



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the religious congregation of
The Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Cross,
Rostrevor, Co. Down
(Congregation of Saint Mary of Monte Oliveto)

undertaken by

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

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Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was asked by the Sponsoring Bodies, namely the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland.

The 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 safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the contents page of this report. The NBSCCCI welcomes 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 in the religious congregation of the The Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Cross, Rostrevor, Co. Down (Congregation of Saint Mary of Monte Oliveto)*, 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 Major Superior, Dom Mark-Ephrem M. Nolan, 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 safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

Introduction

The Order of St. Benedict is made up of independent monasteries which are somewhat loosely related under the international Benedictine Confederation, at the head of which is the Abbot Primate. There is an Abbots' Congress under the Abbot Primate in Rome every four years. The Abbot Primate is elected at this Congress to a primacy of honour and resides at the Monastery of Sant' Anselmo in Rome.

Within this confederation are grouped the 20 congregations or Federations of Monasteries. The Rostrevor monastery belongs to the Congregation of Olivetan Benedictine Monks, which traces its roots back to January 21, 1344 when Pope Clement VI canonically erected the Benedictine Congregation of St. Mary of Monte Oliveto. It was confined to Italy between the 14th and 19th centuries; but it now "has a variety of abbeys and prioral churches in Italy, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Switzerland, Israel, Korea, USA, Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil" (www.benedictinemonks.co.uk). The Benedictine monastery at Rostrevor, Co. Down is of quite recent origin. The founding community came to Ireland in 1998. (The other Benedictine monastery in Ireland, at Glenstal Abbey in Co. Limerick, belongs to the Congregation of the Annunciation.)

The new monastery at Kilbroney, near Rostrevor was completed in 2004. The website of the congregation describes the short history of the foundation and its particular ministry:

Our Benedictine Community arrived in Northern Ireland from the Abbey of Bec in France in January 1998. Our coming to Northern Ireland is a response to a call addressed by the Church to monasteries of contemplative life to engage themselves in the mission of spiritual ecumenism, rooted in prayer, conversion of heart and charity, in those corners of the world where Christians are divided.

The Foundation Decree of the monastery states:

The aim of the Community of Holy Cross Monastery is to live the monastic life, according to the charism of our Benedictine Congregation of Saint Mary of Monte Oliveto. Our particular mission is to contribute to reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants in a land marked by reciprocal violence and stained by the blood of Christian brothers and sisters.

We were already sensitive to the whole theme of Christian unity and to the Irish question in particular because of a previous engagement in Northern Ireland. From 1983 to 1987, the Abbey of Bec had a cella – a small presence of monks, living a hidden life of prayer, interceding for peace and for the unity of Christians. The then Abbot of Bec, Dom Paul Grammont, spoke of their presence "as a gesture of communion with the suffering Church in Ireland".

In 1987, circumstances forced us to interrupt our presence in Ireland. But the hope was nonetheless retained that one day we would return to establish a permanent foundation. When monks returned to Northern Ireland, we were welcomed into the Diocese of Dromore and have been able to establish strong links with the wider Christian community; our outreach to the other Churches have been greatly appreciated and reciprocated.

A providential gift of land in the Rostrevor area, in the ancient monastic townland of Kilbroney, led us to undertake the building of a monastery adapted to the particular needs of the Community and able to provide guest accommodation for retreatants. Having lived temporarily in the former Retreat Centre of the Sisters of Our Lady of

Apostles, we moved into our new home for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2004.

The ancient monastic townland of Kilbroney named in this description refers to the sixth century settlement there of St. Bronagh.

Role Profile (past and present role with children)

This Benedictine community has no specific role in relation to children and young people and has had no such specific role in the past. The monks do however offer public masses and liturgies which are attended by children who are in the company of their parents and/or carers and who remain under the supervision of these adults. There are no altar services and the contact that the monks have with the children is always within the context of other adults being present.

