



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

Second Review of Child Safeguarding Practice

in the

Diocese of Derry

undertaken by

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the

Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board)

Date of Review: September 2022

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Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church Ireland (National Board) was established in 2006 to provide advice, services and assistance in the ongoing development of safeguarding children within the Roman Catholic Church on the Island of Ireland; to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice; and to report on these activities. This is comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

Church authorities who have entered into an agreement with the National Board through signing a Memorandum of Understanding have committed to following *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*.

The Diocese of Derry was previously reviewed in August 2011 under the *Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2008*. The report of the first Review can be found on the National Board's website www.safeguarding.ie/publications. This current Review is an opportunity for the National Board to confirm that recommendations from the previous Review (2011) were implemented.

The recommendations from the previous Review (2011) are set out below along with the current status of implementation:

1. Bishop Hegarty and his Vicar General must ensure that a written procedure be developed to cover the responsibilities of each of the diocesan personnel and communication between these personnel involved in the management of allegations and any ensuing canonical process - implemented
2. The Designated person in consultation with the Vicar General and Chancellor of the diocese should restructure all records so that documentation is arranged in chronological and divided subject order, beginning with files relating to priests who are still alive (in line with current recording guidance). In cases where there are a number of separate file covers within an individual file, these should be dispensed with and all file materials should be amalgamated to comprise a single file. Documents can be clearly labelled to show their provenance. It would be of immense help to future readers of files to have a file summary collated and placed on each file as the first document encountered on opening the file folder – implemented - use of National Board templates, including notifications to civil authorities/National Board (the case file structure/index was fully implemented in 2021).
3. Bishop Hegarty and his Vicar General should now begin to plan for the replacement of both its Designated Persons. The Priest Designated Person has fulfilled his role and now needs to be relieved of this difficult and personally challenging responsibility. The lay Designated Person is now within a year of retirement age and her replacement should be recruited early enough to allow for a full and adequate induction process and handover to take place – implemented

4. Bishop Hegarty must ensure that following the removal from public ministry, the restrictions imposed on the priest involved and the supervision, management and reporting arrangements should be set down in writing - implemented
5. The Safeguarding Committee should develop a communications strategy regarding child safeguarding and appoint a sub-committee that would take responsibility for the implementation of this strategy. While there is evidence of a lot of communication activities, these need to be better planned and coordinated and to serve specific goals set for the diocese - implemented
6. Bishop Hegarty should address, as a matter of urgency, the concerns raised by Parish Representatives concerning the attitude and behaviour of two priests – implemented
7. Bishop Hegarty and his Vicar General, in consultation with the designated person, should examine the whole area of the support needs of complainants and to then make whatever changes in structures are necessary – implemented
8. Bishop Hegarty and his Vicar General in consultation with the Designated Person should identify and utilise appropriate support and therapeutic services for those who have perpetrated abuse and for those who clearly have a psychological and/or an emotional problem that impinges on their ability to work appropriately with children and young people, to help them to face up to the reality of their abuse or other difficulties and to promote their healing; but in a manner that does not in any way compromise children's safety - implemented

The purpose of this second round of Reviews is to assess child-safeguarding practice against the Catholic Church in Ireland's current standards as detailed in *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016* and make statements based on evidence, which provide:

- Public confidence that the Church Body is safe for children;
- Affirmation to Child Safeguarding personnel that they are doing the right things well;
- Confirmation to the Church Authority that what they want to be done is in fact being done;
- Independent verification of Self-Audit – or correction and/or improvement of Self-Audit;
- Opportunities for learning

Introduction

The Diocese of Derry serves the catholic congregation of fifty-one (51) parishes across almost all of County Derry, parts of Country Tyrone and County Donegal, and a very small area across the River Bann in County Antrim. The Catholic population of the diocese is 252,347 out of a total population of 336,741.

The parishes are identified by Deanery: City of Derry; County of Derry; Country Tyrone; and Inishowen.

Following the retirement of Bishop Seamus Hegarty on the 23 November 2011, Monsignor Eamon Martin was appointed as Diocesan Administrator until the 21st April 2013. Very Reverend Francis Bradley was then appointed Diocesan Administrator until the appointment of the Very Reverend Donal McKeown, as Bishop of the Diocese of Derry on the 25 February 2014, who was installed on the 6 April 2014.

There are ninety (90) incardinated priests of the Diocese of Derry: twenty-four (24) in the Republic of Ireland; sixty-five (65) in Northern Ireland; and one (1) outside the island of Ireland. Of the eighty-nine (89) in the island of Ireland, sixty-two (62) have a ministerial appointment, twenty-four (24) are retired and three (3) do not have a ministerial appointment but are not retired e.g. due to ill health.

In addition, there are five (5) priests on loan from other dioceses / Religious Congregations (including a Missionary Society), with a ministerial appointment in the diocese.

There are seven (7) Religious Orders/Congregations located in the diocese, which include the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Nazareth, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Discalced Carmelites, the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and the Loreto Sisters. These have a combined membership of seven (7) religious priests, and sixty-two (62) female religious.

The Reviewers, on behalf of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board), would like to thank the Most Reverend Bishop Donal McKeown for his invitation to undertake a Review of child safeguarding arrangements and practice in the Diocese of Derry. We appreciated everyone's willingness to engage openly with us during our visits to the Diocesan and Safeguarding Offices, and the parishes of Faughanvale & Lower Cumber, Desertegney & Lower Fahan, Buncrana, and The Three Patrons, Derry.

