

**Review of Child Safeguarding Practice  
in the Monasteries of Monks of the  
Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance in  
Ireland**

**undertaken by**

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

**Date: June 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 guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009, and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each Church authority is to be reviewed through an examination of case records and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to a diocese or other authority.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies. It is based upon the case material made available to the reviewers by the Order, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Cistercian monasteries of monks in Ireland. The NBSCCCI was invited by the Abbots and superiors of the five Cistercian monasteries to undertake a joint review. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers and the Abbots of the Cistercian monasteries have confirmed this.

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

## **Introduction**

The Cistercian Order traces its origin to the foundation of a new monastery at Cîteaux in France in 1098. This monastery was established as a reform or 'return' to the faithful living of the Rule of St Benedict (480-545). The founding of this new monastery began a movement that developed into a new Order which expanded rapidly during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, largely due to the fame of St Bernard of Clairvaux. The Cistercians arrived in Ireland in 1142 at Mellifont. Over the following 400 years there were 40 monasteries of Cistercian monks established throughout the country. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were no Cistercians in Ireland until the foundation of Mount Melleray in 1832.

The Cistercians follow the rule of St Benedict. They live in a monastery and do not normally undertake any external apostolate. The life in the monastery is balanced between the services in the church (seven times a day, the first at 4am and the last at 8pm), personal prayer and study, and manual work. Traditionally the main work of Cistercian monks was agriculture but developments in farming and the changing demographics of communities today has meant that there is now less direct involvement in this area. Cistercians take three vows, obedience, stability and *conversatio morum*. Obedience is to the Abbot of the monastery, who is believed to represent Christ to the monks. Stability is to the monastery and community of entry. This means that Cistercian monks do not normally move from one monastery to another, unless they are sent to establish a new monastery. *Conversatio morum* refers to a commitment to be faithful to the Rule of St Benedict and to ongoing 'conversion'.

There are in fact two Cistercian Orders in the Church today. The Cistercian monasteries in Ireland belong to the *Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance* sometimes referred to as Trappists. The Cistercian Order is not centralised, but is better understood as a 'community of communities'. Each community, once it becomes established and independent, remains autonomous. The monks of an autonomous monastery elect their own abbot (normally for a 6 year term), who in canonical terms is the major superior. The Abbot of the founding house retains a role of 'oversight' for each of the foundations that are made from his monastery. He makes a visitation in his 'daughter houses' every two years and is referred to as the 'Father Immediate'. Every 3 years all the Abbots and Abbesses of the Order meet for the General Chapter and this is the highest authority of the Order. They elect an Abbot General to exercise that authority between each General Chapter who in canonical terms is the supreme moderator of the Order and resides in Rome.

The Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance has 96 monasteries of monks and 73 monasteries of nuns globally, with some 2000 monks and 1650 nuns. The monasteries of Ireland form part of the 'Region of the Isles' a grouping of 11 monasteries in Ireland, Britain and Norway. The regions do not form part of the governance structures, but provide solidarity and support to constituent members.

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There are 5 autonomous Cistercian monasteries of monks in Ireland today, currently containing 65 monks;

- Mount Melleray in Cappoquin, Co Waterford was founded by monks from the monastery of Melleray in France in 1832. It currently has a population of 19 monks.
- Mount St Joseph, in Roscrea, Co Tipperary was founded by Mount Melleray in 1878. It currently has a population of 15 monks
- Mellifont Abbey in Collon, Co Louth was founded by Mount Melleray in 1938. It has a population of 10 monks.
- Bethlehem Abbey in Portglenone, Co Antrim was founded by Mount Melleray in 1948. It has a population of 13 monks.
- Bolton Abbey in Moone, Co Kildare was founded by Mt St Joseph in 1965. It has a population of 8 monks.

In the mid-1950s there were 397 Cistercian monks in four monasteries in Ireland. From this time the number of men joining the monasteries began to decline and many who had joined over the previous decade left. In 1965 there were 324 monks in the five monasteries, today there are 65 and more than half of these are over 80 years of age.