The monastery has a guest house attached, but this only caters for adults. If school students come to the guest house as part of a school retreat, they must be accompanied by and at all times be under the direct care of one or more adults, for example teacher(s) from their school.

Profile of Members

There are five monks in the monastery, all of who have made their final Solemn Profession. Three of these men are ordained priests.

Policy and Procedures Document

The monastery has three separate but related policies, all of which can be accessed on its website at www.benedictinemonks.uk under the tab *Our Community*. These are:

- The Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy of the Benedictine Monks of Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor;
- The Monastery's Policy on Protection and Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults; and
- The Safeguarding Policy for the Monastic Guesthouse of Holy Cross Monastery

The Terms of Reference for this review includes an assessment of child safeguarding policy and practice relating to children only, and therefore there has not been an evaluation of the above policies as they may impact on vulnerable adults.

The first of these is the statement of the overarching policy, along with important contact details. The policy states that:

In accordance with the gospel and the principles of their Rule of life, the Benedictine Monks of Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor, strive to welcome all who come to this place as they would welcome Christ Himself. They seek to ensure that each person who is received as a guest or visitor to the monastery is shown reverence and offered respect.

The community is fully committed to the Church's policy formulated in Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland and is signed up to and follows the safeguarding procedures in place in the Diocese of Dromore.

Any worries or concerns regarding the safeguarding of children or well-being of vulnerable adults encountered at Holy Cross Monastery should be reported immediately to the Superior and to the Dromore Designated Person who oversees the Community's safeguarding practice:

Contact details for the Major Superior, the Designated Person, the PSNI, the appropriate Social Care Trusts and the NSPCC are listed. This information is also available in printed form in the entrance to the Monastery and Church.

The Monastery's policy is a more detailed document which sets out the definitions of types of abuse, as well as of an allegation, a victim and the superior. The NBSCCCI standards and guidance document is referenced. The Monastery's policy document details the actions to be taken when an allegation is received, as well as the responses that would be made to a complainant and to a member of the congregation against who an allegation is made.

In this document it is stated that:

All monks of Holy Cross Monastery have been vetted and have undergone safeguarding training. Safeguarding training will be kept up to date to maintain a vigilant awareness alive within the community in regard to safeguarding issues.

*The community is fully committed to the Church's policy formulated in **Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland** and is signed up to and follows the safeguarding procedures in place in the Diocese of Dromore.*

The third policy document sets out the safeguarding structures and practices that cover the guest house at the monastery. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Mmonastery's child safeguarding policy and procedures, a copy of which is supplied to every guest. The guest house document addresses best practice in child safeguarding, and includes the statement:

The Guestmaster will exercise due vigilance regarding those who come to the Guesthouse, and where he deems it appropriate, he may require guests to provide references before accepting their booking. Should a guest act in a suspicious manner he or she will be required to leave.

The policy document goes on to speak about confidentiality, including a detailed consideration of the *Seal of Confession*, and the clarity of this is commended.

When the ministry of the monks at this monastery is borne in mind, the three policy documents taken together are very adequate and sufficient to meet the requirements of good safeguarding.

Structures

As already stated, the community at this Benedictine monastery is of five men, so no sophisticated safeguarding structure is necessary. The monks have been police vetted and have received safeguarding training. Specific safeguarding responsibilities lie with the Major Superior and the Designated Person. The reviewer has consulted the Designated Person who has confirmed that in her opinion the Congregation is well aware of its child safeguarding responsibilities and has taken the requisite steps to ensure that their practices are up to standard. This has included engaging in training and seeking relevant advice and information.

Management of Allegations and liaison with the statutory authorities

There have been no concerns, suspicions or allegations concerning monks at this Benedictine monastery; and so it has not been necessary for the congregation to liaise with the statutory child protection authorities in Northern Ireland.

Conclusion

This Congregation of Benedictine Monks has no ministry that involves direct contact with children. It has however taken seriously its responsibilities to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and has shown evidence of a real commitment to children's safety.

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.