



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Private and Confidential

Review of Safeguarding Practice

in the

Diocese of Dromore

undertaken by

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic

Church (NBSCCC)

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Background

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

This report contains the findings of the review of safeguarding practice within the Diocese of Dromore undertaken by the NBSCCC 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 diocese along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the diocese. The NBSCCC believes that all relevant documentation for these cases available in the diocese was passed to the reviewers and the diocese has confirmed this. Until recently, the diocesan solicitor would have been used extensively when responding to allegations that emerged. This led to written material for the cases being held within the offices of the legal advisor. The diocese has sought to ensure that all the relevant case material is now held in the diocesan offices.

In preparation for the review the designated person made a great effort to assemble the files into the current NBSCCC case file format. We appreciate the effort made to make the records easier to read.

For Clarification –

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, NBSCCC, National Board, National Office - all these terms are synonymous with each other and refer to the same entity.

Also the term Designated Person is interchangeable with that of Designated Officer or Delegate. A precise definition of the content of the role may be found on Page 55 of Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance document.

Introduction

At the request of Bishop McAreavey, staff from the NBSCCC engaged in a process of reviewing safeguarding children policy and practice on June 20th 2011. The fieldwork took place over a two-day period when case files were scrutinised and interviews with key personnel in the diocesan safeguarding structure and external statutory agencies took place. The fieldwork team would wish to acknowledge the positive reception and approach of Bishop McAreavey, his designated person, his administrative support officer, and all other team members, both clerical and lay, involved in the safeguarding of children in the Diocese of Dromore, and for their expressed desire to learn from the review process and develop better practice in relation to safeguarding children in the Church.

The review team recognise the considerable personal pressure currently on Bishop McAreavey, following the murder of a family member and the consequent significant national and international media attention and note that, in spite of that pressure, he was still willing to engage in a review of safeguarding practice in the diocese.

Dromore Diocese is a relatively small diocese with a total of twenty three parishes. It is entirely within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland and therefore conforms to Northern Ireland legislation in all its safeguarding work. There are significant challenges in responding to allegations of abuse in smaller dioceses, which are not evident in larger dioceses; for example, the familiarity between the priests and bishops and the consequent personal stress which follows when a bishop has to take action to restrict a priest's ministry and the lack of resources to employ independent safeguarding personnel.

Bishop McAreavey has been in post since 1999 and most of the cases examined were managed under his leadership. We did examine a couple of cases which were initiated by the former bishop of the diocese. We do not intend to dwell on the management practices of the former bishop but it should be noted that, from our review of the case records from that time, we believe that in some instances the practice followed placed too much emphasis on maintaining the good name of the accused priest rather than ensuring the safety of children.

The purpose of the review is set out within the Terms of Reference that are appended to this report. It seeks to examine how practice complies with expected standards in the Church, both at the time an allegation was received and currently. It is an expectation of the National Board that key findings from the review will be shared widely so that public awareness of what is in place and what is planned may be increased, as well as confidence that the Church is taking appropriate steps to safeguard children. However it remains a matter for the bishop to decide with whom and what is shared from the review.

The review was initiated through the signing of a data protection deed, allowing full access by staff from NBSCCC to all case management and diocesan records. As a consequence of the deed, this access does not constitute disclosure as the reviewers were deemed to be nominated data processors for the records held by the bishop.

The process involved the fieldwork team reading all case management records of living priests incardinated into the diocese against whom a child safeguarding allegation had been made or a concern raised. In addition, interviews were held with Bishop McAreavey, the current Designated Person (who also has the role of Safeguarding Co-Coordinator), the Training Manager, four Deanery Safeguarding Representatives, the Safeguarding Committee and the Advisory Panel. In addition, we had the opportunity to meet two senior staff from the Southern Health and Social Services Trust, who have responsibility for the management of all aspects of statutory child protection and also with an Inspector from PSNI with responsibility for the management and investigation of allegations of abuse as well as the management of sex offenders in the community.

The final part of the review was an assessment of *The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures* against the standards set down in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance*.

The focus of reviews into safeguarding have concentrated on the management of allegations. NBSCCC accepts that the huge emphasis placed on this aspect of safeguarding is critical. In addition, NBSCCC recognises that in order to prevent abuse happening in future the investment in creating safe environments for children must be great and open to scrutiny. It is for this reason that the review process uses the seven standards outlined within *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document as an assessment framework. The report below therefore highlights the findings by the fieldworkers under each standard and draws conclusions regarding the effectiveness of policies and practices in the diocese to prevent abuse, as well as the ability of the relevant personnel in the diocese to assess and manage risk to children. Where appropriate, recommendations for improvements are made.

