



Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the Region of Ireland of the
Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei
undertaken by

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

Date November 2015

CONTENTS

Background	<i>Page 3</i>
Standard 1 <i>A written policy on keeping children safe</i>	<i>Page 9</i>
Standard 2 <i>Management of allegations</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
Standard 3 <i>Preventing Harm to Children</i>	<i>Page 14</i>
Standard 4 <i>Training and Education</i>	<i>Page 17</i>
Standard 5 <i>Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message</i>	<i>Page 19</i>
Standard 6 <i>Access to Advice and Support</i>	<i>Page 21</i>
Standard 7 <i>Implementing and Monitoring Standards</i>	<i>Page 23</i>
Recommendations	<i>Page 25</i>
Terms of Reference	<i>Page 26</i>

Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (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 or other authority.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Child Safeguarding Practice in the Prelature of Opus Dei* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies. It is based upon the case material made available to the reviewers by the Prelature, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Prelature. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the Regional Vicar has confirmed this.

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

Introduction

The specific ecclesiastical mission of Opus Dei within the Catholic Church is to give spiritual formation to adults – lay and clerical – who are incorporated into the Prelature or are members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, in accordance with the circumstances and needs of each one. The work of formation is carried out by lay people in co-operation with the priests of the Prelature. A personal prelature is a juridical structure within the Church first recognized by the 2nd Vatican Council. A public information document (‘Information handbook on the Opus Dei Prelature’ Beat Muller 2011) refers to the Council decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (07.12.1965) No 10 which states that, among other jurisdictions, ‘special dioceses or personal prelatres’ could be established to carry out special pastoral tasks in different regions or among any race in any part of the world. This was a new juridical figure which, being flexible in nature, could contribute to the effective spreading of the Christian message and Christian life.

The main activity of the Prelature of Opus Dei, as described by Beat Muller (2011), is centred on the spiritual formation and pastoral care of its members, so that each one can carry out, in their own place in the Church and in society, a multifaceted apostolic activity, promoting around them the ideal of the universal call to holiness. As well as the personal apostolate which the Prelature fosters in its faithful as its first priority, the Prelature also provides specific pastoral assistance to works and undertakings of a non-confessional, civil and professional nature which pursue educational and charitable goals. Since its foundation by a Spanish priest Saint Josemaria Escrivá in 1928, Opus Dei has spread the message that all the baptised are called to holiness, through the fulfilment of their work and their daily duties. The Church and society are served by fostering commitment among the Christian faithful, helping them to discover and take on the demands of their personal vocation in the specific place they occupy in the world. The priests and faithful of Opus Dei are domiciled in territorial structures such as dioceses, and there are detailed protocols to ensure that the relevant host Bishops are fully consulted and informed about the role and activities of the Prelature. The apostolic constitution by which Opus Dei was erected as a personal prelature was formally ratified in Rome in March 1983.

The Prelature of Opus Dei is established internationally, consisting of approximately 83,000 lay adults plus 2,000 priests and deacons in 60 countries (www.opusdei.org). The Prelate (Pastor) of Opus Dei appointed by the Pope, is based in Rome. The style of government is collegial, and the Prelate and his Vicars always carry out their work assisted by councils, made up largely of laity.

There is a council for women (called the Central Advisory Council) and another for men (the General Council). This organizational structure is mirrored within regions, which are overseen by Regional Vicars. General congresses of the Prelature are usually held every eight years.

The Irish region of Opus Dei was first established in 1947, and currently consists of some 400 lay adults and 18 incardinated priests. Its work is carried out within a network of relationships with other Church and civil organizations or entities through which it seeks

to fulfil its spiritual mission. These are functionally separate from Opus Dei. An organizational chart made available to the reviewer shows that there are different levels of collaboration between Opus Dei and these organizations. The most extensive and closest relationship is with Brosna Educational Centres Ltd, which is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, undertaking the management of 18 centres (youth centres, university residences, study centres etc) throughout the Republic of Ireland. There is also a close relationship with the Lismullin Educational Foundation and Fiuntas Centres Ltd (which manages a conference centre in Co Meath). The Parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Merrion Rd, Dublin is administered by priests of Opus Dei on behalf of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Opus Dei provides spiritual input into a number of educational projects (Rockbrook School, owned by FamEd, in Rockbrook, Dublin; Rosemount School, owned by REFL in Enniskerry, Dublin; Citywise based in Tallaght, Dublin, and RACE based in Co Kildare), and provides adult formation and pastoral support in two parishes in the Diocese of Cork and Ross, one in the Diocese of Derry and one in the Diocese of Down and Connor. Opus Dei priests – of whom a number live in Brosna educational centres – direct their pastoral work in the first instance to the faithful of the Prelature who are located in these organizational settings, which includes celebrating mass, administering the sacraments, giving spiritual guidance, preaching and giving retreats, days of recollection and doctrinal classes. They also provide these pastoral services to others who wish to avail of them in the various contexts mentioned above.

