as a matter of urgency ensures that detailed risk assessments and risk management plans are conducted, put in place and implemented for all SVD IBP members about whom there are child safeguarding concerns. These plans should be implemented with the knowledge, agreement and support of the relevant police and child protection social service departments.

Recommendation 5

That the provincial ensures that the training needs identified in the ongoing internal audit are quickly met and that the training goals included in the Child Safeguarding Plan drawn up by the designated person are resourced and achieved within the identified timeframes.

Recommendation 6

That the provincial, in consultation with the Provincial Council, designated person and the NBSCCCI select and appoint a group of knowledgeable, skilled and motivated people who will act as a safeguarding committee for the SVD IBP for an initial period of three years.

Recommendation 7

That the provincial and the Provincial Council put plans in place for the orientation and briefing of SVD priests and brothers who return to Ireland for holidays or to retire.

Recommendation 8

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Recommendation 10

That the provincial and Provincial Council members, with the assistance of the designated person, other Irish Church authorities and the NBSCCCI plan and resource structures, systems and processes to deal with the challenges that will be posed in the future by returning SVD priests and brothers about whom child safeguarding concerns have arisen in other countries.

Recommendation 11

That the provincial request the designated person to develop a written case management filing policy and methodology, with the assistance of the NBSCCCI.

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 1st 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 1990¹ 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.”

¹ 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 1st 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.