A monastic community has the right to elect its own Abbot, normally for a six year term. Currently there are Abbots in three of the five monasteries – Dom Richard Purcell in Mt St Joseph Abbey, Dom Celsus Kelly in Bethlehem Abbey, and Dom Michael Ryan in Bolton Abbey. At Mount Melleray the last Abbot resigned in August 2014 and the community have voted not to hold an election pending the outcome of the ongoing discussions on a new governance structure for some or all of the monasteries of Cistercian monks in Ireland. The Father Immediate of Mount Melleray (based in England) retains the responsibility as major superior of the community but has delegated responsibility for Child Safeguarding to Dom Richard Purcell. At Mellifont Abbey the last Abbot completed his term in 2010 and the community were unable to elect a successor. There were three different monks appointed temporary superiors but following an Apostolic Visitation in 2013 Dom Richard Purcell was appointed as Pontifical Commissary with full governing powers from April 2014. It is noted that at the General Chapter of September 2014 the five monasteries of Cistercian monks in Ireland were asked to consider a proposal for a new organisational and governance structure. The discussions on this proposal are ongoing.

As each monastery is autonomous, each community has the right to admit new members. Formation generally takes place within the community of entry, though it also involves participation in courses organised by the monasteries of the region. Some monks study for degrees and other qualifications as part of their formation, either by distance/correspondence courses or by living away from the community for the duration of the studies. There are 3 men in formation in Cistercian communities in Ireland today.

The reviewers were advised that Cistercian monks currently have very limited direct contact with children or young people. Both Mount Melleray Abbey and Mount St Joseph

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Abbey have operated boarding schools for boys. The closure of the school at Mount Melleray Abbey was announced in 1972 and the school closed in 1974. The school at Mount St Joseph Abbey (Cistercian College Roscrea) continues and is situated on the same campus as the monastery. The monastic community owns the school and functions as trustees with the Abbot as patron but there is no direct involvement with the school on a day to day basis. A Board of Management has responsibility for the operation of the school. Cistercian College Roscrea operates a distinct Child Safeguarding Policy to that of the monastery.

All 5 Cistercian monasteries in Ireland operate guesthouses as places where adult men and women can come and spend some time of retreat or rest. This apostolate of hospitality is central to the Rule of St Benedict and Cistercian monasticism. The monastery churches are open throughout the day for guests and visitors (with access to Mass or confession), which may include children and young people, either in occasional organized groups (who have safeguarding policies), or with families.

The NBSCCCI safeguarding review of the Cistercian monks' monasteries in Ireland was carried out between 28 Jan – 24 Feb 2015. Each of the 5 communities provided child safeguarding policies and details of child sexual abuse allegations to the NBSCCCI in advance of the review. It is noted that 4 of the Cistercian communities had agreed a common child safeguarding policy. The reviewers met at the onset, and at the end, of the review period with the 3 Abbots who are accountable for child safeguarding in the 5 communities to receive briefings, agree the process and to provide feedback. Reviewers carried out site visits to the 4 communities where child sexual abuse allegations have been made. There have never been any allegations made against monks of Bolton Abbey. They reviewed all safeguarding files in respect of members of the Cistercian Order in Ireland who were living at the time of the review, including those who have left, and a sample of the files of men who were deceased. The site reviews also included other safeguarding material (policies, communications material, training and vetting records, minutes of meetings), as well as meetings with relevant safeguarding personnel. It was agreed that a single safeguarding review would be produced for the Cistercian monks in Ireland, aggregating the data from the individual communities, but also addressing relevant aspects of safeguarding in each community.

In summary the review has confirmed that the Cistercian monastic communities are small and that there is very little activity that brings the monks into direct contact with children and young people. The last reported incident took place in the 1990s. Overall the Order has been slow to implement all the child safeguarding standards to which it committed in 2009, but the safeguarding policies adopted in 2014 are quite comprehensive, addressing a majority of the criteria underpinning the standards. Historically there have been gaps in safeguarding practice – in reporting to the civil authorities, in safety planning, in basic filing, in communication and in application of canonical processes – but the reviewers have seen evidence of improvements in most of these areas in recent years. The criteria that are not met refer to safeguarding structure, and this issue is complex because of the manner in which Cistercian monasteries are constituted. The review has made a total of 7

recommendations, relating to case management, vetting and training, communication, and accountability and structure.

