



**Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the religious congregation of
Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) Dehonians
undertaken by**

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

May 2015

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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 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document for Ireland 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 religious congregation of the Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) Dehonians* 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 us by the Provincial, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) Dehonians. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the Provincial has confirmed this.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group in redacted form before being submitted to Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) Dehonians, along with any recommendations arising from the findings.

Introduction

The Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ's) was founded in France, in 1878. In Ireland and Britain the Congregation is known as the Sacred Heart Fathers. In other parts of the world its members are known the Dehonians in reference to the Founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon. It is an international religious community of over 2300 priests and brothers living and working in 42 countries in five continents. The Generalate of the Congregation is in Rome – the Superior General is elected every six years. The Congregation is divided into provinces, regions and districts. The British – Irish province comprises England, Scotland and Ireland. The Congregation first came to England in 1936, to Scotland in 1970 and to Ireland in 1978. The present Provincial of the British – Irish Province is Fr. John Kelly. He took up office on 1 March 2014. The British – Irish province has become one of the smallest in the Congregation. Presently, there are 20 members in the province – many of whom are elderly or retired. The Provincial Office is located in Stockport Cheshire with the Provincial currently living in Ireland. There are two communities in Ireland, two in Scotland and two in England.

The Sacred Heart Fathers came to Ireland in 1978 and set up a house in the Archdiocese of Dublin with the permission of the Archbishop. At that time, a new formation

programme was being implemented for the Province with the introduction of a pre-novitiate year. A suitable course was located in Dublin at the Mater Dei Institute. To begin with, a house was rented in Rathgar, Dublin. Two priests and the first year candidates or postulants took up residence on 1 September 1978. One year later the Sacred Heart Fathers purchased a house on Inchicore Road, Dublin 8 and moved there in October 1979. On 6 August 1982 the Congregation took on the parish of St John Vianney, Ardlea, Dublin 5. The house at Inchicore Road and the parish of Ardlea are the only communities of the Sacred Heart Fathers in Ireland.

The primary apostolate of the Sacred Heart Fathers in Ireland was focused on the formation of candidates for priesthood and religious life. In parallel with this, efforts were made at vocations promotion and the publication of the spirituality of the Congregation. There is a tradition in the province of working in parishes in each country. The parish of Ardlea is administered by the Sacred Heart Fathers on behalf of the Archdiocese of Dublin. The blessing of the new parochial house and parish hall took place on 13 November 1990.

In 1991, following a further review of formation, it was decided to concentrate the entire programme at Inchicore Road. Prior to this, the students had started in Dublin, done the Novitiate in Ayrshire, Scotland, and then moved to Gateshead, North West England, attending Ushaw College, Durham. The plan was to avail of the wide range of academic, spirituality and pastoral resources then available in Dublin. The students attended the Milltown Institute of Philosophy and Theology and All Hallows College. With the decline in vocations there are no longer any candidates in formation. The formation house at Inchicore Road is now primarily a residence. A section of the house has been refurbished to suit the needs of the elderly.

There are eight members of the Sacred Heart Fathers in Ireland – three of whom are retired.

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, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document for 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 Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) Dehonians. 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 the Sacred Heart Fathers meet 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).	Not met
1.3	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Met partially
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.	Not met
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 Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) present their safeguarding policies and procedures in *Safeguarding Document for Ireland*. This booklet was published in 2014, and is a 23

page A4 formatted document. The booklet is well structured and easily read; and is practical and professional in its presentation. Criterion 1.1 is considered fully met.

The Sacred Heart Father's safeguarding document is not signed by the relevant leadership body, and therefore criterion 1.2 is not met.

While the Sacred Heart Father's *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* is presented as a stand alone text, it also instructs members of the Sacred Heart Fathers to familiarise themselves, and comply with the standards and procedures set out in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2009).

The Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* contains their Child Protection Policy Statement;

'We, the Sacred Heart Fathers, ministering in Ireland, are committed to the indisputable principle that children are a gift from God, with an inalienable right, by the very fact of their human dignity, to be respected, nurtured and protected. We value and encourage the participation of young people in Church activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We therefore undertake to do all in our power to create safe environments for children and young people, in order to ensure their protection from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and to enable their full participation in the life of the Church'.

The reviewer is satisfied that this statement sets out the safeguarding intent of the Congregation and recognises that children are to be protected. However, it does not instruct compliance among its members with safeguarding policies and procedures. The cover of the document identifies it as 'guidelines', which apply to all members of the Sacred Heart Fathers working in Ireland.

The Sacred Heart Father's document concludes that;

'Our [SCJ] safeguarding procedures are in accordance with, and put into practice, the principles and standards set out in Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2008). All members are required to comply with the guidance, procedures, standards and resource documents outlined in Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland.'

While the reviewer acknowledges the instruction for members to comply with the parent document, there is no direction within the Sacred Heart Fathers Safeguarding booklet that members must also comply with the SCJ policies and procedures, as set out in their *Safeguarding Document for Ireland*. While this might seem pedantic, clarification on the issue, and instructing compliance with the Sacred Heart Fathers safeguarding document, may avoid confusion in the future. Therefore, criterion 1.3 is considered met partially.

