



**Review of Safeguarding Practice
in the Institute of
the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (Nicolas Barré)**

undertaken by

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

Date: December 2014

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1. Background

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

The NBSCCCI is aware that some religious congregations have ministries that involve direct contact with children while others do not. In religious congregations that have direct involvement with children, reviews of child safeguarding have been undertaken by measuring their practice compliance against all seven Church standards. Where a religious congregation no longer has, or never had ministry involving children and has not received any allegation of sexual abuse, the NBSCCCI reviews are conducted using a shorter procedure. The size, age and activity profiles of religious congregations can vary significantly and the NBSCCCI accepts that it is rational that the form of review be tailored to the profile of each Church authority, where the ministry with children is limited or non-existent. The procedure for assessment of safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the contents page of this report. The NBSCCCI welcomes that in order to have full openness, transparency and accountability, religious congregations that do not have ministry with children have made requests to have their safeguarding practice examined and commented upon.

The Sisters of the Infant Jesus have currently a very limited role with children; one sister works in pastoral ministry under the auspices of the parish, where the diocesan policy and procedures apply. In addition there have been no recorded allegations of child sexual abuse against any member of this congregation. For these reasons, a limited review is appropriate.

The purpose of this review remains the same and it is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each of these Church authorities is reviewed through an examination of policy and procedures, and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to the religious congregation.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Institute of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Province Leader along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review is not based on a review of case material as during the relevant time period there were no allegations made against members of the congregation that were within the Terms of Reference. There also were no allegations in respect of other forms of abuse within the time period, in respect of deceased and living members of the congregation. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

2. Introduction

The Sisters of the Infant Jesus were founded in Amiens, France in 1662 by Nicolas Barré a member of the Congregation of Friars Minim. The social and religious conditions that prevailed in France at that time meant that many people were living in ignorance and poverty.

The Institute of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus is an international congregation. The central administration office is in England. The Central Leadership Team is comprised of four members, two Irish (one based in Cameroon), one Japanese and one Singaporean. The congregation is registered as a charity in the UK and in Ireland. Communities of Sisters are now in the following countries: France, Spain, Italy, England, Ireland, Czech Republic, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Peru, Bolivia, Nigeria, Cameroon and Myanmar. Each country has its own Leadership Team. In each of the missionary countries the Sisters, together with lay people offer a number of services, mainly through education and with special attention to vulnerable children, and persons with intellectual and physical disabilities.

Recognising that complaints of abuse may arise in relation to any of these services, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus regarded it as necessary that policy and procedures for dealing with such complaints be developed.

Given the international dimension of the Institute, a general policy had been developed. This had been translated into the various languages and each country has been required to appoint a designated person and adapt it to the local situation. The situation in some countries where the Sisters minister is not always conducive to reporting to the statutory authorities and in many cases there is no support structure or services provided by the state. There is an acceptance of physical punishment of children in some countries.

The first Sisters arrived in Ireland from France in 1909. Their aim was to recruit English speaking vocations to develop the schools in Malaysia and Singapore. To this end, in 1911, they opened a boarding school in Millstreet, Co. Cork and a School of Housecraft in 1913. They also gave employment in the farm, knitting and other industries.

The boarding school and the School of Housecraft continued to expand and the schools continued to flourish. Within a few years of the foundation in Drishane, a number of Irish Sisters went to the missions to Malaysia, Singapore and Japan. A few Sisters went to Thailand.

The School of Housecraft closed in 1969. The boarding school closed in 1992.

The community moved from Drishane in 1992, this resulted in the opening of a care home in Cork, and a retirement house in Millstreet, Co. Cork. Smaller community houses were opened in Ballincollig, Co. Cork and Tralee, Co. Kerry.

In 1934 a community house was opened in Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry, to enable the Sisters to learn Irish. The Sisters opened a knitting factory there to give local employment. Today, it remains a retreat/holiday house for the Sisters.

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In 1958 at the request of Archbishop Mc Quaid, the Sisters opened a community house in Malahide, Co. Dublin with a view to starting girls' junior and senior schools there. Eventually, the school became a community school, one of the Sisters remained as principal for five years. The community house was closed in 1985 and the Sisters ceased to have any further involvement in the school. This closure led to the opening of smaller communities in North Circular Road, Portmarnock and Clontarf Road.