## **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's, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities that minister on the island of Ireland, including the Cistercian Order. 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.

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**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 an Order meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially<br/>or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>1.1</b>    | The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.  | Met fully  |
| <b>1.2</b>    | The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation (e.g. the Bishop of the diocese or provincial of a religious congregation).   | Met fully  |
| <b>1.3</b>    | The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.  | Met fully  |
| <b>1.4</b>    | 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 partially  |
| <b>1.5</b>    | 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 partially  |
| <b>1.6</b>    | The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.   | Met fully  |
| <b>1.7</b>    | The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.  | Met fully  |
| <b>1.8</b>    | The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.  | Met fully  |
| <b>1.9</b>    | 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  |

There are 2 child safeguarding documents within the 5 monasteries in the Cistercian Order in Ireland. One single policy was agreed in December 2014 by the Abbeys of Mount Melleray, Mount St Joseph, Mellifont and Bethlehem (for ease of reference, this will be described in this



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report to as the *Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*). Each of the Cistercian communities is autonomous, and Bolton Abbey continues to use its own separate policy, dated 21.01.15 (this will be described in this report as the *Bolton Safeguarding Policy*). Both are interim documents, pending the development of a common Church child safeguarding policy by the NBSCCCI later in 2015.

Both policies note that Cistercian communities do not offer an overtly direct ministry to children and young people, but are fully committed to the importance of safeguarding children and ensuring that they are welcomed, nurtured, cherished and protected in any contact that they might have with the Order's monasteries, monks, staff or volunteers.

The contents of both Cistercian policies are well structured and both are organized to address the implementation of the NBSCCCI safeguarding standards. *Four Communities Safeguarding Policy* is the shorter and more concise of the two. The Bolton Abbey policy is very comprehensive, with 21 appendices including for example the reporting pro-formas, checklists, legal guidance etc. Both are formally mandated by the Abbots/ Acting Superiors of the respective communities, and both state clearly that they are binding on all personnel. The reviewers consider that Criteria 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 are fully met.

Both policies state the need for regular review. Prior to 2014 each monastery administered its own child safeguarding arrangements. Four of the monasteries had in place a similar policy on child protection dated 2007, which is a short summary document. Three of these monasteries reviewed their 2007 policy, (in 2010, 2012 and in 2013). The fifth monastery did not have its own safeguarding policy, and opted to work under the safeguarding policy of the diocese in whose area it is located, with a formal memorandum of understanding to this effect dated in 2012. The reviewers consider that this criterion is partially met on the basis that the Order has completed the 2014 safeguarding policy review.

Criterion 1.5 addresses child protection in different aspects of the Church's work. The reviewers consider that it is partially met in both Cistercian policies. One of the aspects which need to be considered under this criterion is the management, from a child safeguarding point of view, of Church personnel who transfer from one place to another. The reviewers have noted the Cistercian vow of stability to the monastery, which means that monks do not normally transfer locations. The reviewers accept assurances from the Abbots that all implications, including any safeguarding concerns, of any such movement would be fully addressed by them today. It is noted that the issue of transfer is addressed in the *Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*, but in the context of formation and entry into the novitiate. This review (see section on standard 2) has documented instances where the management of child abuse allegations at the point of transfer has been problematic. The reviewers consider that both versions of the Cistercian safeguarding policies need to formally state the requirement that any safeguarding concerns or potential risk must be fully and formally communicated in the event of any movement, in or out of communities, of personnel.

**RECOMMENDATION 1: The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should ensure that the child safeguarding policies are amended to establish that all personnel transferring to and from monasteries are subject of a formal statement which addresses any child safeguarding concerns. This should be done on an interim basis pending the common Church child safeguarding policy.**

The management of religious within Cistercian communities who pose a risk to children is addressed in both policies, which set out the internal process to be implemented at the instigation of, and following, a civil investigation. Both policies also describe the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse, and Criteria 1.6 and 1.7 are assessed as fully met.

