



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the religious congregation of
The Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco
in Ireland
undertaken by

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

Date: November 2015

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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 child safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland. The NBSCCCI is aware that some religious congregations have ministries that involve direct contact with children while others do not. In religious congregations that have direct involvement with children, reviews of child safeguarding have been undertaken by measuring their practice compliance against all seven Church standards. Where a religious congregation no longer has, or never had ministry involving children, and has not received any allegation of sexual abuse, the NBSCCCI reviews are conducted using a shorter procedure. The size, age and activity profiles of religious congregations can vary significantly, and the NBSCCCI accepts that it is rational that the form of review be tailored to the profile of each Church authority, where the ministry with children is limited or non-existent. The procedure for assessment of child safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the contents page of this report. The NBSCCCI welcomes the fact that in order to have full openness, transparency and accountability, religious congregations that do not have ministry with children have made requests to have their safeguarding practice examined and commented upon.

The purpose of this review remains the same and it 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 of these Church authorities is reviewed through an examination of policy and procedures, and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to the religious congregation. This report contains the findings of the *Review of Child Safeguarding Practice within the Congregation of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco* in Ireland undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Provincial along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review is not based on a review of case material as during the relevant time period there were no allegations made against members of the congregation that were within the Terms of Reference. There also were no allegations in respect of other forms of abuse within the time period, in respect of deceased and living members of the congregation. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the child safeguarding process within the Congregation, particularly in the services run by the Congregation.

The Congregation placed a notice on its website on September 26th 2015 announcing that it had invited the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) to conduct a review of safeguarding practice and inviting anyone who had any safeguarding concerns related to the Congregation to contact the Provincial and/or the NBSCCCI and/or the Gardai/PSNI and/or Tusla/HSE. This notice remained on the website until the end of October 2015. A reviewer visited the Provincial Offices of the Congregation on September 28th 2015 to interview the Provincial and the Designated Liaison Person and to review Child Safeguarding files.

Introduction

The Religious Congregation of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco in Ireland, hereinafter referred to as the Salesian Sisters, is part of the wider Salesian ‘family’, which includes the larger Salesian Priests/Brothers Congregation. In the 1840s in Turin, Fr. John Bosco (Don Bosco) began working with the poor boys whom he met on the streets there. He developed this work and it led to the formation of a religious Congregation in 1857, which was named the Society of St. Francis de Sales, and which has since been referred to as the Salesian Society. It became obvious that poor girls were also in need of support and education. With the assistance of a priest from the town of Mornese who had organized a small society of apostolic girls in his parish, and with the support of one of these girls, Mary Mazzarello who showed particular dedication to the task, on August 5, 1872, Don Bosco began the (Society) Congregation of Salesian Sisters. Fifteen Sisters took their first vows that day.

The following quotation from the website of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the name Don Bosco gave to his new Congregation of Sisters, describes the rapid growth of the Congregation and its work in many locations:

In a few years there was a great increase in the number of houses and there were foundations abroad and in Mission territory, especially in South America.

St. Mary Mazzarello was able to leave, at her premature death (for she died after only nine years' work in the Society), 189 sisters working in 26 houses in Italy, France, Uruguay, the Argentine and in the Patagonian Missions.

The Society was approved temporarily in 1911 and definitively in 1921. The stages of its history are marked by the place in which the headquarters were situated: Mornese, the birth-place, where the Superior Chapter stayed for 60 years; Nizza Monferrato, for about half a century, Turin where in 1919 they took up their present abode near the mortal remains of the two Founders, and today, Rome, the Eternal City.¹

The Salesian Sisters first came to Ireland and to Limerick in 1920, at the invitation of the then bishop, Bishop Denis Hallinan. Bishop Hallinan had also invited the Salesian Priests/Brothers to Limerick. The first residence and workplace for the four Sisters who arrived was St. Ita's House in Thomas Street, where they founded a night school for local girls who worked in factories during the day. Up to 250 girls benefitted from this educational initiative at its height. The Sisters subsequently moved to Fernbank House, a property of the Cleaves family, in 1924 and the span of their work gradually increased. They founded a small private primary school there, and became involved in youth work in the area. The Sisters were given permission in 1947 to operate a school at Fernbank as a recognised National School, so a new purpose built school was constructed there. This was followed by the opening of a separate Infant School, Croí Ró Naofa Íosa in 1965; which was required due to the sheer numbers of small children who needed to start primary school in that growing part of the city. In 1955 a second level school was developed in Fernbank. This school took girl boarders for a number of years, but boarding was phased out to provide room for more day pupils.