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*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities who minister on the island of Ireland, including the Diocese of Dromore.

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.

Policy & Procedures

The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are currently being redrafted to ensure that they are in line with National Standards within the Church and in line with relevant legislation in Northern Ireland and in keeping with Church norms.

A review of an early draft indicates a very extensive document, which sets out clearly and concisely the full range of procedures required to safeguard children. Of particular interest are details of the diocesan structure with roles of advisory and safeguarding groups and personnel identified. This is to be commended in terms of making the structure and personnel transparent and accountable to the lay faithful of the diocese. In addition to the current requirements under *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance*, procedures have been developed which demonstrate a forward thinking approach. For example, there is guidance on photographing children and young people which has special reference to *Children Looked After*. There is also helpful advice on the protection of disabled and vulnerable children. There is an anti-bullying policy and guidance for hospital chaplains. All these demonstrate that a scoping exercise has taken place within the diocese to ensure that all areas of work relevant to children are covered by the guidance. When completed it is clear even from this early draft, that the new policy and procedures will meet the standards set down in *Safeguarding Children: Standard and Guidance*.

Recommendation 1

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Committee are to be commended for the very comprehensive preparatory work in policy development and should seek to bring it to conclusion as soon as possible so that it can be implemented in the Diocese.

Standard 2

**Table of the incidence of Safeguarding allegations received
within
The Diocese of Dromore
from 1st January 1975 up to June 2011**

1. Number of priests incardinated in the Diocese of Dromore against whom an allegation or allegations have been made since 1st January 1975 and up to the date of the Review.	10
2. Number of allegations reported to RUC/PSNI involving priests of the diocese since 1st January 1975 and up to the date of the Review.	35
3. Number of allegations reported to Social Services involving priests of the diocese since 1st January 1975 and up to the date of the Review.	35
4. Number of priests of the diocese against whom an allegation has been made and who were living at the date of the Review.	7
5. Number of priests against whom an allegation has been made and who are deceased.	3
6. Number of priests against whom an allegation has been made and who are “Out of Ministry” or who have left the priesthood.	7*
7. Number of priests of the diocese who have been convicted of having committed an offence against a child or young person since the 1st January 1975 up to the date of the Review.	0
8. Number of priests against whom an allegation was made and who are in ministry or retired.	0
9. Number of priests who are not of the diocese but who reside within it, and who are known to be the subject of an allegation arising from their past ministry.	0

**3 of these exercise limited ministry under tightly controlled and restricted conditions and never to children or young people.*

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.

The fieldwork team examined all cases of allegations against priests of the diocese who are alive. This amounted to seven cases. In addition, there are three cases involving deceased priests. While the cases of deceased priests do not come within the Terms of Reference of the review, Bishop McAreavey discussed them with the reviewers and in particular one case of a deceased priest against whom there were several allegations. From the records it appears that these allegations were initially brought to the attention of the former bishop. The reviewers note the seriousness of the allegations and are satisfied that all have been referred to the statutory authorities.

Bishop McAreavey has dealt personally with many of the victims in this case. The reviewers were impressed by the personal interest Bishop McAreavey has taken in supporting these victims and their families, some of whom he remains in contact with.

The rationale for examining live cases was to assess current risk. It was also thought that, in predominantly examining current cases, a judgement could be made as to how the diocese responds today to victims of abuse.

In examining the case records a number of common themes emerged.

a) It is evident from reading all case management records that in the past there has been a strong reliance on legal advice. There is a place for legal advice but care must be taken to also ensure that other sources of guidance are appropriately drawn upon as well. There should be a comprehensive assessment of risk and an emphasis on the welfare of the victims or on supporting any vulnerable person who may be at risk.

Bishop McAreavey stated that he was very reliant on his Advisory Panel. He stated that from 2001 a balance was introduced to the legal advice through the experience and contribution of a statutory social worker who sat on that panel.

The diocesan priest delegate (now called Designated Person) stood down from his role in 2002 when he retired. Bishop McAreavey informed the reviewers that he then sought the support of the delegate from Down and Connor Diocese to act in that capacity in Dromore. The bishop's rationale centred on the smallness of the diocese and the familiarity of the priests with each other, making it invidious for one of the priests of the diocese to take on this role. The priest delegate was replaced by a lay delegate from the Diocese of Down and Connor up to 2008 and until the current post holder took up position in 2009.

