

Private and Confidential

**Review of Safeguarding Practice
in the Society of
Missionary Society of ST COLUMBAN**

undertaken by

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

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Regional Director of the Missionary Society of St Columban in Ireland**

Date: 31.03.14

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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 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 purpose of the review is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each Church authority is to be reviewed through an examination of case records and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to a diocese/congregation or other authority.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Missionary Society of St Columban* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies. The review was carried out between 10.02.2014 and 12.02 2014 at Dalgan, Co Meath. It is based upon the case material made available to the NBSCCCI by the Missionary Society of St Columban, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Society. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers and the Regional Director, the Reverend Patrick Raleigh has confirmed this.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Regional Director, along with any recommendations arising from the findings.

Introduction

The Irish Regional Policy on Safeguarding Children of the Missionary Society of St Columban, published on 13.01.2013, states that *“Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all. The policy goes on to state that”* everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected, and that it has been written to ensure that the Society of St Columban takes every possible measure to prevent abuse. The Society states on its website www.columban.com that its missionaries are committed to the highest safeguarding standards.

The St Columban’s Missionary Society was founded in Ireland in 1916 and initially attracted a number of ordained diocesan priests who wished to undertake missionary work. Its focus became the Far East and it was initially known as the Maynooth Mission to China. The Society worked in China from 1920, until its expulsion by the Communist authorities in the early 1950s. In addition to Ireland and Britain, it is established in the U.S.A, Australia and New Zealand, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Fiji, Peru, Chile, Taiwan, and Pakistan. At its peak in the 1960s, the Society had one thousand missionaries, but the number now stands in the region of four hundred and thirty, from some ten nationalities and located across fifteen countries. It draws new students from its overseas countries. It has seminaries in the Philippines, Korea, Fiji, Peru and Chile. There are no current students in Ireland. The Society also has some sixty seven lay missionaries. The headquarters of the Society is in Hong Kong where the Superior General and his Council reside. The Society has recently been able to re-establish its mission in China, providing teaching resources.

The missionary work of the Society in some of the world’s poorest countries has heightened its awareness of issues of structural poverty, international debt, fair trade, spiralling violence, justice and peace. The Columban Missionaries see concern for justice and peace as central to their apostolate. Linked to this are the themes of environmental concern and the integrity of creation. They also recognise a need to promote an authentic enculturation of the Gospel through dialogue with peoples of other religions.

In Ireland, the Columban Missionaries have been based at Dalgan Park, Navan, Co Meath since 1940. There are currently 129 members of the Society in the Irish Region. The population is ageing, with a current average age of 76.5 years, with just three men under 60 years of age. 32 Columban Missionaries are resident in the nursing home in the Dalgan Park complex; a further 66 also live in Dalgan Park, some of whom work in administration, mission promotion and other ministries, with the majority retired or semi-retired. A total of 25 Columban Missionaries carry out pastoral work (full and part time) in diocesan parishes throughout Ireland. The Society administers a parish in the Archdiocese of Dublin in Ballymun, with 3 Columban priests. It has houses in Maynooth and in Donaghmede and a rented house in Cork, with a further 3 priests situated there. There may also be, at any given time, a population of priests in transit from their resident missions in other parts of the world, on visits and vacation to their homes in Ireland. The

Irish Region has promoted the lay mission programme from its inception, with exchanges of personnel between Ireland and other countries. There are currently 4 lay missionaries in Ireland. Dalgan Park hosts a mission awareness centre, offering seminars on topics related to evangelization, inter-faith dialogue, justice, peace and ecology to colleges and schools throughout the country. These are facilitated through tours of Dalgan Park and/or through presentations/talks in schools. Dalgan Park has extensive grounds, which are open to the public for walking and recreation and are used by families. The Society is also involved in the development and management of the Migrants Rights Centre in Dublin, which provides advice and support to immigrant communities in Ireland. The Columban Missionaries have 80 lay employees, who provide services in catering, nursing and personal care, administration, management, estate maintenance, mostly based in Dalgan Park.

The organisational shape of the Columban operation in Ireland is quite diffuse, with a central structure at Dalgan Park, but a number of ‘satellite’ units, many of them individual men, which are quite widely distributed. From a child safeguarding perspective, the Society does not provide direct services such as teaching or residential care to children and young people in Ireland, but Columban priests have a lot of contact with families and children and young people through their pastoral work in parishes, through their own parish in Ballymun, through school tours to Dalgan and the mission presentation programmes in schools. Columban priests engaged in pastoral work are governed in their day to day work by the safeguarding policy of their host diocese, but the management of any specific allegations against a Columban will be undertaken by the Society under its own safeguarding policy. The parish which they currently administer in Ballymun, for example, has parish safeguarding representatives in line with the policy of the Archdiocese of Dublin and the Columban priests attend diocesan safeguarding training. The Columban Missionaries have a transient population of visiting priests and lay missionaries from overseas and the safeguarding management of this cohort is an additional important factor.