We would like to acknowledge the participation of the former Safeguarding Co-ordinator in the Review, who had been in that role during the period October 2016 until March 2021. She is to be commended for her contribution to safeguarding practice in the diocese over many years and for facilitating the handover, induction and mentoring to her replacement who was appointed to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator role in April 2021. A new DLP was appointed in February 2021 due to the illness of the previous DLP, who sadly passed away in July 2021. We would like to pay tribute to his dedication and professionalism in the care and management of respondents to ensure the safety of children and the support needs of complainants were met.

The diocese's Ministry with children and young people includes e.g. altar server ministry, youth choirs, liturgy groups, Franciscan Youth Ministry, sacramental preparation programmes – *Do this in memory of me*, *Fan the Flame*, SPRED,¹ Hope Camps, the Pope John Paul II Award Programme, and online Youth Ministry.

During 2020 and 2021, a range of activities involving children and young people were ceased / adapted to online access, to comply with government guidelines on pandemic restrictions. This involved the furlough of staff until September 2021, apart from the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who remained available to fulfil her role and responsibilities throughout the pandemic.

Process of Review

The Review of compliance was measured against the National Board's seven standards, contained in *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*, which is accessible at <https://www.safeguarding.ie/policy-guidance/policy-document>. The Review concentrated on safeguarding arrangements and practice through evaluating written records, meetings with Church personnel, including the former Safeguarding Co-ordinator, and Youth Ministry leads as well as young people.

In order to assess compliance, Bishop Donal McKeown, of the Diocese of Derry invited the National Board to undertake a review of practice, which took place in September 2022.

A Memorandum of Understanding and Data Processing Deed Agreement were signed prior to the Review taking place.

The Diocese of Derry Review fieldwork was undertaken during the period 18th to 22nd September 2022. The following is a list of those with whom the reviewers met or spoke with during the fieldwork of this Review:

- Bishop Donal McKeown
- DLP
- Monitoring Officer of Respondent Priests
- Priest Advisor
- Former Support Person
- A Complainant
- Safeguarding Coordinator (including vetting and training)
- Accredited Trainer
 - Vetting Administrator, ROI
 - Former Safeguarding Co-ordinator (up to 2021)
 - Chairperson and members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee
 - Parish Priests / Local Safeguarding Representatives SPRED Volunteers / liturgy volunteers
 - Sacristans
 - Pope John Paul II Award Programme Co-ordinators
 - Youth Ministry Co-ordinator and team
 - *Fan the Flame* Leader

¹ Special Religious Development (SPRED) is an organisation that aims to assist people in parish churches to integrate persons with a learning disability into parish life and worship through the process of education in faith.

- Tusla
- Western Health and Social Care Trust
- An Garda Síochána
- The PSNI

STANDARDS

The Standards are a level of practice required to ensure good child safeguarding arrangements. Each standard is self-contained and supported by indicators to evidence if safeguarding arrangements and practice meet the required standard. The National Board has produced detailed Guidance, which is accessible on its website (<https://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance>).

The seven Standards are:

Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Standard 2: Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant

Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent

Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe

Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

Standard 7: Quality-Assuring Compliance with the Standards

This Review concentrates on practice through evaluating written records, interviews with Church personnel and young people; information from complainants and respondents.

An assessment of practice under each standard is set out below:

Standard 1 - Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Church bodies provide an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. They provide access to good role models whom children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

Derry Diocese has developed Safeguarding Guidance for Parishes based on the Church's Policy, *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards 2016*, which is accessible on the Diocesan Website and can be downloaded in PDF booklet format.

Local Safeguarding Representatives (LSRs) in each of the three parishes visited advised that the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator was accessible, supportive and provided responses to their queries. During parish visits, everyone we met had a clear understanding of their safeguarding role and responsibilities, and reported that they worked together as a team. The reviewers during visits with parish LSRs were able to get a strong sense of established positive working relationships and a commitment to do all within their role and responsibilities to safeguard children.

The reviewers would like to highlight the collaborative approach taken by three parishes, which amalgamated into one. For example, LSRs who were leaving their role had given time to provide induction and support to incoming LSRs. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator continues to support the ongoing change process. The approach taken by everyone involved is an exemplar of collaborative working to ensure the welfare and safety of children.

A parish faith mentor, who co-ordinates the Pope John Paul II Award Programme and preparation of children for the sacraments, discussed how this is done in partnership with parents, schools and youth ministry personnel. Parents are recruited and vetted to help in preparation of the *Do this in memory of me* Mass. The pupils within a school's special needs unit were involved in the preparations and the Mass.

A young person, who completed the Pope John Paul II Award, and had been an altar server, said- "there was always someone to talk to".

There was a real sense of community in the parishes visited that included parishioners, children, schools, youth ministry / liturgy, sacristans, Parish Priests and safeguarding personnel. Reviewers were provided with documentation in each parish to evidence, for example, compliance with completion of hazard risk assessments, parental consent forms (including medical), vetting documentation, codes of behaviour and attendance records.

