

NBSCCCI review implementation of recommendations of the third tranche of Safeguarding Reviews reported on, on 23rd April 2013

The group of Dioceses and Religious Congregations reviewed during late 2012 into the spring of 2013 made public their NBSCCCI review reports on 23rd April 2013. As is common practice, the NBSCCCI has sought an update on the implementation of the recommendations from each Church Authority. Included in this tranche were the Dioceses of Clogher, Elphin, Ferns, Galway, Killala and Waterford and the Missionary Society, Society of African Missions.

At the time of the launch of these review reports it was recognised that significant progress had been made in safeguarding practice across all Church Authorities under scrutiny and much good practice was noted. Individual recommendations were made to ensure continued good practice and improvements in areas where the reviewers noted some deficits. The recommendations were accepted in full and the Bishops and Provincial agreed to implement the recommendations as stated in the review reports. Within the recommendations there are some common themes emerging which have led to engagement with NBSCCCI in the development of protocols and which will assist in the revision of “Safeguarding Children” Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland. For example, a number of Church authorities are required to put in place risk management/safety plans for priests and religious who have been stepped aside from ministry. Work has therefore started at a national level to write guidance on this important aspect of safeguarding to ensure consistent practice across the Church in Ireland.

Since April 2013 there have been some changes in leadership across some of the Church Authorities under review. NBSCCCI would again like to acknowledge the considerable positive engagement and good safeguarding practice of Bishop Willie Lee who has since retired from the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore and also Fr Fachtna O Driscoll, former Provincial of the SMAs who has become the Superior General in Rome. NBSCCCI recognises that strong leadership plays a key role in setting the agenda for good safeguarding practice. In both these Church Authorities, NBSCCCI notes the good handover that has taken place to allow for continuity of practice. It is important to state that NBSCCCI requires that all incoming Bishops and Provincials must appraise themselves of all safeguarding allegations against living priests and religious, so that they can be confident that matters are being addressed.

The update on the implementation of the recommendations can be found on each Church Authority website as follows:

Ferns Diocese

<http://www.ferns.ie/reports/>

Elphin Diocese

http://www.elphindiocese.ie/images/stories/childprotection/update_on_recommendations_february_28th_2014.pdf

Society of African Missions (SMA)

<http://www.sma.ie/images/Safeguarding/SMA%20-%20Follow%20up%20on%20Recommendations%20-%20SMA%20Action%20Plans%20-%2028%20March%202014.pdf>

Killala Diocese

<http://killaladiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Review-of-Safeguarding-Practice.pdf>

Clogher Diocese

<http://www.clogherdiocese.ie/2014/04/safeguarding-review-recommendation-update/>

Waterford Lismore Diocese

<http://www.waterfordlismore.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/W-L-Results-Follow-up-on-Recommendations-Action-Plans-Diocese-of-Waterford-and-Lismore1.pdf>

Galway Diocese

<http://www.galwaydiocese.ie/node/710>

As stated in previous overview reports, this exercise does not constitute a re-examination of practice of the eight Church bodies involved. It is not possible for NBSCCCI to go back and review practice 9 months after the initial review. NBSCCCI therefore relies on the Bishops and Provincials taking action to implement the recommendations and report on this. It is evident, both from the returns and the frequent engagement with safeguarding personnel from all the eight church bodies that the review process brought renewed focus on safeguarding and that this remains an important feature of Church work within these eight Church Authorities.