Although the record of allegations of child abuse against Columban in Ireland refers to a relatively small number of priests, one of these, P.M., was a prolific offender over several decades before he was convicted. The Society was heavily criticised in the report of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin 2009 (Murphy) Report for its poor child protection practice and governance in this case.

This audit was carried out over a three day period in February 2014. The reviewers were given access to all of the safeguarding files held by the Society. They examined all of the files relating to priests against whom allegations had been made and a number of files relating to contact with victims. The safeguarding structure of the Columban Society revolves around two senior members, the Regional Director and the Designated Safeguarding Person. They were interviewed in the course of the audit and provided input in relation to background, policy, and operational matters. The review included an assessment of the Society’s safeguarding policy (2013), a statement outlining the Society’s training programme, an organisational chart, safeguarding training records, the Society’s Manual of Policy and Procedures (2009) and other written data provided by the Designated Safeguarding Person. The reviewers also met with three priest advisors, with

a safeguarding committee and with a representative from the Probation service. They have also spoken by telephone with representatives of an Garda Síochána and the HSE Child Protection services who have had contact with the Columban Missionaries in relation to child safeguarding.

The purpose of this review is set out within the Terms of Reference that are appended to this report. It seeks to examine how case management practice conforms to expected standards in the Church, both at the time an allegation was received and currently. Just as importantly, the review evaluates the efforts that have been made to create safe environments for children to ensure their current and future safety. To achieve these two objectives, the review process uses the seven standards outlined within the NBSCCCI's 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, as an assessment framework.

The review was initiated through the signing of a data protection deed, allowing full access by review fieldwork staff to all case management records. This access does not constitute disclosure as the reviewers through the deed were deemed to be nominated data processors of the material for the Columban Missionaries.

Reviews into safeguarding have two objectives, to establish how concerns of clerical child sexual abuse have been managed in the past and to evaluate the efforts that have been made to create safe environments for children to ensure their current and future safety. To achieve these two objectives, the review process uses the seven standards outlined within the NBSCCCI's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* as an assessment framework (see next section). The report below discusses the findings of the reviewers under each standard. Conclusions are drawn regarding both the effectiveness of policies and practices in preventing abuse and the ability of the relevant personnel within the congregation to assess and manage risk to children. Recommendations for improvements are made where considered appropriate.

The Society has had written policies on safeguarding in place since the 1990s and has produced two policies on safeguarding since committing to the NBSCCCI's Standards and Guidance in 2008, the most recent of which was published in 2013. Considerable credit is due to the safeguarding designated person, fully supported by the regional director, for taking forward the agenda required to implement the standards. In general the audit has concluded that the Society's safeguarding policy meets a majority of the standards. We note that the management of individual cases has shown a considerable improvement and is robust. We also note that several processes need to be tightened to reflect the unique organisational circumstances and that more work needs to be done to develop a safeguarding culture to emphasise prevention. This can be promoted through awareness raising, training, and communicating the Society's safeguarding message.

STANDARDS

This section provides the findings of the review. The template employed to present the findings are the seven standards, set down and described in the Church *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities that minister on the island of Ireland, including the Society of St Columban. The seven standards are:

Standard 1 A written policy on keeping children safe

Standard 2 Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Standard 3 Preventing harm to children:

- recruitment and vetting
- running safe activities for children
- codes of behaviour

Standard 4 Training and education

Standard 5 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message:

- to children
- to parents and adults
- to other organisations

Standard 6 Access to advice and support

Standard 7 Implementing and monitoring the standards

Each standard contains a list of criteria, which are indicators that help decide whether this standard has been met. The criteria give details of the steps that a Church organisation - diocese or religious order - needs to take to meet the standard and ways of providing evidence that the standard has been met.