Criterion 1.8 requires that the policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay. The reviewers have noted a slight difference in emphasis between the two policies on the issue of the need to inform the civil authorities. The *Four Communities Safeguarding Policy* refers to the need for immediate reporting where there are 'reasonable grounds for concern', whilst the "*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*" states the need to report all allegations without delay. NBSCCCI guidance allows for the Designated Safeguarding Person to undertake a preliminary internal inquiry in order to refer to the civil authorities (Standards and Guidance document Resource 1 and 2). However the reviewers recommend that all information gathered by the Designated Safeguarding Person at this time should be made available to the civil agencies, and that any decision not to proceed (e.g. on the basis of incomplete or contradictory information) should be jointly agreed.

The reviewers consider that Criterion 1.9 relating to creation of the policy at appropriate congregational level is technically met as monasteries are autonomous. However the existence of separate policies makes it difficult to assess and monitor child safeguarding governance in the Order as a whole. This issue will be resolved in the near future through the common Church policy.

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**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 an Order meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|---|--|
| <b>2.1</b>    | 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  |
| <b>2.2</b>    | 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  |
| <b>2.3</b>    | 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  |
| <b>2.4</b>    | 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  |
| <b>2.5</b>    | There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.  | Met partially  |
| <b>2.6</b>    | 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  |
| <b>2.7</b>    | 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  |

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Both Cistercian safeguarding policies meet the requirements of Criteria 2.1 – 2.4. There is step by step guidance, and both policies are consistent with relevant legislation (some of which is reproduced in the appendices of the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”). There are nominated designated liaison persons in all 5 communities. However the reviewers note that in one monastery the Abbot has assumed this role following the departure in the recent past of the monk who was the designated liaison person. This needs to be addressed as the Abbot is the accountable authority for safeguarding, and the roles are different. All 5 monasteries have appropriate processes for recording and storing allegations. The reviewers consider that Criterion 2.5, which requires a general complaints policy to be in place to deal with any issues which do not come under the heading of child abuse, is partially met. It is addressed in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”, but not in the “*Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*”. Criteria 2.6 and 2.7 relating to guidance on confidentiality and to contact details for the civil authorities are fully met in both policies. The reviewers however are not making a recommendation as this will be addressed in the national revision of child safeguarding policy currently underway by NBSCCCI.

**Table 1**

**Incidence of safeguarding allegations received within the Cistercian Order against monks, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the completion of the review fieldwork on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

| <b>CISTERCIAN ORDER</b> |   |                 |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>1</b>                | Number of Cistercian monks against whom allegations have been made since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the review.   | 21              |
| <b>2</b>                | Total number of allegations received by the Cistercian Order since 1 <sup>st</sup> January, 1975.   | 48              |
| <b>3</b>                | Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána/PSNI involving priests and brothers since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975.   | 48              |
| <b>4</b>                | Number of allegations reported to the TUSLA/HSE/HSC (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE,) involving priests and brothers of the Congregation since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975. | 47 <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>5</b>                | Number of monks (still members of the Order) against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.   | 3               |
| <b>6</b>                | Number of monks against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.   | 15              |

<sup>1</sup> It is noted that the reviewers were informed that a total of 15 of these allegations were not reported directly by the Cistercians to the child protection agency, but that they accepted assurances from the police authority that the information would be processed to the child protection agency

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|-----------|--|----------------|
| <b>7</b>  | Number of monks against whom an allegation has been made and who are in ministry.  | 2 <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>8</b>  | Number of monks against whom an allegation was made and who are 'Out of Ministry', but are still members of the Order  | 0              |
| <b>9</b>  | Number of monks against whom an allegation was made and who are retired  | 1              |
| <b>10</b> | Number of monks against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Order  | 3              |
| <b>11</b> | Number of monks of the Order who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 | 2              |