The legal advisor, as stated, was also involved at that time with the Advisory Panel which raised concern for the reviewers around a potential conflict of interest. In discussions with the Advisory Panel, they reported that until the current designated person took over management of allegations, the diocesan legal advisor together with the bishop prepared documentation on allegations for panel members. NBSCCC commends the change in current practice whereby the designated person prepares and presents all information for the Advisory Panel.

In reviewing minutes of Advisory Panel meetings, it is refreshing to see that full information was and continues to be shared with panel members. Such an approach allows for an open assessment of risk and a reflection of the pastoral and support needs of survivors. There is evidence of the complainants' views and needs being represented, a move away from a narrow legal focus on managing allegations of abuse and a move towards a greater pastoral response and on the assessment and management of risk.

Recommendation 2.

NBSCCC recommends that the pastoral open approach demonstrated by the current designated person continues and that this good practice is built upon.

b) It is also clear from the case management records that in the past not all allegations were promptly referred to the statutory investigating agencies. NBSCCC would strongly urge the diocese to ensure that all allegations are referred to the statutory authorities in a timely way in line with current Church guidance. There was one example where it appeared that the bishop wanted to notify the police but was advised that this was not required. Through time, the view of the Bishop was acted on and a referral was made. The reviewers acknowledge that a short time after receiving a complaint this priest was removed from ministry. This action, along with additional safeguarding measures concerning this man, ensured that at all times risk to young people was minimised.

c) Discussions took place with both the PSNI and HSC as part of the review of the diocese. Personnel from both agencies commended the diocese and in particular the current designated person for her openness and professionalism in dealing with allegations of abuse. In fact Social Services advised that she was the first person outside Social Services to request a “3.96”¹ in the Southern Trust area. Social Services reported that communication with the diocese is good. They appreciate having an identified person to communicate with in the guise of a designated person and they expressed confidence in her practice.

Recommendation 3.

We would recommend that Bishop McAreavey and his Designated Person convene a meeting annually with Social Services and the Police, to ensure the continued development of positive working relationships in the interests of safeguarding children.

d) As stated above, cases in the past appeared to be managed by the bishop in discussion with the diocesan solicitor and with advice from the Advisory Panel. More recently the Safeguarding Co-Coordinator has been appointed to the role of Designated Person. The records in recent cases demonstrate a significantly different approach, with a clearer emphasis on the welfare of the complainants. In addition, the designated person appropriately consults with the NBSCCC, statutory social workers, PSNI and the Advisory Panel. The consequences are that a very pastoral response has been made to complainants and appropriate action was taken.

e) The recording of case management files is detailed and presents the reader with a comprehensive view of action taken by the diocese. All old files have now been restructured using the NBSCCC case file formatting. Some memos and other documents in the older files are not signed and dated and identifying the author can at times be difficult. Each file contains a narrative prepared by Bishop McAreavey. Narratives are an essential part of case management records and give a good insight

¹ Interagency meeting on assessment and management of risk

into the management of the cases. It is important to ensure that narratives should be factually based and where an opinion is given this should be referenced as such.

It is evident from the case management records that Bishop McAreavey was distressed by the allegations of abuse which were made in the Diocese of Dromore. He reviewed previous cases referred to the former bishop and in some instances renewed contact with complainants whose cases may not have been appropriately managed.

It is not uncommon from those against whom allegations have been made to try and resist the necessary safeguarding actions. To his credit where these attempts were made Bishop McAreavey consulted appropriately to ensure that the safety of children remained his priority.

A number of challenges for Bishop McAreavey working so personally with case management issues have now been rectified with the introduction of an independent lay designated person. Firstly, given the closeness of Bishop McAreavey to cases when they arose, his independence could have been compromised. It is to his credit, in our opinion, that this did not occur. He effectively used his Advisory Panel and more recently NBSCCC to ensure that he remained objective. NBSCCC acknowledges the stress and emotional impact on the bishop in dealing with complainants and their families, accused priests and their family members and parish communities while trying to make independent decisions about risk.

The smallness of the diocese and the ensuing close personal relationships created significant challenges for those working in the safeguarding structure, including the bishop, when dealing with allegations. We believe that Bishop McAreavey delegates appropriately the management of the allegations and asks that a report be made to him on developments when they take place, in line with the current Church guidance.

f) There was very limited evidence in the written record of a support person being offered to complainants. In discussion with the bishop, designated person, and the Advisory Panel, and also from reading the Advisory Panel minutes, it is clear that counselling has been offered to survivors of abuse. Bishop McAreavey himself engaged personally with many survivors and their families on an ongoing basis. In addition, some complainants chose the support of their own parish priests. We accept fully that this is the case but would urge that case records should reflect this fact in the future.