It is important to note that the focus of this child safeguarding review was on the Prelature of Opus Dei which had committed to the implementation of the NBSCCCI standards in 2009, and not on its related organizations. The primary ecclesiastical mission of the Prelature as such is to give formation to its members, and canon law establishes that no-one under 18 years of age may be juridically incorporated into it. However the organizational chart demonstrates that Opus Dei in Ireland provides various forms of pastoral assistance to a wide range of people through its associations with some thirteen organizations, at different levels, and its priests, in the normal course of their ministries, have many contacts with families, children and young people. The reviewer has confirmed with the Safeguarding Committee that all of the organizations identified as having a working relationship with Opus Dei have their own child safeguarding policies and child safeguarding accountability structures, and that Opus Dei priests are fully compliant with these (e.g. schools regulated by the Department of Education and Skills, youth clubs regulated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, parishes regulated by diocesan safeguarding policy).

Brosna Educational Centres Ltd is of particular interest because it is the largest and most closely associated with Opus Dei. It was formed in 2007 to succeed Hostels Management Ltd, which had carried out the same management function for the portfolio of educational centres in association with, but functionally separate from, the Prelature.

Whilst the organizations are separate, there is evidence of considerable cross influence. Appointments on Brosna management committees in its eighteen centres, for example, are agreed with Opus Dei. The Designated Safeguarding Person for the Prelature also

carries out this role in Brosna. The reviewer has seen the Child Safeguarding Manual (2015) of Brosna Educational Centres, as well as a briefing paper entitled *Brosna Educational Centres Ltd and the Prelature of Opus Dei – Review of working Relationship* (01.08.2015). The latter is a comprehensive document signed by the Regional Vicar and by the Chair of Brosna which provides transparent information and clear and important guidance to all staff. It is noted that this document;

- states the functions of each organization
- describes the child safeguarding governance structure in each organization
- identifies and analyses key safeguarding interfaces between the two organizations
- considers the implications of the pending legislation for both organizations (National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 and Children First Bill 2014 (now Children's First Act 2015))
- provides an updated list of Opus Dei priests and their locations, Education Centres managed by Brosna, and Brosna management committees,

It is noted that it is Brosna policy not to provide accommodation for persons under 18 years of age, and that child safeguarding issues between Brosna and the Prelature in the context of resident priests do not arise.

The NBSCCCI safeguarding review of Opus Dei took place in Harvieston House, Dalkey, Co Dublin on 03.11.15, and was carried out by a single reviewer. The reviewer met with the Chairperson of the Safeguarding Committee on 09.10.15 for a planning meeting. The reviewer was given access to a total of 4 files relating to child safeguarding issues, of which one was managed as a child abuse allegation. He met with the Regional Vicar, the Designated Safeguarding Officer and with members of the Safeguarding Committee, and reviewed the child safeguarding policy and other documentation.

- Child Safeguarding policy 2015
- Information Handbook on the Opus Dei Prelature; Beat Muller Nov 2011
- BROSNA Child Safeguarding Manual 2015
- BROSNA Junior Club Handbook 2015
- Review of Working Relationship – Brosna Educational Centres Ltd and the Prelature of Opus Dei 01.08.2015
- Prelature of Opus Dei – Organizational 'Maps' 1 and 2
- Nullamore Learning for Living pamphlet
- Training records
- Vetting records
- Safeguarding Committee notes – agenda and handwritten notes
- Child Safeguarding policies file.

A draft report was subsequently prepared and agreed by the Regional Vicar. It is clear that the Prelature – particularly through the Chairperson of the Safeguarding Committee – prepared thoroughly for the review, which was conducted in a very open and transparent manner.

