

NBSCCCI review implementation of recommendations of the Second Tranche of Safeguarding Reviews undertaken in 2012

On the 5th September 2012 seven Safeguarding Review Reports were published by the Dioceses and Religious Congregations concerned and were also made available on the NBSCCCI website. The dioceses reviewed were Kildare and Leighlin, Limerick, Cork and Ross, and Clonfert. The religious congregations were the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), and the male Dominicans.

One year later, following an acceptance of the review findings and an agreement to implement the recommendations, NBSCCCI contacted each Church Authority to ask for an update on progress. Each Church Authority responded with a written template outlining the work that has been undertaken in relation to each recommendation. In some cases, at the request of the Church Authority there were follow-up meetings between representatives of the Church Authority and NBSCCCI staff to discuss in greater detail actions in relation to the recommendations. Where appropriate, further advice was given by NBSCCCI staff in relation to work necessary to achieve the recommendation in full.

In each case, the Church Authority has decided to place his progress report on the diocesan/religious order website;

1. Spiritans CSSp
<http://www.spiritans.ie/2012/index.php?id=129>
2. Dominicans OP
<http://www.dominicans.ie/implementationnbr.pdf>
3. Missionaries of the Sacred Heart MSC
http://www.ms Ireland.com/?attachment_id=2735
4. Kildare and Leighlin Diocese
<http://www.kandle.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Review-Report.pdf>
5. Limerick Diocese
<http://www.limerickdiocese.org/uploads/Safeguarding%20October%202013/20131023%20Limerick%20-%20%20Amended%20Action%20Plans%20with%20National%20Board%20comment.pdf>
6. Cork and Ross Diocese
Not publically available or published on diocesan web service
7. Clonfert Diocese
<http://www.clonfertdiocese.ie/html/news.asp> - not available as a file but online document

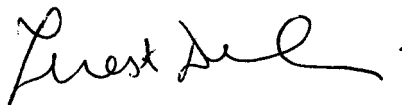
At the time of the launch of these seven reports, the openness to external scrutiny was acknowledged; NBSCCCI believe that the willingness to share the progress of actions as part of the implementation plan is another step towards openness and transparency.

As will be noted from the review reports and the recommendations, the dioceses and religious congregations are at varying stages in their development of work on safeguarding. NBSCCCI have been impressed by the commitment of each Church Authority to now putting in place robust structures, policies and systems to ensure that the mistakes from the past will not be repeated. From the meetings and discussions held with the Church Authorities it is clear that much was gained from participating in the review process in terms of developing practice. For some, the review process was a painful but necessary chapter in their history. The past cannot be undone, but lessons can be learned and through the process of scrutiny practice can change, so that at least today and in the future all efforts are and will continue to be made to safeguard children.

The actions which have been undertaken following the recommendations demonstrate that there is a significant increase in the recognition of a child's right to protection within the Church bodies examined; there is also now much quicker reporting to the civil authorities and an increasing willingness to seek and act upon advice which is child focused.

The NBSCCCI reports did not set out to offer a solution to those who have been harmed by personnel within the Church, rather it was the intention to address current practice in terms of the ability of the Church Authority to create and maintain safe environments and their ability to respond to allegations of abuse and the management of risk. It is important to acknowledge here that as a consequence of the reviews, new complainants have come forward and sought to tell their story. Again dioceses and orders are at different stages in their response to those who have come forward.

A complete re-examination of practice of the seven Church bodies is not possible at this stage, but NBSCCCI is satisfied from the returns received that safeguarding remains a high agenda item for the seven Church authorities and that good work is taking place around the implementation of the recommendations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Devlin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Teresa Devlin
Interim CEO

21st October 2013