As stated above, the approach taken in recent times does show support for the complainant by way of pastoral outreach by the designated person and through a referral to *Towards Healing*². However the diocese does not have an identified support person. In the past a competent and experienced religious sister was engaged to offer support. We would recommend that consideration should now be given to identifying, training, and supporting skilled people who could offer support to complainants.

² Towards Healing is the Catholic Church's Support and Counselling Agency

Recommendation 4.

The diocese should appoint a Support Person and to consider introducing an arrangement whereby that person would attend all initial interviews with the Designated Person. This approach would allow the complainant to meet the Support Person and enable future contact.

Recommendation 5.

In addition the bishop should consider writing to all complainants upon receipt of an allegation offering them support and counselling, inviting them to meet with the designated person to share their complaint and enable a referral to the statutory authorities.

g) An important step to safeguarding children following receipt of an allegation is to put in place supervision and risk monitoring plan. In Dromore one priest is offered to act as adviser to all men out of ministry. It is unclear however from the records if a written plan is put in place by the diocese and if there is a requirement for the adviser to report back to Bishop McAreavey or the designated person on a regular basis about the management of risk.

Recommendation 6.

We recommend that in the event of a priest being removed from public ministry the bishop set down in writing the restrictions on him, as well as the relevant supervision, management and reporting arrangements.

h) The Advisory Panel has recently been reconstituted with new members. There are currently four members, including a statutory social worker in the role of Chair, a canon lawyer, a medical doctor and a children's rights worker. Legal advice is available through the diocesan solicitor, who is not a member of the panel. The panel is serviced by the designated person who prepares the papers.

There is good evidence on case files of the Advisory Panel having offered advice to Bishop McAreavey. The Advisory Panel stated that they believe that they have access to full information, including any assessment reports. They see their role as case management and are confident in offering advice. They have also conducted quarterly reviews of all cases and are in the process of establishing risk management plans / covenants of care for those men out of ministry.

However we believe that the Advisory Panel should be strengthened in numbers and skill sets. Consideration was given to recruiting an expert in Public Protection arrangements and an approach was made, but the potential new member rejected the invitation to join. NBSCCC welcomes the diocesan plans to recruit new personnel to the panel and encourages them to continue in their search.

Recommendation 7.

Consideration should be given to recruiting personnel to the Advisory Panel who can advise on victim impact and on risk management.

As stated in (g) above, the arrangements post removal from ministry are not sufficiently regulated to ensure that risk to children is minimised. The panel did undertake a review of all cases in recent months; and agreed that risk management plans/covenants of care should be put in place.

i) NBSCCC believes that in the past Bishop McAreavey did report all allegations to the statutory authorities. In some instances this should have been done more promptly. It is also important that precepts are put in place following the removal of men from ministry. That said, we do not believe that there are currently any priests inappropriately in ministry and against whom a credible allegation has been made. Bishop McAreavey paid tribute to the contribution of his Advisory Panel in assisting him to make judgements about risk to children and taking action as necessary. Emphasis must be placed on detailing in writing all restrictions placed on those out of ministry.

Recent practice has demonstrated a significant shift both in terms of attitude and practice and we commend the strong support of the current designated person, which appears to empower Bishop McAreavey in making this change. It is critical that Bishop McAreavey continue to show strong leadership in dealing with allegations of abuse. We believe that, with good support from his designated person and Advisory Panel, there will be greater emphasis in the future on responding to and supporting survivors of abuse; we believe that anyone who is thought to have harmed a child or young person will be in no doubt as to the process Bishop McAreavey will follow to ensure prompt referrals to PSNI and Social Services and, where necessary, the removal of the priest from ministry.

In recognising the significant emotional impact of responding to allegations of abuse within the Church for all concerned, the priority must be to offer support to the complainant and their families. Secondly, attention must be given to managing any potential risk in order to prevent further abuse. In carrying out these tasks those involved require support, including the bishop and all other members of his safeguarding team. These role holders can find themselves experiencing high levels of stress and in a lonely place. The NBSCCC recommends that role holders should seek support through peer relationships or through the National Office.

Recommendation 8.

To support him further in his work we recommend that Bishop McAreavey engage with another bishop in whom he has confidence in an ongoing dialogue on safeguarding issues that would enable him to get personal support and share his own knowledge and experience. Such a dialogue, involving their Designated Persons, would be a useful help for all concerned.