Standard 1

A written policy on keeping children safe

Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

Compliance with Standard 1 is only fully achieved when a congregation meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
1.1	The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Met fully
1.2	The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation (e.g. the Bishop of the diocese or provincial of a religious congregation).	Met fully
1.3	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Met fully
1.4	The policy is reviewed at regular intervals no more than three years apart and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or legislation.	Met fully
1.5	The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work e.g. within a church building, community work, pilgrimages, trips and holidays.	Met partially
1.6	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Met fully
1.7	The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.	Met fully
1.8	The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.	Met fully
1.9	The policy should be created at diocese or congregational level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the diocesan or congregational policy and approved by the relevant diocesan or congregational authority before distribution.	Met fully

The reviewers consider that Criteria 1.1 to 1.4 are fully met in the Society's policy and procedures. There was a delay between the introduction of the NBSCCCI's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* in 2009 and the production of the first safeguarding document based on the standards and guidance in 2012. This was then reviewed and re-issued the following year. The reviewers were shown a policy entitled '*Irish Regional Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors*' which was in place since the mid-1990s, which has a strong emphasis on case management. Whilst Criterion 1.1 is assessed as fully met, the current safeguarding policy has retained the concentration on the management of individual cases evident in this original policy and needs to be balanced with more emphasis on the development of a safeguarding culture. These issues will be addressed further in the report. The current policy would benefit with section at the beginning on content, so as to make its sections and structure more accessible to the reader.

The reviewers consider that there are a number of specific areas in relation to different aspects of the Church's work which need to be formally addressed in the Columban safeguarding policy and that Criterion 1.5 is met partially. Criterion 1.5 refers to the need to address child protection in the different aspects of the Church's work. In the case of the Columban Missionaries, aspects which need to be addressed are those of;

- Columban priests administering in outside parishes or religious communities in Ireland
- Columban priests from overseas who are visiting in Ireland and who are resident in outside parishes for periods of time
- The role and function of lay ministers
- The mission promotion function (to include contact with schools, including children and young people visiting Dalgan Park

As already noted the Columban Missionaries, because of their mission, have a transitory population of priests and lay ministers who move between jurisdictions and regions. The reviewers have seen recent Certificates of Suitability for Ministry which were introduced in 2009 for Columban Missionaries moving from one jurisdiction to another. In 2011 this was extended to cover Columban Missionaries from overseas who spend periods of time on visits or vacations in another region. Regrettably some of the most serious incidents and allegations of child abuse have occurred in this context. It is on the basis of these certificates from the overseas regions that the Irish director is able to establish and certify the suitability of Columban priests for ministry in a local diocese. The reviewers were informed that the certificate (which is similar to a celebret) is due to be reviewed and updated by the Society. The reviewers recommend that this requirement should be referenced and described in the safeguarding policy. The safeguarding policy should also state that there should be a formal record to establish that the regional director has communicated all safeguarding information and any requirements related to risk management, to the host diocese or religious congregation. The review has already referred to the lay ministry, and the role and function of lay ministers should also be addressed in the safeguarding procedures. Requirements for vetting, information exchange, awareness raising and the management of allegations need to be made clear.

The Society needs to ensure that all visits of children and young people to Dalgan Park, or all visits to schools to deliver presentations, are covered by appropriate safeguarding procedures. This could be achieved by the Society raising the profile of safeguarding by formally confirming with the visiting school or organisation that it has safeguarding procedures which will be fully implemented.

The reviewers are satisfied that the requirements of Standards 1.6 – 1.9 are fully met.

RECOMMENDATION 1. The Regional Director should ensure that Standard 1.5 is reviewed within the Society’s Safeguarding Policy. The revision of Standard 1.5 needs to address the following areas which are particularly relevant to the work of the Society; a) to emphasise the role of the Regional Director in assessing Certificates of Suitability for Ministry for Columban Missionaries returning to Ireland and in ensuring that communication with host dioceses or religious congregations is formalised and is effective in relation to safeguarding children b) to state the safeguarding requirements of the role of lay ministers, including expectations re vetting, information exchange, awareness raising and management of allegations c) to state the safeguarding requirements of mission promotion work with schools (including groups who visit Dalgan Park).

Standard 2

Management of allegations

Children have a right to be listened to and heard: Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the Church and to civil authorities.

Compliance with Standard 2 is only fully achieved when a congregation meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
2.1	There are clear child protection procedures in all Church organisations that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child (historic or current).	Met fully
2.2	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.	Met fully
2.3	There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.	Met fully
2.4	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.	Met fully
2.5	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.	Not met
2.6	There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute.	Met Fully
2.7	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI.	Met partially

The reviewers are satisfied that Criteria 2.1 – 2.4 are fully met. In relation to Criterion 2.4, the reviewers wish to note that the filing system was well organised, contained good case summaries and that relevant information was filed and documented in an accessible way.

The reviewers have concluded that Criterion 2.5, which requires a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, is not evidenced in the Columban Fathers' Safeguarding Children policy document. Whilst the policy deals with how to manage a complaint or allegation of abuse on a step by step basis (Criterion 2.1), it needs also to address what should happen if a complainant is not satisfied with, for example, the standard of service received, or any behaviour which has adversely affected a child which is not addressed under Criterion 2.1. There needs to be a complaints process, including steps and time scales, for appeal and review.