Role Profile (past and present role with children)

The Salesian Sisters have had a role in the ownership, management and staffing of schools in Limerick, (and) Clare and Offaly.

¹<http://www.salesianmissions.org/about-us/daughters-mary-help-christians-fma>

The infant and primary schools in Fernbank are being amalgamated in 2016. The Congregation also has a primary school, Mary Queen of Ireland, in Caherdavin, Limerick.

The Salesian Secondary School at Fernbank in Limerick is in the process of amalgamation with St. Nessian's Community College, announced in October 2013, and will become Thomond Community College in September 2016. The Congregation will be represented on the Board of the new school and will be partners with ETB but the school will be the responsibility of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. St. John Bosco Community College, Kildysart, Co. Clare opened in September 2002 as the result of the amalgamation of the Cahercon Salesian Secondary School (which had operated (briefly) as a girls' secondary boarding school and a mixed day school from the 1960s) and Kildysart Vocational School. The Congregation is represented on the Board of this second level school, but it is owned and managed by the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

The Sisters owned and operated a third secondary school in Brosna near Birr, Co. Offaly, which was mainly for girl boarders, but this closed in the 1990s.

The Salesian Sisters in Ireland live in 13 community houses, seven of which are in Limerick, city and county, and six of which are in Dublin. Of the Sisters who are still working or undertaking voluntary work with children and young people, the following are the areas of work in which they are involved:

1. 5 Sisters are employed by the Department of Education and Science as primary school teachers;
2. Three Sisters are employed as teachers in second level schools;
3. One Sister is employed as a Chaplain in a girls' detention school;
4. One Sister is employed as a Chaplain in a university;
5. Three Sisters work as Art Therapists in school and community settings, with children and with adults;
6. One Sister is involved with Crosscare in giving advice and in advocacy work with immigrants and the homeless in Dublin;
7. One Sister is involved in the promotion of Cosmology and the Care of the Earth in the schools with which the Congregation still has a connection and in others.

In addition to these Sisters, a number of other Sisters are involved in parish ministry, including youth ministry, and in supporting prayer groups and sacramental preparation in parishes in the Diocese of Limerick and in the Archdiocese of Dublin. A full description of all of the activities in which the Salesian Sisters are involved is provided on the Congregation's website at www.salesiansisters.net/ss/index.cfm/what-we-do

Profile of Members

There were 69 Sisters who are members of the Irish Province of the Congregation at the time of this review. In addition, 10 Irish Salesian Sisters are on missionary work abroad, during which time they become members of the Province in which they serve.

These 69 Sisters in Ireland live in 13 separate community houses as follows:

1. Limerick A – 4 Sisters
2. Limerick B – 4 Sisters
3. Limerick C – 9 sisters
4. Limerick D – 3 Sisters
5. Limerick E – 7 sisters

6. Limerick F – 11 Sisters (“Mother House” - main foundation in Limerick since 1924)
7. Limerick G – 5 Sisters (1 sister from British province attached to this community temporarily while caring for family member)
8. Dublin K – 8 Sisters (Provincial House)
9. Dublin L – 4 Sisters
10. Dublin M – 4 Sisters
11. Dublin N – 5 sisters
12. Dublin O – 3 Sisters
13. Dublin P – 3 Sisters

The range of ages of the Sisters is from 48 years to 88 years, with the average age being just short of 70 years. Within five years there will be seven Sisters in the Irish Province who are under 65 years of age.

Policy and Procedures Document

The (Congregation) Province has a *Safeguarding Children - Policy Statement of the Salesian Sisters - Irish Province*, dated February 2012. This is displayed in all 13 community residences.