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.

People and Structures

(i) Safeguarding Representatives and Parish Advisory Groups:

Dromore Diocese is split into three deaneries with 7 to 8 parishes in each deanery; each deanery has a safeguarding representative who supports parish Safeguarding Advisory Groups to ensure that safe environments are created for children. This approach means that the responsibility is shared between the parish priest and several people at parish level and that no one individual is working in isolation. The role of the Parish Safeguarding Advisory Panel is set out in the new developing diocesan policy and procedures document.

As part of the review we met four safeguarding representatives to hear first hand of their experiences, successes and challenges. The most significant finding by the fieldwork team was the infectious enthusiasm of the safeguarding representatives. Their positive hard working approach is a credit to the diocese. They recognise the importance of their work and do not under-estimate the continued challenges in working to ensure commitment from both priests and the laity in safeguarding activities. The deanery representatives meet every two months.

As part of their work the representatives have developed a safeguarding booklet. This booklet is given to volunteers upon completion of their awareness training.

In addition, there is a plan to build upon the good example of one representative who has spoken at Mass, whereby an annual report is given to inform the lay faithful about the procedures in place to safeguard children.

The representatives have also developed a parish audit template and have identified all child related activities and service providers and have conducted audits of their practice, including St Vincent de Paul Society etc.

The representatives have established a sub-committee who are currently in the process of reviewing the diocesan policies and procedures and will collate the parish audit and report this to the NBSCCC.

The representatives have a very good understanding of their role and how they relate to the Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Committee. They reflected great support for their work from Bishop McAreavey. For his part, Bishop McAreavey on parish visits checks that safeguarding procedures are in place and that relevant notices

are visible. The representatives stated that safeguarding is a live issue in every parish in Dromore, in the main due to the efforts of the safeguarding and advisory groups.

Bishop McAreavey informed the reviewers that in guidance due to be published on the operation of parish pastoral councils, there is a requirement that a member of the Parish Safeguarding Advisory Group sit on the parish pastoral council as of right. This is to ensure that safeguarding is kept in mind in every aspect of parish life.

(ii) Safeguarding Committee

All safeguarding committee members attended for the meeting with NBSCCC. They take their responsibilities very seriously and indicated that they had great support for their work from the bishop, who is always in attendance at their meetings. They stated that they are not afraid to challenge the bishop and that he accepts their advice. The committee recognise the challenges of continuing to have the commitment and motivation of volunteers in today's Church.

Practices

(i) Recruitment

Recruitment is managed centrally through an administrator and safeguarding co-coordinator. Vetting is also centralised through the northern dioceses Vetting Officer. To support the management and tracking of recruitment, the administrator holds a central database and ensures that those who work with children (and vulnerable adults) have application forms, references and self declaration forms and are vetted.

(ii) Codes of Behaviour

A Code of Behaviour for adults and children is set out in the revision of the diocesan policy and procedures document. The code for children should be seen as guidance only, as it is always recommended that children assist in writing their own code of behaviour for the activity they are engaged in, this allows for greater understanding and ownership by the children of the rules.

(iii) Operating Safe Activities

As above, the draft revised diocesan policy and procedure document has details around supervision ratios, recruitment, managing pilgrimages, amongst a range of activities. The guidance all appears appropriate.

Standard 4

Training and Education

All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.

The training manager who is also a safeguarding representative takes a key role in disseminating and ensuring adherence to the policy and procedures through training and information sessions. Dromore Diocese was previously part of the *Keeping Safe* initiative; however through the training manager and safeguarding co-ordinator they have positively engaged with NBSCCC piloting the new training materials and offering helpful feedback on these. The training manager is very positive about her work and the importance of training in equipping those who have safeguarding responsibilities.

A large number of volunteers and priests have been trained by the trainers and safeguarding representatives. Across the diocese approximately 2500 parish volunteers have received awareness training. Training has also been provided to parish priests and curates.

In discussion with the designated person there was a concern expressed about the level of awareness of the impact of abuse on children, young people and their families by some priests in the diocese.

Recommendation 9.

Bishop McAreavey in consultation with his Safeguarding Committee should source appropriate training for priests and safeguarding personnel on the impact of abuse on children.

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.

We have already noted that the deanery representatives have set up a sub-committee to review the diocesan policy and procedures to ensure that they are in line with *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance*. In the course of this work the representatives, in consultation with the Safeguarding Committee, should ensure the production of leaflets and a poster for display in Churches.