Criterion 2.6 is met as the policy states that there is guidance on the limits of confidentiality. Information about external referral pathways for referring child protection concerns such as contact details for An Garda Síochána or the HSE Child Protection service, as required by Criterion 2.7 need to be added to the policy document.

RECOMMENDATION 2. The Regional Director should ensure that Criteria 2.5 and 2.7 are reviewed and include information about an appeals/complaint review process, and detail contact details for child protection referrals to the civil agencies within the policy document.

Table 1

Incidence of safeguarding allegations/suspicious/concerns received within the Society against priests, from 1st January 1975 up to time of review.

SOCIETY OF ST COLUMBAN		
1	Number of priests against whom allegations* have been made since the 1 st January 1975 up to the date of the review.	12
2	Total number of allegations received by the Order since 1 st January, 1975	41
3	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána involving priests since 1 st January 1975.	41
4	Number of allegations reported to the HSE (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE,) involving priests of the Society since 1 st January 1975.	39
5	Number of priests (still members of the Society) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.	6
6	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.	6
7	Number of priests against whom an allegation has been made and who are in ministry.	1
8	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are “Out of Ministry”, but are still members of the Society.	5
9	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are retired.	5
10	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Society/priesthood.	1
11	Number of priests of the Society who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since the 1 st January 1975.	1

* This includes allegations, suspicions and concerns

The reviewers saw all the files relating to allegations made against 12 Columban priests. Six of these men are deceased. Of the remaining six, two currently reside abroad outside the jurisdiction of the Irish Region. The vast majority of the allegations on file (24 in total, with three which are indeterminate) refer to P.M., who was a Columban priest from 1960 until his suspension from the Society in 2000. P.M. had served as a priest in Ireland, in Japan and in the UK. He was reviewed by the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin 2009 (Murphy) report, because of a period of residence in the Archdiocese of Dublin. P.M. had been made subject of a precept in 1999 placing canonical restrictions on him and was laicised in 2010. He has elected to continue to reside with the Society and they have accepted him under strict conditions. He was convicted in the UK in 1998 and has been convicted a number of times subsequently in Ireland on child sexual abuse charges and has been imprisoned in both jurisdictions. P.M. is recorded as having admitted to abusing many more children/young people than are documented in the allegations made to date. He was sentenced for a period of three years in 2007 having been found guilty of two cases of indecent assault. This sentence was suspended for six years under conditions from the Court. These conditions require him to keep the peace and be of good behaviour, to follow the direction of the Probation Service, to have no unsupervised contact with children and/or families and to reside at Dalgan Park. He is currently serving two suspended sentences of three years dating from May 2013.

On 26.11.2009 the Columban Missionaries publicly admitted that they were shamed by the findings of the Murphy report and humbly apologised to each and every victim.

P.M. is subject of extensive restriction and close supervision by the Society. He will also be subject of a Supervision Order by the Court until 2016. The reviewers have met with his Probation Officer and his Priest Advisor. The Probation Officer has advised of on-going assessment and monitoring by her service and very good communication with the Columban Missionaries.

Of the remaining 17 allegations against Columban Missionaries, eight refer to five living priests and nine to a total of six deceased priests. Three of the living priests reside in Ireland and their cases have been referred to the civil authorities. There have been no prosecutions in these cases to date. All are subject to internal management by the Society through the imposition of precepts and are subject of on-going restrictions on their ministry and on their movement and associations with children or young people. Of the two priests who reside outside Ireland, one has been subject of a stringent safety plan for a number of years. The other has been permitted to continue in ministry as a priest in good standing following investigation by the Society. The reviewers are satisfied that the Society is pro-active in assessing and managing non adjudicated cases, including referring to and seeking the advice of the NBSCCCI's National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG).

In addition to Columban cases, the Regional Director advised the reviewers of the residence in Dalgan Park of a priest who was not a Columban, in respect of whom a child abuse allegation had previously been made whilst in his own diocese. The reviewers note that the diocese has advised the NBSCCCI that there was verbal communication, although there is no record of this in the safeguarding files. This is far from satisfactory,

as none of the current Columban post-holders were made aware of the relevant safeguarding information, which included background details and the imposition of restrictions by his own bishop. Once the details came to light, the reviewers are satisfied that the Regional Director of the Columban Missionaries acted quickly and purposefully and that a process is now in place for assessment and risk management appropriate to this particular case. However the reviewers are critical of the diocese's failure to inform the Columban Missionaries in writing, which is unacceptable from a child safeguarding perspective.