Sacristans were clear about the safeguarding arrangements in place for altar servers. Sacristy sign in, sign out registers were up to date, and registers from 2016 were shown to the Reviewers. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator has drawn up an exemplar completed hazard risk assessment for altar servers, which has been shared with LSRs and Sacristans

Although there were no external organisations using parish buildings post Covid-19, Parish Priests and LSRs were clear about the requirement to seek written confirmation from an external agency that they had insurance and a safeguarding policy in place.

Guidance for Clerics/Religious who have Ministry with Children in an External Organisation / Church Body is in place, with supporting documentation accessible in the Safeguarding section of the diocesan website. This information is collated and held by the Diocesan Secretary.

The reviewers had an opportunity to meet personnel involved in a range of youth ministry activities, for example, the Youth Ministry Synod Online 6-week programme, *Fan the Flame*, Hope Camps, the Pope John Paul II Award Scheme; SPRED, preparation for the sacraments – *Do this in memory of me* and the Gift programme (for children post confirmation). The diocese also participates in World Youth Day; and there is a weekly Instagram podcast to engage with young people, jointly presented by Bishop McKeown and the Youth Co-ordinator. The reviewers were impressed with the variety of activities available to children and young people and the commitment of everyone to deliver these. There was clear evidence that safeguarding arrangements were a priority in preparation and delivery of activities, and the happiness and safety of children was a focus for all involved.

The reviewers had an opportunity to meet with a lead who organises the *Fan the Flame* Mass. This is a mass of celebration for year seven and sixth class pupils who have received the sacrament of confirmation. It started in 2007, hosted at the Brandywell Grounds. In recent years it moved to the Celtic Park Grounds, with the latest being on 9th June 2022. Each year there is a different theme, which is sent to all the schools well in advance. The pupils are encouraged to design tee shirts. They also create a 'reflection journal' for each child, as well as a 'memory bottle' for children with special needs.

Fan the Flame is attended by 2,500 - 3,000 young people on the day. This is well planned, with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place, which involves the diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Derry Council, PSNI, Ambulance and Fire Services, the local hospital, the Order of Malta, and schools, plus professional and volunteer youth stewards.

Clear evidence was provided to the reviewers of detailed hazard risk assessments, including traffic/crowd management, vetting, and safeguarding training. All information is held on a central database. There was clarity of roles and responsibilities across agencies, with a chain of command, with identified safeguarding personnel to provide a response to immediate safeguarding concerns, including for lost children. Each child received a wristband with the contact number of who to contact if they had any concerns about themselves or others. Teachers accompany children at the event. This is another exemplar of multi-agency safeguarding practice to allow children to celebrate their confirmation of faith safely.

The Youth Co-ordinator and team are to be commended for adapting their way of engaging with young people using online platforms during the Covid-19 lockdown. Paper copies of information about activities, consent forms, codes of behaviour and sign in/sign out registers were all adapted for access and completion online. Training was provided for leaders (including technical guidance) and access to activities were password protected. Examples of activities included *Alpha* online - a Christian faith video, followed by discussion - Young People's Synod Programme, and the Papal Cross Award book club.

The reviewers were provided with a range of evidence of safeguarding documentation already highlighted in the examples of youth activities above.

The safeguarding arrangements to enable online working are currently being organised into substantive written guidance. This will be an excellent resource and should be shared with all dioceses and Religious Orders across Ireland to enhance and improve online safeguarding practice.

Signage for CCTV and Webcams were displayed in entrances to churches, which were seen during parish visits.

The diocese has clear procedures and streamlined arrangements in place to ensure personnel who have contact with children are vetted. Parishes within the diocese located in the ROI have a dedicated vetting co-ordinator who has direct access to the ROI vetting portal. Vetting is up to date and all documentation is held securely including archived records in both N.I. and ROI. The vetting databases and documentation were seen by the reviewers as part of the Review. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator can access vetting information for all parishes. Local Safeguarding Representatives advised that they consult with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Vetting Co-ordinator about any queries regarding the vetting process. All records within the Safeguarding Office comply with GDPR requirements.

Vetting figures	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
N.I.	139	182	257	264	51	20
R.O.I.	35	64	130	101	26	0

The increase in figures in 2018 is due to the increase in Hope Camp volunteers and Eucharistic Ministers (ROI).

The role of Eucharistic Minister in visiting the housebound in Northern Ireland does not meet the definition of regulated activity that would require an enhanced check by Access N.I.; whereas, Eucharistic Ministers visiting the housebound in the Republic of Ireland are required to be Garda vetted. The reviewers highlighted that until this issue is resolved, the following guidance should be followed: completion of references; safeguarding training; and a suitable adult to supervise where children are present during a home visit. A written record of the date and time of the home visit, and of who was present in the home at the time of a visit should be completed.

Recruitment and selection of volunteers meets the required standard, and documentation was viewed during a parish visit to corroborate this.

The Parish Priests and LSRs were clear about how to report a concern and advised that the Designated Liaison Person is accessible, supportive and responds to concerns reported.

There were no complaints outside of notifications of child abuse since the last Review; and there were no whistleblowing notifications since the last Review. Guidance is in place for the aforementioned.

Meetings with the Safeguarding Committee, Safeguarding Co-ordinators (past and present), leaders for Youth Ministry and of activities including *Fan the Flame*, Hope Camps and the Pope John Paul II Award Scheme, SPRED, Parish Priests, LSRs and sacristans all provided clear evidence that the diocese provides a safe environment to welcome, nurture and keep children and young people safe.

