

Overview of the Safeguarding Practice from 5th Tranche of Reviews conducted in the Arch Diocese of Dublin; the Dioceses of Meath; Cloyne and Killaloe. The Religious Congregations of the Presentation Brothers; The Patrician Brothers and the Benedictines, Glenstal. The Missionary Society of The Columban Fathers and the Congregation of the Society of Divine Word.

May 12<sup>th</sup> 2014

In November 2013, the fieldwork into the 5th tranche of safeguarding reviews began. This overview report provides a short commentary on the findings. Included in this tranche were 4 Dioceses, 3 Religious Congregations, and 1 Missionary Society; in addition, included in this overview report are the findings of the review relating to the Divine Word Missionaries which was reviewed earlier in 2013 as part of the 4th tranche.

Of the 4 Dioceses 2 have been the subject of National Inquiries – Dublin and Cloyne. The reviews by NBSCCCI do not seek to reiterate the findings of the National Commissions, but to review practice since those reports and offer comment where applicable on cases not reviewed by the Commission, where they fall within the NBSCCCI's terms of Reference.

The review process involves fieldwork conducted by reviewers employed by NBSCCCI and this fieldwork took place over a 2/3/4/5 day period between November 2013 and February 2014 (with the Divine Word fieldwork preceding these dates). Also included are reviews of the policy and procedures documents and other supporting written evidence and a critique of the relationship between the Diocese/Congregation/Society as obtained through discussions with the civil authorities. The reports are factually checked, reviewed by an independent Reference Group and NBSCCCI lawyers before being submitted as a final report to the Church leader.

The purpose of the reviews is set out in the Terms of Reference which was agreed by the Bishops Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union in June 2010.

As with all other reviews, the process was initiated through the signing of a data processing deed which allowed the exchange of information with the NBSCCCI and as detailed above was overseen by a Reference group made up of Dr Helen Buckley, TCD; Paul Harrison, HSE and John Toner, independent consultant and chair of safeguarding trust boards in Northern Ireland. This process ensures that all comments contained in the report are based on evidence and represents a fair assessment of the fieldwork findings. In other words it is in place to ensure the NBSCCCI conducts the reviews properly.

Each Review report is an assessment of local policy and practice against the Church's seven standards, followed by recommendations for improvements to practice as appropriate. The terms of reference are clear in stating that in terms of allegations that the concentration is on current risk, in other words the reviewers read files relating to living priests/brothers. Where the reviewers referenced deceased priests, or brothers it is because the review of those cases merited comment in terms of future safeguarding practice.

The Reviews involved a time period from 1st January 1975 to the period of the Review.

### **Key Findings of the Reviews**

- All Dioceses are making very good progress in adhering to the Board's Standards.
- For the Religious Congregations and Missionary Societies, progress appears slower. There has been a sea change in that all are now conscious of their obligations around reporting, unfortunately in 2 cases (1 Congregation) we saw that priests continued in ministry even though admissions were made and in another Order cases against deceased brothers, former brothers and lay teachers were not always notified to the Gardai.
- Reporting to the civil authorities in relation to allegations against living priests/brothers is now very prompt but the delays in the past are acknowledged.
- Removal from ministry is now always considered and judgments are made on basis of an examination of the information available. Advice is consistently sought from Advisory panels, NCMRG, and civil authorities
- Management plans relating to accused Priests and Brothers are variable and monitoring needs to be improved, in terms of clarity of roles, review of restrictions, and sharing of information
- Support for complainants in some Dioceses and Orders is excellent, in others further improvements are required to ensure a systematic compassionate response.
- For some Religious Congregations and Missionary Societies, they have invested their energies in managing and monitoring risk presented by prolific offenders and have neglected the current safeguarding aspects
- In other religious Congregations and Missionary Societies, the reviewers saw excellent prevention and management of allegations
- In comparison to the numbers of allegations, very few result in criminal investigation and fewer still result in criminal convictions
- Patterns emerging:
  - Offences largely took place between 1940 -2000, with a decline in notified offending behaviour after 2000; however there is still a need for vigilance and constant oversight and prompt action as noted in the conviction of a priest who abused children up until 2011.
  - Some priests in particular abused very quickly after ordination, which leads to questions about formation.
  - A number of the abusers were charismatic priests, who were popular among people.
  - Some abusers had other addictive problems such as alcohol addiction.

Diocese/Order/Congregation	Numbers of Priests/Brothers	Numbers of allegations	Numbers convicted
Cloyne	30	46	1
Dublin	101	432	9
Meath	11	23	1
Killaloe	19	65	1
Presentations	28	54	0
Patricians	15	22	0
Glenstal	6	10	0
Columbans	12	41	1
Divine Word Missionaries	6	8	1

A series of recommendations have been made within each report and there is an expectation that these will be developed into plans of action. NBSCCCI will request an update on progress of implementation of recommendations in 9 months.

Finally it is important that complainants come forward if there are still unreported allegations of abuse; NBSCCCI encourages reporting to the Diocese/Religious Order and to the civil authorities.

NBSCCCI also would encourage anyone who has suffered abuse to contact Towards Healing, Counselling and Support Service for survivors of Clerical and Religious Congregations abuse, which is totally independent although funded by the Catholic Church.

Contact details are:

Towards Healing - Click to visit the website : [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

Free phone 1800303416 (Republic of Ireland) Free phone 0800 0963315 (Northern Ireland)



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**  
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