The incident illustrates the importance of clear lines of communication in relation to safeguarding children in the interfaces between religious organisations and dioceses and the importance of appropriate information sharing. It should also be incumbent on the Columban Missionaries in future to ensure that all new placements of religious personnel are appropriately screened. The reviewers note that the need to implement a system of formal referencing is actually addressed in the Safeguarding Children Policy document 2013, but the detail of such a procedure is not set out.

RECOMMENDATION 3. The Regional Director should establish a protocol to ensure that all incoming placements of religious personnel from dioceses or congregations are subject to screening for safeguarding children and young people (to include production of a current Celebret or Certificate of Suitability for Ministry) and that all receive safeguarding awareness training.

The case management records indicate that the timing of reporting of allegations by the Columban Missionaries to the civil authorities was variable up until 2008 and it is noted that historically there have been some significant delays. Of the 41 allegations made, 39 have been reported to an Garda Síochána or PSNI (in the 2 outstanding cases allegations came from dioceses in Northern Ireland who liaised directly with the PSNI). A number of the allegations in the files of deceased priests were not forwarded to the HSE until a 'sweep' was carried out in 2013. It is accepted that as the alleged abusers were dead at the time those allegations were received, no child protection issues arose which would have necessitated the involvement of the HSE in those cases in any event. After 2008, when the Society signed up to the safeguarding standards, the record establishes that reporting of new allegations greatly improved.

The reviewers note that the Columban Missionaries have actively sought to provide outreach and support to victims where possible, including those cases where the respondent priests are deceased. There are numerous examples in the files of pro-active support work with victims and complainants.

Standard 3

Preventing Harm to Children

This standard requires that all procedures and practices relating to creating a safe environment for children be in place and effectively implemented. These include having safe recruitment and vetting practices in place, having clear codes of behaviour for adults who work with children and by operating safe activities for children.

Compliance with Standard 3 is only fully achieved when a congregation meets the requirements of all twelve criteria against which the standard is measured. These criteria are grouped into three areas, safe recruitment and vetting, codes of behaviour and operating safe activities for children.

Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.1	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.	Met partially
3.2	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.	Met partially
3.3	All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as required by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.	Met partially

The reviewers have been informed that there are currently processes in place for vetting staff and volunteers (religious staff are vetted through the Irish Missionary Society; employees through the HR department at Dalgan House; volunteers and lay missionaries through the Office of the Regional Director). Criteria 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 are not directly addressed in the Children Safeguarding policy and are assessed as partially met. This could be improved by reference to Resource 3 (*Safe recruitment and selection checklist*) and Resource 4 (*Declaration form for all persons working as employees or volunteers with children and young people*) in the NBSCCCI's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* .

Criteria – Codes of behaviour

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.4	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.	Met fully
3.5	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).	Met partially*
3.6	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.	Not met*
3.7	There are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.	Met partially*
3.8	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.	Met partially*
3.9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Not met*

**The reviewers recognise that the Columban Society does not offer direct services to children and young people and that the maintenance of safe environments for children and young people is not currently central to its operations or its practice. However, it does have regular contact with families and children and this area needs further consideration by the Society.*

Appendix 2 of the Safeguarding Children Policy 2013 provides a code of practice for Columban Missionaries, staff and volunteers in dealing with children and young people, which meets the requirements of Criterion 3.4. Although bullying is referred in Appendix 2, the document does not contain an anti-bullying policy (Criterion 3.5) nor a whistle blowing policy (Criterion 3.6). It addresses how to respond to children in a generalised way and also refers to respect for the fundamental rights of children, but does not specifically address Criteria 3.7 and 3.8. The policy does not address Criterion 3.9, on intimate care for children with disabilities.

Criteria – Operating safe activities for children

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.10	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Met partially*
3.11	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.	Met fully*
3.12	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, the Internet) to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation.	Met partially*

**As above the reviewers recognise that the Columban Society does not offer direct services to children and young people, and that the maintenance of safe environments for children and young people is not currently central to its operations or its practice. However, it does have regular contact with families and children and this area needs further consideration by the Society.*

The application of Criterion 3.10 requires a risk assessment framework, which is partially addressed in Appendix 2. Appendix 2 contains guidance on supervision ratios etc, meeting the threshold for Criterion 3.11. Criterion 3.12, whilst recognised, is not fully addressed

RECOMMENDATION 4. The Regional Director should ensure that, as part of a more pro-active approach to prevention, that the component criteria of Standard 3 on *Safe Environments and Preventing Harm to Children* are more fully addressed in a revision of the Safeguarding Children policy.