This Standard is met.

Standard 2 - Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

Church bodies have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.

Reports of abuse received since the previous review in 2011 up to September 2022 are outlined below:

Table 1

Cleric's Current Status	Complainants	PSNI / Gardai Notified	Trust / Tusla Notified	National Board Notified	Appropriate and timely canonical action taken
Living Priests					
Cleric 1. Restricted Ministry Sexual abuse allegations	1st	PSNI - 5 days	PSNI advised Tulsa	13 days	Canonical action suspended until completion of civil investigations
	2nd	1 day	As above	1 day	As above
	3rd	1 day	As above	1 day	As above
Cleric 2. In Ministry Sexual abuse allegation	1	PSNI advised the diocese	Diocese informed Tulsa same day receipt of notification from PSNI	5 months	Canonical inquiry resulted in NFA
Cleric 3. In Ministry	1	PSNI - 6 days	Trust - 1 day	1 day	Code of conduct issue. Canonical investigation not applicable
Cleric 4. Out of ministry Sexual abuse allegation	1st	PSNI - 4 days	Trust - 4 days	4 days	Yes - Decree issued with restrictions. Up to date plan and monitoring in place.
	2nd	PSNI - Same day	Trust - Same day	Same day	As above

Cleric 5. Retired Sexual abuse allegation	1	The PSNI reported to Diocese	Same day	Same day	NFA by civil authorities. Internal investigation – NFA Canonical investigation not applicable.
Cleric 6. In ministry Sexual abuse allegation	1	PSNI - 1 day	Trust - 1 day	1 day	NFA by civil authorities. Canonical investigation concluded no semblance of truth – NFA
Cleric 7. Physical Abuse In ministry [Complaint included 2 deceased priests]	1	Gardai – same day	Tusla – same day	2 days	No further action by civil authorities Canonical action not applicable – Physical abuse allegation.
Clerics deceased prior to notification received					
Cleric's Current Status	Complainants	PSNI / Gardai Notified	Trust / Tusla Notified	National Board Notified	Appropriate and timely canonical action taken
Cleric 8 Deceased Physical abuse (Same complainant as Cleric 7 above)	1	Gardai – same day	Tusla – same day	2 days	N/A
Cleric 9 Deceased Physical abuse Same Complainant as cleric 7 & 8 above)	1	Gardai – same day	Tusla – same day	2 days	N/A
Cleric 10. Deceased Sexual abuse allegation	1	Gardai Next day	Tusla Next day	The National Board received the initial report	N/A

Cleric 11. Deceased Sexual abuse allegation Same complainant as cleric 10 above	1	Gardai – Next day	Tusla Next day	The National Board received the initial report	N/A
Cleric 12 Deceased Sexual abuse allegations	1st	PSNI – Next day	N/A	Next day	N/A
	2nd	Gardai – 5 days	N/A	5 days	N/A
Cleric 13. Deceased Physical abuse allegation	1	PSNI - 3 days	N/A	5 months 12 days	N/A
Cleric 14. Deceased Sexual abuse allegation	1	Gardai - 15 days	HSE - 15 days	Next day	N/A
Cleric 15. Deceased Physical abuse allegation	1	PSNI 10 days	N/A	2 days	N/A
Cleric 16. Deceased Sexual abuse allegation [Allegations against 2 priests]	1	Gardai 4 days	Tusla 4 days	N/A No notifications on file to National Board	N/A
Cleric 17 Deceased	1	Gardai 4 days	Tusla 4 days	No notifications on file to National Board	N/A

Sexual abuse allegation Same complainant as 16 above					
Cleric 18 Deceased	1st	PSNI 11 days	Trust 11 days	26 days	N/A
Sexual abuse allegation	2nd	PSNI 3 days	N/A	3 days	N/A
	3rd	PSNI Date not recorded	N/A	Date not recorded	N/A
	4 th	PSNI – 14 days	N/A	1 month 6 days	N/A N/A

The table above relates to 18 clerics and 26 complainants

All reports received were retrospective complaints of abuse, and notifications were made to the Gardaí, PSNI, Tusla, the relevant Trust, and the National Board.

The National Board accepts that there can be variance in notification timescales to civil authorities due to a number of factors e.g. unidentified respondents and complainants; limited information/detail about complaint; follow up of third party information; and follow up of information from other Church Bodies.

Notifications to the statutory authorities can and should be made in a timely fashion, even if they lack all of the information that can be subsequently provided.

Case management files should contain the dates of all notifications to the statutory agencies and to the National Board.

Some notifications to the National Board were not made in a timely fashion.

Every named respondent, living or deceased should have their own case management file; and when an allegation is received from a complainant about two or three respondents, there should be individual notifications made in relation to each respondent.

The Diocese received reports in respect of six (6) respondent priests whose identity was unknown. Four of the reports also did not have an identified complainant.

The two reports that included details of the complainant were shared with the PSNI. Documentation in each of these cases was reviewed and discussed with the DLP, and the reviewers are satisfied that all efforts were made to identify respondents and complainants, based on the limited information available.

Documentation was also reviewed regarding six (6) respondent priests from other Church Bodies. The DLP ensured follow up regarding the six respondent priests with other Church Bodies who had responsibility for them, and confirmed information in writing.