This one page document contains the following statement:

We Salesian Sisters, as well as our co-workers and volunteers, value and encourage the participation of children and young people in our various ministries and in activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

We recognise the dignity and rights of children and are committed to their protection and support. It is our aim to safeguard, respect and value the dignity and well-being of every child, young person and vulnerable adult with whom we work to ensure their protection from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

The welfare of the child is always paramount

We will work in partnership with the HSE and An Garda Siochana in all matters pertaining to the safeguarding of children

The second half of the page contains contact details for the statutory child protection agencies, for the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI), Towards Healing, Childline and the Samaritans, as well as for the Designated Person and the Provincial Delegate / of the Congregation.

The Salesian Sisters produced a document in May 2007 entitled *Policy and Procedures on Child Protection*, which was signed by the Provincial and circulated to all members of the (Congregation) Province.

On February 9th, 2013 the Provincial Leadership Team discussed, fully endorsed and adopted by signing the July 2012 *Child Safeguarding Policy* of the Our Lady Queen of Ireland Province. This detailed 31-page policy and procedures document is adequate for the needs of the Province at this time.

Structures

The Salesian Sisters is an international Congregation that has a Superior General in Rome who heads the Congregation’s Council. According to its website,

The Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Salesian Sisters) has its centre in Rome where the Superior General and her Councillors reside.

The Superior General is the bond of communion and the centre of unity in the Institute (Const. 116).

The General Council, composed of the Vicar General, 13 Councillors, and the Secretary General, collaborates directly with the Superior General in the government and animation of the Institute.²

Ireland is a full Province of the Congregation and is led by a Provincial who is supported by a Provincial Leadership Team or Council made up of four Councilors. The Provincial is appointed following a process of consultation and serves for a six-year term. The current Provincial is 5½ years in post. The Designated Person for the Province, who is on the Council, is 11 years in post.

The Designated Person is supported by a lay Deputy Designated Person. The Designated Person has attended a range of NBSCCCI training courses. The Congregation has also been assisted by the NBSCCCI in providing child safeguarding training to members in both Limerick and in Dublin.

Sisters who are employed by the Department of Education and Science or who work in community services or parishes receive training and vetting appropriate to their postings.

In April 2013 the Designated Person conducted an internal audit of the Garda Vetting status of all of the members of the Province. The reviewer is of the view that the results of this audit could be compiled on a spreadsheet which could be used as both a running record and a reminder of where renewals or new applications for vetting are required. Written guidance on this has been communicated to the Provincial and the Designated Person.

During the review field work visit, the reviewer read child safeguarding files on the HSE / Tusla Audit correspondence and returns; the NBSCCCI; Garda Vetting; Towards Healing; and Child Safeguarding guidance from CORI and from IMU.

Management of Allegations and liaison with the statutory authorities

There have been no suspicions, concerns or allegations of the abuse of a child or young person by a member of the Salesian Sisters. It has not been necessary for the Sisters to develop and maintain a working relationship with the Gardai or with the child protection services of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

Conclusion

The Salesian Sisters *charism* and mission is to work with children and young people. The Congregation in Ireland is still involved in this work in various ways and in a number of locations, but over time this involvement is diminishing. The Province has had no child safeguarding concerns relating to any of its Sisters; and it has in place the structures and

² www.cgfmanet.org

policies to ensure that any child or young person who takes part in any activities it organises or sponsors is protected.

Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

Terms of Reference (which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes)

Small Religious Congregations

Introduction

In order for the National Board to be able to state that all Church Authorities on the island of Ireland have been evaluated in respect of their child safeguarding policies and practices, both historical and current, then some form of appropriate assessment has to be conducted of every one of these. It is rational however that the form of assessment is tailored to the profile of each Church Authority, and that needless expenditure of resources and unnecessary interference in the life of religious orders and communities that have no children-specific ministry would be avoided.

This Review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small Religious Congregations /Orders, and Missionary Societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the Congregations ministry.

It would also scrutinize practice within all known cases to ensure that they have been responded to appropriately.

The review's methodology is an adaptation of the methodology developed for all Dioceses and large religious congregations and missionary societies, where the ministry involves regular contact with children.