Standard 4

Training and Education

All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
4.1	All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.	Met fully
4.2	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.	Met fully
4.3	Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person.	Met partially
4.4	Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Met partially

The reviewers were advised that the preparation for and publication of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin 2009 (Murphy Report) instigated considerable recognition and awareness within the Columban community of child safeguarding issues and that training has been ongoing since. The Safeguarding Children Policy 2013 identifies four groupings for safeguarding education : the resident members in Ireland; the new arrivals group; men returning from overseas to retire or work in Ireland, and the Furlough Group which is a voluntary programme for Columban Missionaries on vacation in Ireland and the lay employees The policy states that training on safeguarding policy and procedures is provided directly to the first three groups and that safeguarding requirements are communicated to the employee group through the Staff Handbook. The Society does not have a dedicated Training Officer and training has been provided by the Regional Director, the Designated Person and the Human Resources Manager. There has also been input from the Society's solicitors. This has been supported by training events organised by the NBSCCCI. The reviewers were given a copy of a data base on safeguarding training for all Columban Missionaries world wide, which tracks provision of basic training, updated training, special training and eligibility for further training. The reviewers accept that Criterion 4.1 is met in relation to Columban Missionaries in the Irish province. The reviewers have some apprehension however, about the voluntary nature of the

safeguarding input into the Furlough Group and recommend that safeguarding awareness training should be a requirement for this group.

The use of training opportunities provided by the NBSCCCI has enabled the Designated Person and the Regional Director to remain updated and Criterion 4.2 is met.

The training needs assessment and the programme overall requires to be reviewed and kept updated and therefore Criterion 4.4 is assessed as partially met. The reviewers suggest that the Society needs to consider an identified training resource separate from the Designated Officer and to consider the possibility of extending the role to the international regions

This review has identified gaps in the safeguarding policy in relation to areas such as recruitment, complaints, managing risk, and therefore Criterion 4.3 is assessed as partially met.

RECOMMENDATION 5. The Regional Director should ensure that a Training Needs Analysis is conducted so that a formal Safeguarding Training Programme, can be developed and resourced for all relevant personnel, as part of a more pro-active approach to awareness raising and prevention.

RECOMMENDATION 6. The Regional Director should ensure that it is a mandatory requirement of the Society that all Columban Missionaries returning to Ireland, either permanently or temporarily, undergo safeguarding awareness training and that this is updated on a regular basis.

Standard 5

Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

This standard requires that the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures be successfully communicated to Church personnel and parishioners (including children). This can be achieved through the prominent display of the Church policy, making children aware of their right to speak out and knowing who to speak to, having the Designated Person's contact details clearly visible, ensuring Church personnel have access to contact details for child protection services, having good working relationships with statutory child protection agencies and developing a communication plan which reflects the Church's commitment to transparency.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
5.1	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.	Met Fully
5.2	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.	Met partially
5.3	Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Met Fully
5.4	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts / Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person.	Met partially
5.5	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.	Met fully
5.6	Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.	Not Met

The Safeguarding policy is generally available, and is accessible also on the Society's website and Criterion 5.1 is met. The reviewers note that the right of children to be safe from abuse is recognised in the policy and recommend that this could be improved by taking steps (the production of posters, leaflets etc) to make safeguarding more visible and to fully comply with Criterion 5.2. The reviewers accept that the identity of the Safeguarding Person is established within the Society through training and awareness events and that Criterion 5.3 can be judged as fully met. There is however room for more

visibility of this role. Contact and referral pathways to the civil authorities for safeguarding need to be documented prominently in the safeguarding children policy and in publicity or communications material and Criterion 5.4 is partially met. The reviewers have seen and heard evidence of good liaison between the Columban Missionaries and the civil agencies and Criterion 5.5 is assessed as fully met. The issue of communication, as required by Criterion 5.6 is not addressed as a distinct heading in the Safeguarding Children Policy 2013.

RECOMMENDATION 7. The Regional Director should ensure that a communication strategy is developed which sets out where, when and how the safeguarding message is communicated within the Society, as part of a more proactive approach to awareness raising and prevention.

Standard 6

Access to Advice and Support

Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just 'response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.

Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
6.1	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Met fully
6.2	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Met fully
6.3	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Met fully
6.4	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Met fully
6.5	Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.	Met fully

The Columban Society has elected to use the NBSCCCI National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG) for specialist advice and support as needed and the reviewers have seen evidence of this influence in the decision making process in several cases. The reviewers consider that Criteria 6.1 and 6.2 are fully met. Criterion 6.3 is addressed in the Safeguarding Policy 2013. As already noted, the reviewers, in reading the case files, have seen a lot of evidence of compassionate reaching out to victims by the Columban Missionaries, offering access to counselling as well as other forms of support. The reviewers were informed that the Society has recently appointed an experienced

counsellor to undertake victim support work as required. This initiative is commended. This work could be further enhanced through a written policy for victim support. The reviewers met with three Priest Advisors who provide ongoing personal support to Columban Missionaries who are subject to restriction. The advisors bring considerable experience of supervision, counselling and of canon law to the role and the reviewers consider that the requirements of Criterion 6.5 are fully met. This is a demanding and complex role and number of issues were raised with the reviewers in discussion. These included: the need for much tighter time lines in order to bring civil and canonical processes to a speedier conclusion. Secondly, the balance between child protection and natural justice for respondent priests, including the degree to which restrictions are proportionate to the established credibility of allegations. Thirdly the management of historical allegations, where complainants are now adults. Fourthly, the balance between advocacy and support in the Priest Advisor role and lastly the need for psychological assessments at an early stage in the management process.

The reviewers have noted that none of the men against whom allegations have been made have left the Columban community, despite the imposition of restrictions and supervision by the Society. Representatives from the civil agencies have described the management of these men within the community as an important protective factor. The Society is commended on its commitment to the management of these men, which makes an important contribution towards the reduction of the risk of re-offending.

Representatives from an Garda Siochana and from the HSE have confirmed to the reviewers that communication with the Society has greatly improved and is moving in the right direction in terms of reporting allegations and consulting on responding to concerns.

Standard 7

Implementing and Monitoring Standards

Standard 7 outlines the need to develop a plan of action, which monitors the effectiveness of the steps being taken to keep children safe. This is achieved through making a written plan, having the human and financial resources available, monitoring compliance and ensuring all allegations and suspicions are recorded and stored securely.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
7.1	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.	Not met
7.2	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Fully met
7.3	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Not met
7.4	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	N/A
7.5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Fully met

The reviewers were informed the current Designated Safeguarding Person in the Columban Missionaries has been in post for less than a year. The previous designated officer had served in that role since the 1990s. It is planned to recruit an external Designated Safeguarding Person in the near future. Between 2006 -2012 the current Designated Safeguarding Person served as Regional Director. The management agenda of the Columban Missionaries during this period was dominated by the Murphy Report and by the PM criminal proceedings, including notifications by complainants of their abuse. As a result most of the Columban Missionaries safeguarding activity was taken up in managing and responding to the complex and public issues thrown up by these cases. It is only in the relatively recent past that the Society feels that it has been able to reflect on the wider safeguarding issues. The Society has not yet established a Safeguarding Committee, although the reviewers did meet with the Regional Director, the Designated Safeguarding Person and one other Columban priest who will form the nucleus of such a structure. The proposed Safeguarding Committee needs to recruit key personnel from outside the Society in order to provide expertise, lay experience and gender balance. This report has already drawn attention to the need to revise the Safeguarding Children Policy in some key areas such as vetting, training and

communication which have not been addressed. The development of a strategic safeguarding plan (to meet Criterion 7.1) by an established Safeguarding Committee should provide the framework for this task to be undertaken.

The Society is currently engaged in a worldwide policy-review, guided by the experience gained in the Irish Region, to improve the safeguarding standards expected from all regions around the world.

The reviewers have been assured that financial support for an agreed safeguarding strategy will not be a barrier (Criterion 7.2). There is no formal process at present for regular reporting to the Regional Director on safeguarding performance (Criterion 7.3), and this is also a function of the Safeguarding Committee.

The reviewers note that Criterion 7.4 does not apply as the Columban Missionaries do not have parishioners of their own and because the over-arching safeguarding environment in the parishes in which they work rests with the dioceses.

The reviewers were assured that secure arrangements are in place for management and security of safeguarding data and are satisfied that Criterion 7.5 is fully met.

RECOMMENDATION 8. The Regional Director should take steps to establish a Safeguarding Committee with appropriate membership (including external input) and chairing, which will oversee the production of a strategic safeguarding plan and establish a system of regular monitoring and reporting on safeguarding performance to him.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1. The Regional Director should ensure that Standard 1.5 is reviewed within the Society's Safeguarding Policy. The revision of Standard 1.5 needs to address the following areas which are particularly relevant to the work of the Society; a) to emphasise the role of the Regional Director in assessing Certificates of Suitability for Ministry for Columban Missionaries returning to Ireland and in ensuring that communication with host dioceses or religious congregations is formalised and is effective in relation to safeguarding children b) to state the safeguarding requirements of the role of lay ministers, including expectations re vetting, information exchange, awareness raising and management of allegations c) to state the safeguarding requirements of mission promotion work with schools (including groups who visit Dalgan Park).