In summary, this report has concluded that the Prelature of Opus Dei is compliant to a high degree with the NBSCCCI criteria which have active application and are relevant to it. The review has documented how accountability rests with the Regional Vicar, who manages a child safeguarding structure which features a functioning Safeguarding Committee, an active child safeguarding policy and a Designated Safeguarding Officer, as well as provision for an Advisory Panel to give specialist advice if required. The organizational configuration within which the Prelature carries out its mission is different from that of other Church bodies, and it depends, from a child safeguarding perspective, on the commitment of associated bodies to also be thorough in this area. The review has identified the need to consolidate some aspects of the work of the Safeguarding Committee in order to accommodate a safeguarding horizon that is wider than the Prelature itself. The incidence of reported allegations is small in number, and has been appropriately managed. Overall the approach to child safeguarding within the Prelature is strong. The review has made a small number of recommendations related to training, and the functions of the Safeguarding Committee and an Advisory Panel.

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 guidance, *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 Prelature of Opus Dei. 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 partially
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 fully
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 Child Safeguarding Policy of the Prelature, revised on 07.03.2015, confirms its commitment to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of children in accordance with NBSCCCI standards. It is addressed in the first instance to the priests of the Prelature, and states its relevance to the other faithful involved in any activities with young people. It confirms that the

Prelature does not run activities such as youth clubs, schools or residences, and that all such activities are subject to child safeguarding regulation in their own governance contexts. The policy is published in seven parts for ease of access;

- Child Safeguarding Policy – scope and summary
- Initial Complaints Procedure
- Record of Initial Disclosure
- Code of Good Practice
- Essential Information
- Training and Monitoring
- Processing a Complaint

Criteria 1.1 and 1.3 – 1.9 are assessed as fully met. Whilst the policy documents are clearly identified as formal documents of the Prelature, they do not contain the signature of the Regional Vicar, and Criterion 1.2 is regarded as met partially for this reason. It is noted that this criterion will be superseded by the adoption by all congregations of a common Church safeguarding policy in 2016. As noted, the policy confirms that the Prelature will ensure that all organizations with which it collaborates have child safeguarding policies in their own right. All of the other criteria associated with this standard are fully met. The review commends the clarity with which the process for managing individuals who may pose a risk to children is stated in this policy (Criterion 1.6).

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 Opus Dei meet 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.	Met partially
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

Fulfilment of Criteria 2.1 – 2.4, and of Criterion 2.6, is evidenced in the 2015 Child Safeguarding policy. Although the Child Safeguarding policy is presented in a clearly accessible format, the Prelature does not have a general complaints policy for children/young people, and Criterion 2.5 is assessed as partially met. It is also noted that Criterion 2.7 should contain child protection contact details for Northern Ireland. Both of these partially met criteria will be addressed through the the adoption by all congregations of a common Church child safeguarding policy in 2016

In relation to Criterion 2.3, it is noted that the current Designated Safeguarding Person, who is a retired teacher with extensive experience in child safeguarding, was appointed in 2009 by the Prelature. He is also the Designated Safeguarding Person for Brosna Educational Centres. This decision was taken by Brosna and the Prelature to ensure maximum co-ordination and to avoid any ambiguity as to who, or which organization, should deal with any child safeguarding issue arising in their interfaces. The office of the Designated Safeguarding Person therefore straddles both organizations, creating a single visible point of reference for co-ordinating child safeguarding responses, and also emphasising the very close relationship between them.

Table 1

Incidence of safeguarding allegations from 1st January 1975 up to time of Review

Name of Church Authority: Region of Ireland of Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei		
1	Number of priests of the Prelature, against whom allegations have been made since the 1 st January 1975 up to the date of the review.	1
2	Total number of allegations received by the Prelature since 1 st January, 1975.	1
3	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána/PSNI involving priests since 1 st January 1975.	1
4	Number of allegations reported to the TUSLA/ HSE/HSC (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE,) involving priests of the Prelature since 1 st January 1975.	0
5	Number of priests (still members of the Prelature) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.	1
6	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.	0
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 Prelature	0
9	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are retired	0

10	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Prelature	0
11	Number of priests of the Prelature who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since the 1 st January 1975	0

The reviewer was given access to a total of four files which document concerns in four instances, of which one constituted a child abuse allegation during the time frame covered by the review. The reviewer read two of the three files designated as ‘concerns’. Both evidence careful consideration of referral material, and consultation with civil and Church authorities, and do not constitute child abuse allegations.