The reviewers are also satisfied that information received from other Church Bodies about two (2) of their respondent priests who had moved into the Derry Diocese was followed up with appropriate actions. This included sharing appropriate information with relevant diocesan personnel. Neither of these respondent priests are involved in ministry.

The need for notifications without undue delay has been highlighted in this section.

The reviewers have established that the diocese has in place procedures and arrangements for responding to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations to comply with legal and practice requirements.

The standard is met

Standard 3 - Care and Support for the Complainant

Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.

Complainants with current involvement with the diocese were advised about the National Board Safeguarding Review. One complainant met with a reviewer during their visit to the diocese. No written submissions were received.

The complainant informed the reviewer that they have trust and confidence in the DLP. The complainant felt listened to and advised they received a caring response from the DLP (the DLP also acts as support person at the request of the complainant).

There was evidence in case files, and from meetings with the bishop, DLP, and a recently retired Support Person that complainants were listened to; treated with care; offered a dedicated Support Person; and given the opportunity to meet with the bishop.

The reviewers are satisfied that all complainants who could be contacted by the DLP received information and leaflets about the services of Towards Healing and Towards Peace. Guidance was provided by the DLP, as appropriate, in relation to obtaining support and counselling through their GP or organisations such as Nexus² and the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre N.I.

Third parties making a report on behalf of a complainant were provided information about Towards Healing and Towards Peace for them in turn to give to the complainant where possible, as were the contact details of the DLP. The case file records also evidenced follow up by the DLP with a third party, if they did not feedback / update the DLP at the date agreed with the third party.

In all cases where the identity of the respondent priest was unknown, support was offered to the complainant whose details were known, including an opportunity to meet with the bishop.

Also, in all cases where the respondent priest was deceased prior to the notification being made, complainants were contacted by the DLP and offered / provided support (ref. Table 1, section 2.)

In cases where respondents were from other Church bodies, the DLP linked the complainant with the DLP from the other Church body. The DLP also ensured that support was offered to four (4) complainants who resided in the Derry Diocese where the respondent priest was from another Church Body.

Case file records also evidenced that complainants were advised about how to access legal services.

Evidence was also in case files of the complainant being kept informed about the progress of the case and being provided with minutes of their meetings with the DLP.

² Nexus provides a professional counselling service helping people to survive sexual violence

A former Support Person met with by the reviewers highlighted the need for Support Persons to listen, believe and support complainants. She confirmed that during her time as a diocesan safeguarding volunteer, she received support in her work, and she availed of private counselling for additional support, when needed.

Two new Support Persons (male and female) have been appointed and vetted, and have received training to undertake their role. They will receive support and supervision from the DLP.

The reviewers suggested to the DLP that good practice would be to follow up with a complainant who initially declined support, with a further offer of support within a defined period, as appropriate.

The DLP and Safeguarding Co-ordinator advised that they met with the other Northern dioceses to share good practice, address challenges and provide support to each other. There is also the potential for dioceses to pool resources when required in the area of support to complainants. The reviewers commend this collaborative approach.

The reviewers are satisfied that complainants experience a caring response from the DLP, Bishop McKeown and diocesan Support Persons, together with appropriate support services based on their needs.

This Standard is met.

Standard 4 - Care and Management of the Respondent

The Church authority has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents (cleric or religious) is provided.

The DLP commenced post in February 2021. This coincided with the deputy DLP ceasing their post. Initially the DLP was contracted to work fourteen (14) hours per week and this has been increased to twenty (20) hours per week to enable the responsibilities of the role to be completed. The reviewers highlighted the need to appoint a deputy DLP to provide support as and when required, including cover when the DLP is not available e.g. annual leave, sick leave. The opportunity to share this role with a neighbouring diocese could be explored. The DLP agreed to take this forward with the Bishop. The reviewers also suggested that the DLP would benefit from dedicated administration hours.

Since taking up post, the DLP has completed a review of all cases and has a detailed knowledge of current cases. All case management plans are up to date and are being kept under review. The DLP uses the file structure / index / template in accordance with the Standard for case management. This is commended.

Respondents were given an opportunity to complete a questionnaire about their experience of the care and management they received, and to meet with reviewers during their visit to the Diocese.

Two completed questionnaires were received:

The first respondent priest was satisfied with the support he received, and he had been advised about his right to access civil and canon law legal representation. He acknowledged the support provided by the DLP. He spoke of the terrible delays involved in the criminal investigation. He also stated that a management plan was in place.

The other respondent was dissatisfied with the lack of practical support from the diocese, and he believes that he was misrepresented by the diocese at a criminal court hearing. He was offered a priest advisor, and he was advised about his right to access civil and canon law legal representation. He was aware of a “contract in operation” (behaviour contract).

There were no requests from respondents to meet with the reviewers.

The current DLP has overall responsibility for the management of all respondents.

The case files of three (3) priests who are currently subject to a management plan were included in the Review. Two (2) of these respondent priests have had safeguarding involvement since the previous Review. The third (3) respondent priest is included in Table 1, Standard 2 – Cleric four (4).