Criteria 1.4 is met fully, through the Congregation's historical practice and continued commitment to review their policies and procedures every three years.

The Sacred Heart Fathers have two communities in Ireland; a formation house for students entering the priesthood, which is also a residence for retired members; and the parish of St John Vianney in Dublin. The Sacred Heart Fathers have had no students in the formation house since 2002 and the retired members who reside there have no contact with children within the facility. Despite this, the Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* does contain a comprehensive code of behaviour, outlining expectations of behaviour should members be involved in church activities involving children and young people. The document instructs also priests involved in parish activities to ‘strictly comply with Dublin Diocesan Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedures’. Criterion 1.5 is considered met fully.

Criterion 1.6 is not met. There is no reference to the management of an individual against whom an allegation has been made, or who poses a risk to children, within the safeguarding document. The reviewer acknowledges the Sacred Heart Father community in Ireland is small and that the Congregation has not had any allegations against its members in Ireland. However, policy and procedural development on the management, monitoring and pastoral support of an individual who may pose a risk to children will see the Congregation better placed to respond to the issue should it arise in the future.

Recommendation One

The policy should be approved and signed by the provincial leadership of the Sacred Heart Fathers.

Recommendation Two

The Provincial Leader should ensure the development of policy and procedure relevant to the management of individuals who present a risk to children.

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 the Sacred Heart Fathers 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 fully
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 fully

The reviewer is satisfied that the Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* meets all of the criteria in Standard 2. The document provides step-by-step guidance on managing allegations, which is consistent with current legislation and guidelines. The Designated Liaison Person is experienced and also holds a similar role in the provincial regions of Scotland and England. Given the small number of Sacred Heart Fathers in Ireland, the duplication of role within the provincial regions is uncernering. The role of the Designated Liaison Person is set out on page ten of the *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* and is consistent with the expectations of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland*.

The Sacred Heart Fathers have eight members in Ireland. This includes the Congregation's Provincial and a Vocation Growth Counsellor, three members who are retired, and three who are in parish ministry. While acknowledging the Sacred Heart Fathers compliance with Standard 2 criteria, the reviewer recognises that Dublin Archdiocesan safeguarding procedures are also in place in the parish of St John Vianney, where three of the SCJ members are in ministry.

Table 1

Incidence of safeguarding allegations received within the Sacred Heart Fathers against priests, from 1st January 1975 up to time of review.

Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ) Dehonians		
1	Number of Religious Order priests against whom allegations have been made since the 1 st January 1975 up to the date of the Review.	0
2	Total number of allegations received by the Religious Congregation since 1 st January, 1975	0
3	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána involving priests since 1 st January 1975.	0
4	Number of allegations reported to the Tusla/HSE (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE) involving priests of the Religious Congregation since 1 st January 1975.	0
5	Number of priests (still members of the Congregation) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.	0

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.	0
8	Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are “Out of Ministry, but are still members of the Congregation ”.	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 Congregation / priesthood.	0
11	Number of priests of the Congregation 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 Sacred Heart Fathers have not received any allegations against any of their members in Ireland or against any Irish priest working abroad that fall within the remit of this review.

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 the Sacred Heart Fathers meet 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).	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.	Met partially*
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.	Met fully
3.9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Met fully

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

Where criteria are denoted with an *, it is recognised that the range of activity relating to children and young people performed by the Congregation is very limited, and the criteria has limited application. It is also noted that while the activities relating to these criteria are minimally reflected in the day to day activities of the Sacred Heart Fathers. Again, the reviewer recognises that the Sacred Heart Fathers have only three members in parish ministry. These members are subject to the diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures appropriate to the activities of their ministry.

The Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* does not contain an anti bullying policy. Within the SCJ code of behaviour the document does set out an expectation of behaviour for young people;

'Young people are expected to behave in a polite, responsible manner at all times.... Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted by young people'

However, these statements are not comprehensive, nor provide direction on the avoidance and management of bullying behaviours. Therefore, criterion 3.5 is considered to be met partially.

The Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* under ‘protecting children from abuse’ states;

Child abuse is significant harm caused to any child by physical injury, neglect, sexual abuse or emotional abuse. It can happen to children of all ages, gender, racial origin, class, disability or culture. Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than the child abuses that power and causes harm to that child or young person. The common denominator of all child abuse is that it makes children and young people feel diminished or threatened, and that it causes them harm. All forms of abuse constitute a betrayal of trust and an abuse of power by an adult over a child or young person. Child abuse may involve a parent or other family member, or someone else who cares for the child at home, school, religious or any other setting. The people who abuse are often known and trusted by the child. Child abuse is WRONG. All children have a right to grow up in an environment free from harm and which maximises their potential. If a child is being abused action must be taken immediately.

While this statement highlights that child abuse may involve members of the religious community, and indicates a need for action in those cases, it does not provide direction or procedure in ‘whistle blowing’. Again, the reviewer acknowledges the limited application of this criterion given the profile of the Sacred heart Fathers in Ireland. However the Sacred Heart Fathers have members in parish ministry where the active significance of this criterion is more evident. SCJ policy in this area, coupled with diocesan procedures, would provide comprehensive guidance to SCJ members if required.