The one case designated as an allegation documents a report received by the Irish region of the Prelature some forty years after an alleged sexual abuse incident concerning a priest from another region who had long since left Ireland. The file establishes that the complaint was referred without delay to An Garda Síochána and investigated, and a decision taken by the DPP not to initiate proceedings in the case. It was also reported at the time to the diocesan Safeguarding Office. The case was the subject of a prompt canonical investigation by Opus Dei in the region where the respondent was living, where the allegation was denied by him. The complainant in this case was offered a support service by the Prelature, but declined. The responses of the Prelature in this case were timely and appropriate.

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 Opus Dei 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 fully
3.2	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.	Met fully
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 fully

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).	Not met*
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'),	Met partially

	confidentially if necessary.	
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.	Not met*
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.	Not met*
3.9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Not met*

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.	Not met*
3.11	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.	Not met*
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.	Not met*

***Denotes no active application in the context of this congregation**

The Child Safeguarding Policy 2015 notes that the Prelature, because its mission is defined in terms of spiritual formation, does provide services or have employees or volunteers. The reviewer has been advised that all of the priests or deacons of the Prelature are Garda vetted, in line with best practice guidance, through the office of the Designated Safeguarding Person. Vetting records are maintained centrally. The reviewer has assessed that Criteria 3.1 – 3.3 are met fully in policy and practice.

The Child Safeguarding Policy 2015 contains a full section entitled Code of Good Practice, based on observance of the norms of prudence. It is noted that the code applies to all of the faithful of the Prelature who are involved in giving Christian formation to young people, who are required to sign and return a Code of Good Practice statement. Criterion 3.4 is assessed as fully met.

The issue of ‘whistle blowing’ is not explicitly addressed in the Child Safeguarding Policy 2015, although it was pointed out to the reviewer that the profile and accessibility of the safeguarding guidance was high within a relatively small community of priests. Criterion 3.6 is assessed as partially met, and this issue will be addressed in the common Church policy in 2016.

A number of the criteria underpinning Standard 3 (3.5 and 3.7 – 3.12) are designated as not met, but without active application. It is noted that these criteria apply to activities and issues with children / young people who are not managed by the Prelature, but may be managed via associated organizations, whose own child safeguarding policies cover the areas in question. The Brosna Safeguarding Manual 2015, for example covers the areas of unacceptable behaviour, discrimination, bullying, supervision and safe operating practice, risk assessment, and information technology.

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 fully
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 Child Safeguarding Policy 2015 states that the safeguarding of children is fostered by the observance of the norms of prudence which are communicated to the faithful of the Prelature in the course of their regular personal formation in the spirit of Opus Dei. The organizations with which the Prelature collaborates have their own safeguarding training arrangements. All priests and deacons of the Prelature receive basic induction training on the Child Safeguarding Policy, and training records are maintained. Training is co-ordinated, and also provided, by the Designated Safeguarding Person. Members of the Safeguarding Committee, including the Designated Safeguarding Person, have confirmed that basic awareness training is monitored and that any additional training needs are assessed and met. It is noted that training provided by Brosna as part of its safeguarding programme (in conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland and City of Dublin Youth Services Board) is also accessed by members of the Prelature. Criteria 4.1 – 4.3 underpinning standard 4 are assessed as fully met. Criterion 4.4 is assessed as met partially and it is recommended that the Prelature consult with the NBSCCCI to confirm that training sourced and provided through Brosna is consistent with the NBSCCCI training framework.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Regional Vicar should consult with the NBSCCCI in relation to the child safeguarding training needs of the Prelature and use of Brosna sourced training.

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.	Not met*
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.	Met partially

The Child Protection Policy 2015 is available in all locations where priests or deacons of the Prelature are resident, and is available on the Opus Dei website. Criterion 5.1 is fully met. Although Criterion 5.2 is assessed as having no active application for the Prelature, the development of a child/young person friendly pamphlet raising awareness of the right to be safe from abuse and of contact details could be considered by the Safeguarding Committee in conjunction with Brosna, as a good practice initiative.

Attention has already been drawn to dual role and visibility of the Designated Safeguarding Person and Criterion 5.3 is fully met. The Child Safeguarding Policy does not contain contact details for civil authorities in Northern Ireland, although the Prelature has a presence there, and Criterion 5.4 is met partially. This will be addressed in the pending common Church policy. In relation to criterion 5.5, Opus Dei has consulted with An Garda Síochána as appropriate in relation to case management and notification of allegations; they also inform the relevant Diocesan office and have consulted with the National Board. Tusla have advised that Opus Dei are not part of The Ferns Audit and have therefore not been assessed by them.