The reviewers are satisfied from review of case file records and meetings with the DLP and Monitoring Officer that the three respondent priests subject to a Management Plan are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, with a date set for the next review. Plans are based on the respondent priest’s current circumstances, ongoing assessment and advice from the National Case Management Committee.

A case management Monitoring Officer (appointed in February 2022) supports the DLP in monitoring priest respondents who are subject to a case management plan; the previous DLP had undertaken this monitoring role. The Monitoring Officer has a job description, had references and vetting completed, and received training. A service level agreement is in place between the diocese and the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer is appropriately experienced and receives supervision and support from the DLP. The Monitoring Officer completes written records of their work and provides these to the DLP to place in the case file. This was evidenced on the case files reviewed. During a meeting between the reviewers and the Monitoring Officer, he demonstrated full knowledge and understanding of his current cases.

The canon law process was initiated in all cases that met the criteria following completion of civil investigations, other than in two cases, in one of which the respondent was not well enough to meaningfully participate, and in the second of which there was insufficient information to allow a preliminary canonical investigation to take place.

In cases where a statutory investigation was recommenced due to additional information received or a new referral regarding the respondent priest, the canon law process was suspended to allow the statutory process to be completed. Interim plans to manage the respondent priest were in place until the outcome of both civil and canon law processes were completed. Following the outcome of investigations, individual plans were reviewed and updated based on an assessment, including any recommendations/advice from the National Case Management Committee (evidenced by review of case file documentation and discussion with the DLP).

There were two (2) cases following completion of statutory investigations and feedback to the DLP that were determined to be boundary violations, with which the reviewers agree, having evaluated each case. Both priests completed work regarding the issues identified, and they remain in full ministry.

In all cases where the identity of the respondent priest was unknown, appropriate notifications were made by the DLP to the statutory authorities and the National Board, based on the limited information available. If information about the complainants were known, they were contacted and offered / provided support (evidenced by review of case file documentation and discussion with the DLP).

Respondents were informed about their right to access legal advice from both civil and canon law legal representatives.

Evidence was in case files of the respondent being kept up to date about the progress with the case, and minutes of meetings shared with them.

Bishop McKeown sought advice from the National Case Management Committee as appropriate and recommendations were actioned as required. Where management plans were required, these have been kept under review, and amendments made to reflect any change in the respondent's circumstances – evidence of referrals and minutes of National Case Management Committee and up to date plans were filed in the case record. During meetings between the reviewers and the DLP, the DLP demonstrated full knowledge and understanding of all cases.

The review of case file records evidenced that respondents are offered support from a Priest Advisor, and their welfare is considered as part of case management.

The reviewers had an opportunity to meet with a Priest Advisor. He was clear about his role and responsibilities. He had no current cases, and said that respondent priests may prefer to receive support from a trusted colleague or friend. He confirmed that support from the DLP was available to him. He was also aware of the need to keep records of his contacts with a respondent priest and to provide these to the DLP to place in the case file. The Priest Advisor was open to avail of up to date training and support to undertake his role.

The need for formal meetings between a Priest Advisor and DLP was highlighted by the reviewers. These meetings should be scheduled when the Priest Advisor next has a respondent priest allocated to him to support.

The reviewers support the proposal of the Northern Dioceses to establish a pool of Priest Advisors. This will allow for the development of experience and expertise, shared role-specific training, group mentoring and support, and a choice of advisor who is not involved in the management of the case to be matched with the respondent.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is widely identified, so that everyone knows who to go to with a safeguarding concern. This was evidenced through display of DLP contact details on the diocesan website, parish bulletins and display of posters in Church premises.

The Franciscan Friars of Renewal advised the reviewers that they appreciated the interface arrangements in place with the Diocesan DLP. They described the DLP as professional, accessible, knowledgeable and supportive, and valued their advice and guidance.

The DLP advised that there can be delay in information sharing from the civil authorities, and that information when shared is limited in respect of an ongoing investigation and outcome of this, due to Data Protection requirements.

The PSNI highlighted the benefit of having a named diocesan contact person (DLP) as a link for ongoing / historical cases and information sharing. The PSNI also acknowledged that regarding complex cases, it could take up to twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months to progress a case.

The reviewers received positive feedback from the PSNI, Western Health & Social Care Trust, Tusla and the National Garda Protective Services Bureau about timely receipt of notifications, requests for information, and co-operation with overall case management from the DLP.

It was suggested by reviewers that the Bishop and the DLP should request a meeting with senior personnel in the PSNI, Western Health & Social Care Trust, Gardai and Tusla to discuss what is working well, challenges in case management and how to address same.

The reviewers are satisfied a fair process is in place to support, manage and monitor respondents.

This Standard is met.

Standard 5 - Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe

Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.

The stated aim of Derry Diocese is to support all Church personnel and volunteers in providing safe environments for children and young people, and for the adults who work with them. This is achieved through the provision of relevant, effective and high quality training and support. The Safeguarding Committee has set two clear objectives to achieve this

- to build training skills and capacity at parish level; and
- to support good practice locally
(Reference: Diocese of Derry Safeguarding Training Plan 2019 through to Post Covid-19 2022).

The reviewers were advised that the diocesan safeguarding children training is tailored and delivered at five levels: parish information sessions; full day training; refresher training; mandated person's training; and training for young leaders.

The diocese utilise the National Board to access specific training programmes for particular safeguarding roles, and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator engages with the National Board's Director of Training and Support regarding these.