The proposed Review would consider the following:-

- (a) Former role with children
- (b) Allegations of child abuse against members and how these have been responded to
- (c) Existing relationships with statutory authorities such as the HSE, Gardai in the Republic and the HSCT or PSNI in Northern Ireland.
- (d) Policies in place and being applied for safeguarding children
- (e) Roles and responsibilities and where they exist the operation of Advisory Panels, and Safeguarding Committees

The objective of the Review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice matches up to the standards set down in the Safeguarding Children Guidance published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the Review. In cases where the alleged or known offender

is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

Guidance Documents

The Review will be guided by the following:-

- (a) Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance;
- (b) Children First Guidance in ROI; and Regional Child Protection Guidelines in Northern Ireland;
- (c) Legislation that exists in each jurisdiction which contributes to safeguarding children and young people.

The Review will be undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

The Review process will be overseen by a **Reference Group** to whom the CEO will report on a regular basis. The membership of this **Reference Group** has been drawn from each of the statutory child protection agencies in both jurisdictions, along with eminent individuals in the field from academia. The current Reference Group consists of : Dr Helen Buckley (TCD); Mr Paul Harrison (Tusla), and John Toner (SBNI).

It is important to confirm that the value of the Review is dependent upon full and complete access to all relevant documentation and information relating to the abuse of children known to the individual Church authorities. The Review will proceed on the basis that willingness exists on the part of each of the subjects of the Review to provide full access to the fieldwork team, subject, where relevant, to the terms of the Data Processing Deed agreed between the Sponsoring Bodies and entered into between the parties hereto.

Step Guide to the Review Process

Step 1.

A letter of invitation to review is sent by the Provincial/Regional Superior or other person responsible for the Congregation/ Order or Missionary Society (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Ordinary’).

Step 2.

The CEO will forward a survey to the provincial which will identify:

- Current number of members
- Past role with children
- Current role with children
- Total number of allegations received up to 2014
- Number of living members against whom there are allegations

Step 3.

For any Order where there have been allegations a full review will proceed, as per step 4 - 23. For those Orders where there have been no known allegations a desk top examination of policies and procedures will take place followed by a site visit to interview all relevant personnel within the safeguarding structure. For these orders **step 5 and 13-23** will apply.

Step 4.

The CEO and Ordinary will confirm the dates for the fieldwork for the Review, and names of the fieldwork team.

Step 5.

The Church Authority will be asked to make available all of the case files and related documentation in respect of any safeguarding concerns that have been identified within the diocese. The Church Authority will make available a room with wireless internet access for the reviewers to conduct their review of files, so that any records made by the reviewers can be directly typed and stored onto a secure server which is only accessed by the reviewers. In the absence of internet access the reviewers will type their notes onto a secure encrypted usb stick for later uploading onto the secure server.

Step 6.

The Church Authority will be requested to sign the revised Data Processing Deed prior to the arrival of the team.

Step 7.

The Church Authority will arrange a schedule of interviews with all who hold safeguarding roles within its functional area. The designated person and the Church Authority will be available to the reviewers throughout the period of fieldwork.

Step 8.

The fieldwork team when they arrive on site will firstly confirm that they have a suitable place to work in and that all the required documentation has been provided to them for their Review. In the event that the fieldwork team forms the opinion that the Church Authority has not provided access to all such documents, the Board shall give notice in writing to the Church Authority of the opinion of the fieldwork team and such notice shall specify the reasons for same. Thereupon, the Church Authority shall respond in detail to the Notice. Each party shall use its best endeavours to resolve any differences of opinion which shall arise and, in the event that resolution is not arrived at, the parties will attempt to resolve the dispute by recourse to the services of a mediator agreed between them or nominated for the purpose at the request of any of them without prejudice to the Board's entitlement to terminate the Review. In the event that resolution has not been arrived at following mediation, either party shall be at liberty to terminate forthwith the Review.

Step 9.

On arrival, the fieldwork team should be supplied with a single case file index that lists all the cases that have been created within the diocese. These may be divided into two groups. The first group will contain all allegations that relate to living alleged or known perpetrators. The second will contain any that are deceased.

Step 10.