After Vatican II many changes came about in the Church and in religious life. Some of the Sisters moved from the larger communities to smaller houses and adapted to a different way of living religious life. Most were involved in parish ministry.

In the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's many new apostolates were established. In some cases they collaborated with other religious congregations. In 1972, the Rosminian Fathers invited some Sisters to work in conjunction with them in caring for adult men with special needs at St. Patrick's, Upton, Co. Cork. They continued that ministry until 2003.

A year later in 1973 a request came from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart priests to join with them in running the retreat house at Myross Wood, Leap, Co. Cork. The Sisters are no longer involved there.

From 1977-2001, a number of smaller communities were opened.

1977 Tonleage Road, Coolock, Dublin 5.

1980 Hartstown, Dublin 15.

1983 Ballymun, Dublin 11.

1994 One sister went to minister in Derry.

1995 Dromcollogher, Co. Limerick, the local community invited some Sisters to come and be a presence among the elderly of the area.

1997 A retirement house was opened in Mallow, Co. Cork to accommodate the Sisters from the community in Weybridge, England.

2001 One sister went to minister in Belfast.

The missionary spirit continues, in recent years Irish Sisters have established ministries in Cameroon, Nigeria and the Czech Republic.

The Sisters of the Infant Jesus do not now provide any direct services for children and/or young people in Ireland. However individual active retired Sisters are involved in pastoral ministries at local and parish levels, working with adults and young people in catechetical programmes.

One Sister is chaplain in a community school. She is governed by and is familiar with child safeguarding policies and procedures of that school

3. Role Profile for Ireland

The congregation does not carry out any direct work with children today, one Sister provides a chaplaincy service, as stated above and any other work carried out in parishes or projects in Ireland involving adults or young people is carried out following the procedures of the organisation/diocese in which they work.

4. Profile of Members

As of December 2014, there are 49 members of the congregation resident in Ireland. The age group for these Sisters is from 60-100. These Sisters are accommodated in various community houses throughout the country.

5. Policy and Procedures

The congregation has developed a safeguarding policy. The reviewer is satisfied that it is adequate in its current form. It gives clear guidance in the management of allegations of abuse. While none have been recorded against the congregation, the leadership is aware that having been involved in the educational field for a prolonged period of time, it is possible that an allegation may be made at any time and are open to this.

The leadership raised the question of safeguarding policy and procedures in their missions abroad. The congregation is involved in several countries, where the approach to child protection varies significantly, both legislatively and procedurally from country to country.

The Leadership indicated a willingness and keenness to develop their overall policies further, using their Irish safeguarding document as a basis, adapting this as appropriate to the other countries where their missions are located. There is a clear commitment on their part to do this. This will involve appointment of dedicated personnel in these countries to implement all safeguarding processes.

6. Management of Allegations

There have not been any allegations received by the Sisters of the Infant Jesus in respect of any of their members.

7. Liaison with Civil Authorities

This congregation has been categorised in Category 2 of the indexing of religious congregations by TUSLA, the Children and Family Agency, that means that there have been “no allegations against members and whose ministry involves children in Ireland”. There are no concerns regarding this congregation from Tusla and An Garda Siochana.

8. Conclusion

The Congregation of The Sisters of the Infant Jesus, has had considerable ministry with children in Ireland and are aware of the possibility of allegations emerging in relation to their ministry. They now have very limited ministry with children and where this happens, it is governed by appropriate safeguarding policy and procedures. Clearly their future lies in missionary work abroad. NBSCCCI support the congregation’s plan to disseminate and augment their child safeguarding policy procedures in all countries where they minister. Advice should be sought from the NBSCCCI to ensure a more comprehensive and updated version of their Irish policy and procedures document acts as a basis for this.

Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

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

Small Religious Congregations

Introduction

In order for the NBSCCCI to be able to state that all Church Authorities on the island of Ireland have been evaluated in respect of their child safeguarding policies and practices, both historical and current, then some form of appropriate assessment has to be conducted of every one of these. It is rational however that the form of assessment is tailored to the profile of each Church Authority, and that needless expenditure of resources and unnecessary interference in the life of religious orders and communities that have no children-specific ministry would be avoided.

This review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small Religious Congregations /Orders, and Missionary Societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the congregations ministry.