The review recognizes that the Prelature is a small organization where communication is intensive in all aspects, including that of child safeguarding. The practice in communication of child safeguarding needs to be captured in a policy statement, and Criterion 5.6 is therefore assessed as partially met.

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

All criteria underpinning Standard 6 are assessed as fully met. In relation to Criterion 6.1, there is provision in the Child Safeguarding Policy for the appointment of an Advisory Panel to provide specialist advice and support to the Regional Vicar in individual cases. It has not been necessary to convene such a panel to date. The reviewer was advised that specialist advice would in the first instance be sought from NBSCCCI, and that membership of an Advisory Panel would draw on professional expertise already available to the Prelature through the Safeguarding Committee - civil and canon law, clinical psychology, child protection. The Prelature should draw up terms of reference for an Advisory Panel which would establish that its function is different from that of the Safeguarding Committee (see Resource 1 NBSCCCI *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*). Criterion 6.2 is also fully

met through contacts between the Prelature and the NBSCCCI, the National Youth Council of Ireland (through Brosna), the regulatory bodies in the field of education and the relevant diocesan safeguarding offices. Criterion 6.3 is addressed in the Child Safeguarding Policy 2015 through guidance on how to respond and the code of practice. The policy provides for the appointment of Support Persons for complainants/victims, as required by Criterion 6.4. The Prelature does not have a victim support policy, and it is suggested that the Safeguarding Committee could consider the principles that could inform a victim support statement, as a good practice initiative. Finally the Child Safeguarding Policy provides detailed guidance on internal management in the event of an allegation.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Vicar General should draw up written terms of reference for an Advisory Panel, to establish that it has a different function from that of the Safeguarding Committee.

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.	Met partially
7.2	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Met fully
7.3	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Met fully
7.4	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	Not met*
7.5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met fully

The Child Safeguarding Policy 2015 states that the entities responsible for activities with young people (in association with the Prelature) should have written safeguarding plans. This provision in Criterion 7.1 also applies to the Prelature. One of the roles of Safeguarding Committees is to implement and review strategic safeguarding plans, to monitor and plan progress. The practice evident in the Prelature's Safeguarding Committee needs to be recorded in this format, and Criterion 7.1 is assessed as partially met.

The current Safeguarding Committee was appointed on 01.11.14 for a five year term of office, and its record of activity fulfils the requirements of Criterion 7.2. Its membership, drawing in expertise from civil and canon law and clinical psychology, as well as the Designated Safeguarding Person, is appropriate, although the reviewer understands that some aspects need to be finalized. The reviewer was shown a file recording meetings and action points of the Committee, which meets quarterly. It is recommended that the Safeguarding Committee clarify its terms of reference (see Resource 1 NBSCCCI *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*), to ensure that there is a clear distinction between its functions (to monitor and oversee policy and strategy) and that of an Advisory Panel (to provide specialist advice in individual cases – see recommendation 2). This is necessary because there is likely to be

dual membership in the event of activation of an Advisory Panel. The reviewer also recommends, in view of the network of organizations or entities within which the Prelature is located, that the Safeguarding Committee should undertake, as a fixed agenda item, a regular scan for any safeguarding issues arising in any part of the structure associated with the Prelature.

Criteria 7.2 (Financial support) and 7.5 (Secure storage) are met fully, and Criterion 7.4 does not have active application

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Regional Vicar should consolidate the functioning of the Safeguarding Committee by;

- (a) Clarifying its terms of reference, drawing on NBSCCCI guidance.**
- (b) Developing a strategic safeguarding plan for the Prelature, to be implemented and monitored by the Committee.**
- (c) Seeking agreement with the other entities associated with the Prelature for the Safeguarding Committee to regularly scan the network for safeguarding issues.**

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Regional Vicar should consult with the NBSCCCI in relation to the child safeguarding training needs of the Prelature and use of Brosna sourced training

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Vicar General should draw up written terms of reference for an Advisory Panel, to establish that it has a different function from that of the Safeguarding Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Regional Vicar should consolidate the functioning of the Safeguarding Committee by;

- a) Clarifying its terms of reference, drawing on NBSCCCI guidance
- b) Developing a strategic safeguarding plan for the Prelature, to be implemented and monitored by the Committee
- c) Seeking agreement with the other entities associated with the Prelature for the Safeguarding Committee to regularly scan the network for safeguarding issues

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.