The safeguarding representatives have taken a lead in producing information for volunteers. The booklet produced by one of the representatives is a good example of communication in the diocese. This booklet has the aim of supporting volunteers following training so that they are aware of their responsibilities, the different forms of abuse and diocesan reporting procedures. This initiative by the representative is to be commended. In addition, the plan for representatives to speak at Sunday Masses on the issue of safeguarding is a positive way of the diocese being open about the importance of safeguarding.

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.

On the whole the reviewers found that there was a lack of written evidence to indicate that survivors of abuse are being adequately supported. From discussions with the bishop, the designated person and the Advisory Panel, we know that in reality considerable support was given to some victims. In all cases it is important to make a written record of the fact that advice and support has been offered to survivors to confirm that practice complies with this Standard.

Recommendation 10.

Bishop McAreavey in consultation with his designated person should identify support people, ensure they are offered training and supported so that they in turn can offer the necessary guidance to victims of abuse.

In terms of offering support to respondents, a priest adviser is offered.

Recommendation 11.

The diocese may wish to consider having a number of priest advisers and ensuring that they are trained and supported in their role.

In discussion with the key role holders they were asked what emotional support was provided to them in managing challenging situations. It is clear that there is no structured form of support for either Bishop McAreavey or the designated person. In light of this and the demanding roles they have, it may be appropriate for an arrangement of pairing with another diocese to be considered so that, on a confidential basis, both the bishop and designated person have someone to turn to for advice and support. We would also encourage a continued dialogue with NBSCC staff on all safeguarding and case management matters.

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.

(i) Monitoring Compliance

In order to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards on self-auditing, as set down in Section 3 of the *Safeguarding Children: Standard and Guidance*, an annual review of cases is required. The Safeguarding Committee, as part of its revision of policy and procedures, will conduct an audit of safeguarding practice in each parish.

Recommendation 12.

The Safeguarding Committee should ensure annual audits are completed and forwarded to NBSCCC.

(ii) Parishioner Feedback on Policies

Parishioners have access to relevant Church personnel and appropriate information, including the diocesan website. It is suggested that these are further promoted and that feedback be encouraged from parishioners.

(iii) Recording / Storage of Allegations

All case files are managed by the diocesan secretary and kept in folders which are held in a secure room in the diocesan centre. The case files were in good order but could be further enhanced by ensuring that all relevant information for each case is kept in one file. The reviewers noted that separate legal files have been held by the diocese. We would recommend that all relevant documentation is compiled into one file for each case.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:-

- 1. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Committee are to be commended for the very comprehensive preparatory work in policy development and should seek to bring it to conclusion as soon as possible so that it can be implemented in the diocese.**
- 2. NBSCCC recommends that the pastoral open approach demonstrated by the current designated person continues and that this good practice is built upon.**
- 3. We would recommend that Bishop McAreavey and his Designated Person convene a meeting annually with Social Services and the Police, to ensure the continued development of positive working relationships in the interests of safeguarding children.**
- 4. The diocese should appoint a Support Person and introduce an arrangement whereby that person would attend all initial interviews with the Designated Person. This approach would allow the complainant to meet the Support Person and enable future contact.**
- 5. Bishop Mc Areavey should consider writing to all complainants upon receipt of an allegation offering them support and counselling, inviting them to meet with the designated person to share their complaint and enable a referral to the statutory authorities.**
- 6. We recommend that following the removal from public ministry of a priest, the bishop sets down in writing the restrictions imposed on the respondent and the supervision, management and reporting arrangements relating to him.**
- 7. Consideration should be given to recruiting personnel to the Advisory Panel who can advise on victim impact and on risk management.**

- 8. To support him further in his work we recommend that Bishop McAreavey engage with another bishop in whom he has confidence in an ongoing dialogue on safeguarding issues that would enable him to get personal support and share his own knowledge and experience. Such a dialogue, involving their Designated Persons, would be a useful help for all concerned.**

- 9. Bishop McAreavey in consultation with his Safeguarding Committee should source appropriate training for Priests and safeguarding personnel on the impact of abuse on children.**

- 10. Bishop McAreavey in consultation with his Designated Person should identify support people, ensure they are offered training and supported so that they, in turn, can offer the necessary guidance to victims of abuse.**

- 11. The diocese may wish to consider having a number of Priest Advisers and ensuring that they are trained and supported in their role.**

- 12. The Safeguarding Committee should ensure annual audits are completed and forwarded to NBSCCC.**

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 1990³ 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.

³ 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 June 2011 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.