It would also scrutinize practice within all known cases to ensure that they have been responded to appropriately.

The review's methodology is an adaptation of the methodology developed for all dioceses and large religious congregations and missionary societies, where the ministry involves regular contact with children.

The proposed review would consider the following:-

- (a) Former role with children
- (b) Allegations of child abuse against members and how these have been responded to
- (c) Existing relationships with statutory authorities such as the HSE, An Garda Síochána in the Republic and the HSCT or PSNI in Northern Ireland.
- (d) Policies in place and being applied for safeguarding children
- (e) Roles and responsibilities and where they exist the operation of Advisory Panels, and Safeguarding Committees

The objective of the review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice matches up to the standards set down in the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church

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in Ireland launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the review. In cases where the alleged or known offender is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

Guidance Documents

The review will be guided by the following:-

- (a) *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.*
- (b) Children First Guidance in ROI; and Regional Child Protection Guidelines in Northern Ireland;
- (c) Legislation that exists in each jurisdiction which contributes to safeguarding children and young people.

The review will be undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

The review process will be overseen by a **Reference Group** to whom the CEO will report on a regular basis. The membership of this **Reference Group** has been drawn from each of the statutory child protection agencies in both jurisdictions, along with eminent individuals in the field from academia. The current Reference Group consists of: Dr Helen Buckley (TCD); Mr Paul Harrison (Tusla), and John Toner (SBNI).

It is important to confirm that the value of the review is dependent upon full and complete access to all relevant documentation and information relating to the abuse of children known to the individual Church authorities. The review will proceed on the basis that willingness exists on the part of each of the subjects of the Review to provide full access to the fieldwork team, subject, where relevant, to the terms of the Data Processing Deed agreed between the Sponsoring Bodies and entered into between the parties hereto.

Step Guide to the Review Process

Step 1.

A letter of invitation to review is sent by the Provincial/Regional Superior or other person responsible for the Congregation/ Order or Missionary Society (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Ordinary’).

Step 2.

The CEO will forward a survey to the provincial which will identify:

- Current number of members
- Past role with children
- Current role with children
- Total number of allegations received up to 2014
- Number of living members against whom there are allegations

Step 3.

For any Order where there have been allegations a full review will proceed, as per step **4 - 23**. For those Orders where there have been no known allegations a desk top examination of policies and procedures will take place followed by a site visit to interview all relevant personnel within the safeguarding structure. For these orders **step 5 and 13-23** will apply.

Step 4.

The CEO and Ordinary will confirm the dates for the fieldwork for the Review, and names of the fieldwork team.

Step 5.

The Church Authority will be asked to make available all of the case files and related documentation in respect of any safeguarding concerns that have been identified within the diocese. The Church Authority will make available a room with wireless internet access for the reviewers to conduct their review of files, so that any records made by the reviewers can be directly typed and stored onto a secure server which is only accessed by the reviewers. In the absence of internet access the reviewers will type their notes onto a secure encrypted usb stick for later uploading onto the secure server.

Step 6.

The Church Authority will be requested to sign the revised Data Processing Deed prior to the arrival of the team.

Step 7.

The Church Authority will arrange a schedule of interviews with all who hold safeguarding roles within its functional area. The designated person and the Church Authority will be available to the reviewers throughout the period of fieldwork.

Step 8.

The fieldwork team when they arrive on site will firstly confirm that they have a suitable place to work in and that all the required documentation has been provided to them for their review. In the event that the fieldwork team forms the opinion that the Church Authority has not provided access to all such documents, the Board shall give notice in writing to the Church Authority of the opinion of the fieldwork team and such notice shall specify the reasons for same. Thereupon, the Church Authority shall respond in detail to the Notice. Each party shall use its best endeavours to resolve any differences of opinion which shall arise and, in the event that resolution is not arrived at, the parties will attempt to resolve the dispute by recourse to the services of a mediator agreed between them or nominated for the purpose at the request of any of them without prejudice to the Board's entitlement to terminate the review. In the event that resolution has not been arrived at following mediation, either party shall be at liberty to terminate forthwith the Review.

Step 9.

On arrival, the fieldwork team should be supplied with a single case file index that lists all the cases that have been created within the diocese. These may be divided into two groups. The first group will contain all allegations that relate to living alleged or known perpetrators. The second will contain any that are deceased.