Depending on the volume involved a decision should be made as to whether all or a random sample of the "deceased group" should be reviewed. Care should be taken to include all prominent cases in the sample.

Step 11.

Each case file will be reviewed by each fieldworker independently in the first instance. They will create a written summary with chronological information of the case. In certain cases a second reader may be required, this will be discussed and agreed between the fieldworkers.

Step 12.

Following the reading of the case and the creation of a summary, the fieldworkers will analyse and assess the actions taken in the case. They will assess compliance with agreed Church policy that was extant at that time. They will also indicate whether any current risk exists in respect of the information contained within the file and advise the church Authority of necessary safeguarding action to reduce the risk.

Step 13.

When all the case files have been read, the fieldwork team will then examine and review any procedures or protocols that exist within the diocese to confirm that they are in compliance with the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document issued by the NBSCCCI in February of 2009.

Step 14.

To complete the Review, the fieldwork team will then seek to speak to those directly involved in the safeguarding structure in the diocese. This should include the Advisory Panel, a sample of parish safeguarding representatives, the designated person, the safeguarding committee, victim support and advisors and the Bishop/Provincial. The purpose of these interviews is to form a view of the competence and effectiveness of the safeguarding structure that exists within the Church Authority.

Step 15.

The fieldwork team will also seek to speak to representatives of the key statutory agencies to provide them with an opportunity to express their views on the quality of the working relationships that exist between them and the Church Authority.

Step 16.

A verbal feedback session on initial key findings will be given to the Church Authority.

Step 17.

Upon completion of the field work, the team may request to take materials – other than casework records to review off-site; this alongside all materials gathered by the reviewers, including written notes on cases and meetings, will be analysed and will form the basis of the draft assessment review report.

Step 18.

The draft will be forwarded to the Church Authority for factual accuracy checking.

Step 19.

Alongside all other reports under review, the report will be presented in draft to the Reference Group for their critique and comment. If further work is required at the direction of the Reference group the CEO will ensure this work is completed and advise the Church Authority accordingly.

Step 20.

The report will be legally proofed by NBSCCCI lawyer.

Step 21.

The report will be forwarded to the National Board for approval

Step 22

A final draft report will then be submitted to the Church Authority. The expectation would be that the Report will be published by the Church Authority at an agreed time in the future.

Step 23.

All case material written, including summaries, as part of the review, which are for the reviewers use only, will be stored on a secure server.

Guide for Reviewers

In terms of small (female religious orders) reference should be made to the following:

1. Has the Order provided alternative care to children in an orphanage, industrial school or children's residential home, but no longer is engaged in running such services;
2. Has the order provided education to children, in both or either boarding schools and day schools, but no longer does so ;
3. Has the order provided medical and/or nursing services to children, but no longer does so;
4. Has the order provided any other services to children, in community services centres, youth clubs etc., and no longer does so;
5. Does the order currently provide any sort of service to children and families that brings them into regular contact with children;
6. Has the order never provided any service to children (e.g. contemplative orders).

In relation to category 1 above;

1. The reviewers will establish whether any service they provided is included in the list of children's residential services produced by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB);
2. If this is the case, reference should be made to this.
3. If complaints have been referred to the Redress Board or Ryan Commission, this review cannot access these records and that will be stated in the report.
4. If the order has received complaints which have not been processed through Redress or Ryan these cases will be thoroughly examined as detailed above.

Review of Policy and Procedures

1. It is recognised that not all Orders will have any ministry with children and therefore their policies and procedures should reflect the work that they do with children.
2. If the Order only works through other organisations, example in Diocesan work or in schools, they are required to follow the policies of those organisations.
3. If there are gaps in the policy document an assessment should be made as to whether the ministry engaged in requires full compliance with all criteria attached to the seven standards
4. Where it is clear that the criteria do not apply a reference should be made at the beginning of the review report that the Order's ministry is not directly with children and therefore adherence to particular criteria do not apply.
5. In the Order is a contemplative Order, there is no expectation that they will have detailed policies and procedures, but reference should be made to their ministry and that they have no contact with children.
6. In all cases, contact will be made with the civil authorities to identify if they have any child safeguarding concerns in relation to the order.