RECOMMENDATION 2. The Regional Director should ensure that Criteria 2.5 and 2.7 are reviewed and include information about an appeals/complaint review process, and detail contact details for child protection referrals to the civil agencies within the policy document.

RECOMMENDATION 3. The Regional Director should establish a protocol to ensure that all incoming placements of religious personnel from dioceses or congregations are subject to screening for safeguarding children and young people (to include production of a current Celebret or Certificate of Suitability for Ministry) and that all receive safeguarding awareness training.

RECOMMENDATION 4. The Regional Director should ensure that, as part of a more pro-active approach to prevention, that the component criteria of Standard 3 on *Safe Environments and Preventing Harm to Children* are more fully addressed in a revision of the Safeguarding Children policy.

RECOMMENDATION 5. The Regional Director should ensure that a Training Needs Analysis is conducted so that a formal Safeguarding Training Programme, can be developed and resourced for all relevant personnel, as part of a more pro-active approach to awareness raising and prevention.

RECOMMENDATION 6. The Regional Director should ensure that it is a mandatory requirement of the Society that all Columban Missionaries returning to Ireland, either permanently or temporarily, undergo safeguarding awareness training and that this is updated on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION 7. The Regional Director should ensure that a communication strategy is developed which sets out where, when and how the safeguarding message is communicated within the Society, as part of a more proactive approach to awareness raising and prevention.

RECOMMENDATION 8. The Regional Director should take steps to establish a Safeguarding Committee with appropriate membership (including external input) and chairing, which will oversee the production of a strategic safeguarding plan and establish a system of regular monitoring and reporting on safeguarding performance to him.

Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

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

1. To ascertain the full extent of all complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority (Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society) by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 up to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and who are ministering/or who once ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority, and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
2. If deemed relevant, select a random sample of complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious now deceased and who ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority.
3. Examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
4. To ascertain all of the cases during the relevant period in which the Church Authority
 - knew of child sexual abuse involving Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and including those clergy and/or religious visiting, studying and/or retired;
 - had strong and clear suspicion of child sexual abuse; or
 - had reasonable concern;
 - and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.

As well as examine

- Communication by the Church Authority with the Civil Authorities;
- Current risks and their management.

5. To consider and report on the implementation of the 7 Safeguarding Standards set out in *Safeguarding Children* (2009), including the following:
 - a) A review of the current child safeguarding policies and guidance materials in use by the Church Authority and an evaluation of their application;
 - b) How the Church Authority creates and maintains safe environments.
 - c) How victims are responded to by the Church Authority
 - d) What training is taking place within the Church Authority
 - e) How advice and support is accessed by the Church Authority in relation to victim support and assessment and management of accused respondents.
 - f) What systems are in place for monitoring practice and reporting back to the Church Authority.

Accompanying Notes

Note 1: Definition of Child Sexual Abuse:

The definition of child sexual abuse is in accordance with the definition adopted by the Ferns Report (and the Commission of Investigation Report into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin). The following is the relevant extract from the Ferns Report:

“While definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to context, probably the most useful definition and broadest for the purposes of this Report was that which was adopted by the Law Reform Commission in 1990¹ and later developed in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children, 1999) which state that “child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or that of others”. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- sexual exploitation of a child which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape, or other media) or the manipulation for those purposes of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse.”

¹ This definition was originally proposed by the Western Australia Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, 1987 and is adopted by the Law Reform Commission (1990) *Report on Child Sexual Abuse*, p. 8.

Note 2: Definition of Allegation:

The term allegation is defined as an accusation or complaint where there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse, including retrospective disclosure by adults. It includes allegations that did not necessarily result in a criminal or canonical investigation, or a civil action, and allegations that are unsubstantiated but which are plausible. (NB: Erroneous information does not necessarily make an allegation implausible, for example, a priest arrived in a parish in the Diocese a year after the alleged abuse, but other information supplied appears credible and the alleged victim may have mistaken the date).

Note 3: False Allegations:

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland wishes to examine any cases of false allegation so as to review the management of the complaint by the Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society.

Note 4: Random sample:

The random sample (if applicable) must be taken from complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse made against all deceased Catholic clergy/religious covering the entire of the relevant period being 1st January 1975 to the date of the Review.

Note 5: Civil Authorities:

Civil Authorities are defined in the Republic of Ireland as the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána and in Northern Ireland as the Health and Social Care Trust and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.