Step 10.

Depending on the volume involved a decision should be made as to whether all or a random sample of the "deceased group" should be reviewed. Care should be taken to include all prominent cases in the sample.

Step 11.

Each case file will be reviewed by each fieldworker independently in the first instance. They will create a written summary with chronological information of the case. In certain cases a second reader may be required, this will be discussed and agreed between the fieldworkers.

Step 12.

Following the reading of the case and the creation of a summary, the fieldworkers will analyse and assess the actions taken in the case. They will assess compliance with agreed Church policy that was extant at that time. They will also indicate whether any current risk

exists in respect of the information contained within the file and advise the church Authority of necessary safeguarding action to reduce the risk.

Step 13.

When all the case files have been read, the fieldwork team will then examine and review any procedures or protocols that exist within the diocese to confirm that they are in compliance with the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document issued by the NBSCCCI in February of 2009.

Step 14.

To complete the review, the fieldwork team will then seek to speak to those directly involved in the safeguarding structure in the diocese. This should include the Advisory Panel, a sample of parish safeguarding representatives, the designated person, the safeguarding committee, victim support and advisors and the Bishop/Provincial. The purpose of these interviews is to form a view of the competence and effectiveness of the safeguarding structure that exists within the Church Authority.

Step 15.

The fieldwork team will also seek to speak to representatives of the key statutory agencies to provide them with an opportunity to express their views on the quality of the working relationships that exist between them and the Church Authority.

Step 16.

A verbal feedback session on initial key findings will be given to the Church Authority.

Step 17.

Upon completion of the field work, the team may request to take materials – other than casework records to review off-site; this alongside all materials gathered by the reviewers, including written notes on cases and meetings, will be analysed and will form the basis of the draft assessment review report.

Step 18.

The draft will be forwarded to the Church Authority for factual accuracy checking.

Step 19.

Alongside all other reports under review, the report will be presented in draft to the Reference Group for their critique and comment. If further work is required at the direction of the Reference group the CEO will ensure this work is completed and advise the Church Authority accordingly.

Step 20.

The report will be legally proofed by NBSCCCI lawyer.

Step 21.

The report will be forwarded to the NBSCCCI for approval.

Step 22

A final draft report will then be submitted to the Church Authority. The expectation would be that the report will be published by the Church Authority at an agreed time in the future.

Step 23.

All case material written, including summaries, as part of the review, which are for the reviewers use only, will be stored on a secure server.

Guide for Reviewers

In terms of small (female religious orders) reference should be made to the following:

1. Has the Order provided alternative care to children in an orphanage, industrial school or children's residential home, but no longer is engaged in running such services;
2. Has the order provided education to children, in both or either boarding schools and day schools, but no longer does so ;
3. Has the order provided medical and/or nursing services to children, but no longer does so;
4. Has the order provided any other services to children, in community services centres, youth clubs etc., and no longer does so;
5. Does the order currently provide any sort of service to children and families that brings them into regular contact with children;
6. Has the order never provided any service to children (e.g. contemplative orders).

In relation to category 1 above;

1. The reviewers will establish whether any service they provided is included in the list of children's residential services produced by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB);
2. If this is the case, reference should be made to this.
3. If complaints have been referred to the Redress Board or Ryan Commission, this review cannot access these records and that will be stated in the report.
4. If the order has received complaints which have not been processed through Redress or Ryan these cases will be thoroughly examined as detailed above.

Review of Policy and Procedures

1. It is recognised that not all Orders will have any ministry with children and therefore their policies and procedures should reflect the work that they do with children.
2. If the Order only works through other organisations, for example in Diocesan work or in schools, they are required to follow the policies of those organisations.
3. If there are gaps in the policy document an assessment should be made as to whether the ministry engaged in requires full compliance with all criteria attached to the seven standards
4. Where it is clear that the criteria do not apply a reference should be made at the beginning of the review report that the Order's ministry is not directly with children and therefore adherence to particular criteria do not apply.
5. If the Order is a contemplative Order, there is no expectation that they will have detailed policies and procedures, but reference should be made to their ministry and that they have no contact with children.
6. In all cases, contact will be made with the civil authorities to identify if they have any child safeguarding concerns in relation to the order.