The Safeguarding Committee have a responsibility to ensure that a three-year Safeguarding Plan is in place. The reviewers are satisfied that a plan is in place for 2019 to 2022, and is actively being progressed. They examined the written plan, and met with the Safeguarding Committee, accredited trainers, and local parish personnel. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all training events were suspended during 2020 to December 2021 - in line with Public Health Guidance. Face-to-face training has recommenced and an updated schedule for 2022 has been developed. Once-off training requests from the parishes will also be facilitated by the trainers.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator maintains a centralised record of clergy, co-workers and volunteers who have completed one-day safeguarding training and refresher training. The Safeguarding Committee receives updates from the Safeguarding Co-ordinator regarding mandatory safeguarding training, and an annual training return is submitted to the National Board, including evaluation and feedback of each session provided.

Mandatory Training Figures: 2017 to 2021

Year	Participants
2017	22
2018	449
2019	117
2020	0
2021	8

The high numbers in 2018 were due to an increase in HOPE Camp Volunteers, Eucharistic Ministers and Legion of Mary Volunteers.

The reviewers noted that training needs, including for defined roles at parish level, were identified during analysis of self-audits completed by Local Safeguarding Representatives. The invitation to parish priests and local safeguarding representatives to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator led Deanery meetings twice a year (spring and autumn) provides another opportunity to discuss training needs and issues, and informs the training plan for the following year.

There are two experienced accredited diocesan trainers. They are mandated by the Safeguarding Committee to attend Metropolitan Area meetings and national training support days to maintain their accreditation and to be updated on national developments in safeguarding children. They both reported to reviewers the benefits of delivering training jointly, and described how the return to face-to-face training enables group discussion and participation in shared activities. The training schedule is busy, and there would be benefit in identifying a third person to undertake National Board accredited training and become a trainer to support the existing trainers who are working to full capacity.

LSRs and personnel involved in children's activities reported to reviewers that training is beneficial, as it contributes to maintaining standards for safeguarding practice, and provides up-to-date information on national guidance, policy and procedures.

LSRs support the delivery of safeguarding information sessions in the parishes.

The Franciscan Friars of Renewal acknowledged their appreciation of the safeguarding training provided by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Guidance updates from the National Board are uploaded to the Safeguarding section of the diocesan website on a regular basis.

The Reviewers are satisfied that training is a priority for the Safeguarding Committee, and requirements for mandatory training have been met in previous years – pre-pandemic - and a plan is in place to achieve this again in 2022.

This Standard is met.

Standard 6 - Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

Church bodies appropriately communicate the Church's child safeguarding message.

The National Board Review for Safeguarding Children in the Diocese was promoted and placed on the diocesan website on the 16th August 2022.

The Children First Act (2015) Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed on the diocesan web-site.

A comprehensive Communication Plan is in place for 2021 – 2022. Actions include safeguarding personnel engagement with deaneries, local parishes, young people and parents, provision of up to date safeguarding leaflets/posters and training information. The update of the safeguarding section of the diocesan website is currently ongoing."

In preparation for the lifting of pandemic restrictions, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator re-issued to LSRs the safeguarding children guidance for parishes, the Information and Guidance Leaflet for Altar Servers, and the Children's Safeguarding Checklist with a link to the diocesan website. A Vetting Regulated Activity update was also provided, which highlighted re-vetting requirements post Covid-19 and for those who had not been involved in regulated activity for over a year.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator wrote to Parish Priests and LSRs offering to co-lead information sessions with LSRs, at the invitation of the parish.

The Safeguarding Committee and Safeguarding Co-ordinator re-commenced the annual Deanery meetings with clergy and LSRs, across the four Deaneries in October 2021. At these meetings the need was highlighted to update parish websites with change of details of the DLP and Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Each parish was also provided with written information about the changes, to use to update their website. It is planned by the Bishop and Safeguarding Co-ordinator to re- issue a reminder to parishes to ensure safeguarding information is up to date on individual parish websites.

Safeguarding children posters/leaflets (with up to date contact details of the DLP and civil authorities were hand delivered to each parish), children's/adults' codes of behaviour, and Towards Healing and Towards Peace services information were on display in entrances and sacristies of church buildings visited by reviewers.

Safeguarding information which is easy to read is available in Irish and Polish, and will be translated into other languages based on need and feedback from parishes.

Notices setting out the need to show a *celebret* or letter of good standing were clearly displayed in sacristies and completed documentation was provided to reviewers to evidence that requirements were met for visiting priests to the diocese. Sacristans advised that they felt confident to ask visiting priests to show their *celebret* card to them. The name and contact details of the designated liaison person are published in parish bulletins.

Both reviewers were able to attend a 'Safeguarding Sunday' event organised by the Safeguarding Committee to highlight the safeguarding message to the lay faithful in the diocese. This involved Mass on September 18, 2022 with the participation of a local school choir. Prayers of the Faithful were dedicated to all those who have suffered the pain of abuse, and to their healing. Prayers were also said for everyone who gives their commitment and time to work as safeguarding representatives to ensure the safety of children.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator together with the Safeguarding Committee are considering how best to promote with families, achievements in safeguarding children practice in the diocese, e.g. via schools' social media platforms.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator together with the Safeguarding Committee is committed to maintain an up to date Safeguarding section of the diocesan website, to include timely uploading of information, such as changes in safeguarding personnel, resources, plans and reports.