Recommendation Three

The Sacred Heart Fathers should consider developing a whistle blowing policy which should be included in future updates to their policies and procedures.

The Sacred Heart Fathers have appropriate guidance on the use of mobile phones within their code of behaviour. Consideration should be given to expanding this guidance to include other forms of digital and media equipment.

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 fully

The Sacred Heart Fathers' Provincial has availed of training presented by the NBSCCCI. The Designated Liaison Person has received training through the Dublin Archdiocese, and within the UK safeguarding structures. Once again, consideration is given to the active application of this Standard to the Sacred Heart Fathers, given their profile.

The eight Irish members of the Sacred Heart Fathers have received training on their policies and procedures, while the five members in active ministry have received training from external sources (NBSCCCI, Dublin Archdiocese, UK safeguarding agencies).

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 partially*
5.2	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.	Met fully
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 fully
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 fully

In Ireland, the Sacred Heart Fathers have two locations where their safeguarding policy is, and can be displayed, the Formation House and the parish of St John Vianney. The Congregation has a website, but this is not easily accessed and has an address that does not clearly identify the Sacred Heart Fathers (<http://scjbhprovince.synthasite.com>). The child protection policy is available on the safeguarding page of the site, along with contact details for the Designated Liaison Person. Given the limited points of contact the Sacred Heart Fathers have with the public, the reviewer feels that additional efforts

should be made to facilitate easier communication between the Sacred Heart Fathers and the community. Criterion 5.1 is considered to be met partially.

Recommendation Four

The Provincial of the Sacred Heart Fathers consider providing an easily accessible point of contact between the Congregation and the public. Given the limited geographical locations, and points of public contact the Sacred Heart Fathers have in Ireland, it is envisaged that this would be better served through an easily found online presence.

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 Sacred Heart Fathers are an international religious congregation in the Catholic Church and are part of a province that includes Ireland and Britain. Safeguarding has been consolidated within the province, and administrative emphasis placed on the larger membership population in the UK. The reviewer found that this is not to the detriment of the Congregation's responsibility to safeguarding within Ireland. As part of the Sacred Heart Fathers safeguarding structure their provincial and advisory councils are located in England. While the Sacred Heart Fathers have not had any Irish based priests with allegations, the councils are available if required. The Sacred Heart Fathers also expressed a positive relationship with the NBSCCCI. Criterion 6.1 is considered to be met fully.

The Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* (page 4) states;

'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. In the event of a complaint, whether current or historical, a pastoral response to the victim and to the perpetrator will be provided'.

This intent, together with the practical procedural guidance, and provision of contact details for support agencies contained within the Sacred Heart Fathers *Safeguarding Document for Ireland* meets the requirements of Criteria 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5.

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.	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 reviewer accepts that criteria contained within Standard 7 holds little practical application to the profile and ministry of the Sacred Heart Fathers in Ireland. Criterion 7.1, which requires a strategic safeguarding plan to be in place, is geared for medium to large Church organisations. Its practical relevance to a small congregation is limited. Through fieldwork, the reviewer observed a commitment by the Sacred Heart Fathers to safeguarding within their Congregation. Given the small number of SCJ priests monitoring compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures is conducted at a personal and local level. Criteria 7.2 and 7.3 are considered to be met fully.

Criterion 7.4 is not met within the Sacred Heart Fathers policies and procedures, but the reviewer is aware that SCJ members engaged in parish activities are bound by diocesan safeguarding practices.

The Sacred Heart Fathers have had no cases in Ireland and therefore no requirement to ‘record and store’ files securely. However, the reviewer considers that criterion 7.5 is met fully given the Congregations preparedness to meet the requirements if necessary.

Recommendations

Recommendation One

The policy should be approved and signed by the provincial leadership of the Sacred Heart Fathers.

Recommendation Two

The Provincial Leader should ensure the development of policy and procedure relevant to the management of individuals who present a risk to children.

Recommendation Three

The Sacred Heart Fathers should consider developing a whistle blowing policy which should be included in future updates to their policies and procedures.

Recommendation Four

The Provincial of the Sacred Heart Fathers consider providing an easily accessible point of contact between the Congregation and the public. Given the limited geographical locations, and points of public contact the Sacred Heart Fathers have in Ireland, it is envisaged that this would be better served through an easily found online presence.

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 Diocese by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 to 1st June 2010, against Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and who are ministering/or who once ministered under the aegis of the Diocese and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Diocese.

2. If deemed relevant, select a random sample of complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Diocese by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 to 1st June 2010, against Catholic clergy and/or religious now deceased and who ministered under the aegis of the Diocese and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Diocese.

3. To ascertain all of the cases during the relevant period in which the Diocese:
 - 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 Diocese.

4. To consider and report on the following matters:
 - Child safeguarding policies and guidance materials currently in use in the Diocese and an evaluation of their application;
 - Communication by the Diocese with the Civil Authorities;
 - Current risks and their management.

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.

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 1st June 2010 and must be selected randomly in the presence of an independent observer.

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.