

Reviews Show Improving Child Protection Practice in 6 Dioceses

30th November 2011

The six Reports released today by the dioceses reviewed by the NBSCCC show improvements in the attitude to and understanding of child protection in those dioceses, according to NSBCCC CEO, Ian Elliott.

“Most importantly,” he stated, “I found improvement in the area of implementation of systems to ensure child protection.”

The focus of the Reports is current risk and an examination of the safeguarding framework in each diocese. They do not set out to provide a detailed analysis of past practice but concentrate on scrutinising the current situation.

The National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC) also found marked improvements in the prompt notification of the statutory authorities.

“The attitude of these Dioceses and their Bishops in the implementation of the Guidelines, engagement with the review process and participation in NBSCCC training that the NBSCCC provides, has been good,” said Ian Elliott. “And it is important to note that much of the work here is being undertaken by volunteers, indicating an even wider commitment.”

One area on which the NBSCCC is urging greater focus is the critical role of “delegate” or “designated officer”. In many cases, this has been undertaken by a member of the clergy. In some of the Reviews, a recommendation has been included that, where possible, this role should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced lay person. It would be the NBSCCC’s view that it is significantly more difficult for a member of the clergy to perform all of the tasks that are involved in the successful discharge of the responsibilities of the delegate or designated officer.

“Our goal with these reviews is to assure lay faithful and clergy, and, particularly, parents and young people that the implementation of the Safeguarding Guidelines is effective and that where it is not, we will identify it and take action,” stated John Morgan, Chairman, NBSCCC.

“With a total of 188 Church Authorities in ministry on the island of Ireland we still have substantial numbers of audits to carry out. However a number of these Authorities are tiny and their membership is skewed towards older people” said Elliott. “To date, we have focused on the dioceses but in the immediate future we are going to also include a number of religious congregations or orders. We have already committed to four dioceses and they will be included in the next tranche but we will also add at least two religious congregations as well. Our intention is to complete the overall task in two further years and to encourage the participants to follow the example set by these six bishops and publish their completed Review reports together twice a year. The next six reports we would hope to have released in May/June of 2012.”

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Ger Kenny 087 2488393