The reviewers are satisfied that the diocese is appropriately communicating the safeguarding message and using up to date, accessible information and methods to achieve this.

This Standard is met.

Standard 7 - Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

The Church body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually. The Church body only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.

The Diocese's Child Safeguarding Committee has a constitution in place, together with terms of reference, and the Committee membership meets the requirements of the constitution.

Meetings are scheduled in advance for the year ahead.

The reviewers have established that the Safeguarding Committee is committed to mandatory reporting, caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them, responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, caring pastorally for complainants and respondents, and for other affected persons.

A Mandated Persons list of clergy who minister in the ROI is in place. There are twenty-six (26) such priests. Fourteen (14) of these men are incardinated priests of the diocese who have ministerial appointments in ROI. Eight (8) are retired priests of the diocese (who can engage in occasional ministry) and who reside in ROI; two (2) are priests of the diocese who do not have a ministerial appointment, but are not retired; and two (2) are priests from other dioceses or Religious Congregations. In relation to Mandated Persons who are employed as pastoral workers, there are six (6) who work in the ROI (at least for part of their time). There are three (3) Mandated Persons who are employed diocesan safeguarding staff whose remit includes working in the ROI.

The Safeguarding Committee are to be commended for having in place an up-to-date three-year Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan, 2022 to 2024, together with Training and Communication Plans for 2022.

These plans are based on the areas covered in the seven Standards, with set indicators, actions required, by whom and timescale to be completed. Plans are up dated annually.

Parish self-audit returns for 2021 were completed, together with a Safeguarding Children Annual Report. These were completed in preceding years from 2016 onwards, with the exception of 2020 - due to the impact of Covid-19. All of these were examined by the reviewers and were up to standard.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator collates and analyses information contained in the parish self-audit returns. A report is completed and shared with the Safeguarding Committee. Following a review by the Safeguarding Committee, a written response is sent to each Parish Priest, containing actions and advice. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Committee plan to meet with individual parishes during the next year, using either Zoom or in-person visits.

A DLP Annual Report for 2021, and a mid-year report for 2022, were provided to the reviewers.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the DLP are to be commended for their work and progress made with the three-year Safeguarding Children Plan and with case management respectively since coming into post in 2021, despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 and lockdown.

The parish personnel met during the fieldwork reported good communication and valued support from the diocesan safeguarding leads.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and DLP have joint scheduled monthly meetings with Bishop McKeown to keep work under review and receive support. Agendas are agreed in advance, and decisions made at these meetings are recorded. The DLP reported that she has time at the end of this meeting to discuss cases with the bishop confidentially. The reviewers suggested that a planned meeting once a year should take place between the bishop and Safeguarding Co-ordinator and DLP individually to discuss professional development and training needs.

The DLP advised that their monthly meetings with the bishop involved discussion about case progress and to discuss actions required or taken. These discussions also included an exchange of information about support to complainants and respondents. The reviewers suggest that a written record should be kept of these meetings. A part of these meetings should include formal support to the DLP. The reviewers suggested to Bishop McKeown that a formal professional case management supervisor should be available to the DLP, given the complexity of case management work.

The reviewers discussed with the DLP that the annual review of active cases should include new concerns or complaints that may have arisen. It should also examine liaison between the complainant and their Support Person, and liaison between respondents and their Priest Advisor, as well as updating the risk management plan as appropriate, and a legal update. The outcome of this review should be recorded in writing and placed at the front of the current case file.

It was also suggested that if a respondent priest is deceased, and there is ongoing involvement with the complainant, this involvement should be reviewed by the DLP on an annual basis. The outcome of this review should be placed in the case file together with any actions required. The reviewers suggest that this is an important part of the annual self-audit on case management matters, and it should be submitted to Bishop McKeown for review.

The reviewers observed positive working relationships between Safeguarding Committee members at their meeting in September 2022. The Chairperson of the Committee had a prepared agenda and he reviewed matters arising and actions from the previous meeting. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator was given time to present their full report, and members were able to discuss and ask questions. All committee members participated in discussion and listened to each other's views. The chairperson was able to summarise discussion and agree priority actions to be taken and reviewed at the next meeting.

The reviewers are satisfied that plans of action are in place to quality assure compliance with the Standards and these are monitored and kept under review on a regular basis.

This Standard is met.

Conclusion

The reviewers are satisfied that Derry Diocese is in compliance with *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*.

Safeguarding arrangements are in place to promote the welfare and safety of children in the diocese.

This is based on evidence from documentation examined, engagement with Bishop McKeown; the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (past and present); the DLP; vetting and training personnel; Parish Priests; a Priest Advisor; a Support Person; a complainant; civil authorities; Local Safeguarding Representatives; sacristans; youth ministry / activity leads; young people; and the Safeguarding Committee.

We were assured by the commitment, caring and cooperative approach of everyone involved, regardless of their role, to keep children and young people happy and safe while participating in activities provided by the diocese.

Bishop McKeown is a visible leader, who is approachable and supportive to all within the diocesan safeguarding structure, something that was highlighted by young leaders in the diocese particularly.

The bishop's leadership approach is replicated by the Child Safeguarding team.