The reviewers have examined written information relating to 11 monks who were alleged to have sexually abused children in 4 of the monasteries, and one file relating to a priest from another order who was convicted for sexual abuse of a child and who spent a period of time, living in a Cistercian monastery, but not as a member of the Cistercians. As already noted, there is one monastery, which at the date of the review had received no allegations or disclosures of child abuse against members of the community and consequently has no safeguarding files and no respondents to manage. Accordingly what follows is a review of the safeguarding files relating to 4 of the Cistercian monasteries. Written information on all 6 Cistercian monks/former monks who are living was reviewed, as was a sample of information relating to 5 deceased men, including one who was convicted and whose record of allegations was particularly serious. Individual files were kept on most of these men and are well structured and accessible, with the exception of one monastery which kept files on the victims, but not on the safeguarding management of individual monks who were implicated. The review is therefore based on 9 files relating to 9 monks, and 11 victim files relating to a further 2 monks. It is recommended that this monastery introduce a safeguarding filing system as recommended by the NBSCCCI.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: The Abbot of one monastery should ensure that there is a filing system for recording the management of monks against whom allegations are made, according to NBSCCCI recommended format.**

The total number of Cistercian monks against whom allegations have been made during the period of the review amounts to 21. Two monks have been convicted on charges of child sexual abuse. The majority of the monks subject of allegations are deceased (15), and it is noted that in 12 of these cases the monks were deceased at the time when the

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<sup>2</sup> One of the monks is not a priest and does not exercise a ministry but continues to live a monastic life within the monastery.

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allegations were made. Of the 6 men who are living, 3 have been laicised and/or have left the Order, and 3 continue to live in monasteries, 1 of whom is no longer active. All 3 monks resident in monasteries are subject to restrictions which prohibit contact with children or young people. One of these men is a priest whose ministry has been limited. All 3 men lead the lives of monks under restricted regimes.

There have been 48 allegations of child sexual abuse made against members of the Cistercian Order in Ireland. One of the monks (Monk B – see case discussion below) was on loan to a diocese and a total of 7 allegations were made when he was working there, which were managed through the diocesan safeguarding processes. The reviewers therefore consider that reporting the remaining 41 allegations was the responsibility of the Cistercians. The reviewers were given assurances from the Order that all of these allegations have been reported to An Garda Síochána or to the PSNI (although the written evidence of the reporting to the PSNI of a sizeable number of these allegations is poor)- The reviewers were also informed that 40 of the allegations have been reported to the child protection agencies in both jurisdictions. The allegation that was not reported related to a monk who had been deceased for almost 14 years at the time when it was made known to the Order.

The reviewers saw records relating to 46 victims/survivors relating to the overall total of 48 allegations.

Monk A, who has been deceased for a number of years, was the subject of 14 allegations relating to 14 victims/survivors. Most of these allegations refer to abusive activity which took place in the 1970s in the monastery environment. The reviewers were informed that the monastery does not hold a file on Monk A which records how safeguarding was managed, but it does have files on each of his victims. Information relating to internal restrictions, hospital assessments that were undertaken on him, or details of reporting to the civil agencies, is not documented. The reviewers have concluded from the available material and from discussion with the Abbot that the risks in this case were recognized by the Order at the time and that some action was taken to have him assessed and supervised. Monk A was not subjected to any canonical inquiry. There are psychiatric reports on a number of the victim files, which catalogue extreme distress and the long term consequences of their abuse. Monk A was convicted of 5 charges of indecent assault of 3 children in the 1990s and given a suspended sentence of 4 years. Following his conviction a number of new allegations emerged. There is evidence that the Abbot reached out to victims, offered to meet with them, advised them to seek legal advice, and offered counselling services. Supervision of Monk A, in his later years was taken over directly by the Abbot.

The second Cistercian monk to be convicted of child sexual abuse charges was Monk B. As referred to above, Monk B was a Cistercian priest who was on leave from his monastery to work in a diocese in the 1980s. Following an initial period of probation he was given an appointment in the diocese where records indicate that 7 allegations were made against him, the majority of them over a short period of time. Six of these related to children, and 1 to a vulnerable adult. The management of these allegations by the diocese has been addressed in the NBSCCCI diocesan safeguarding review of that diocese.

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Monk B was dismissed from the diocese the following year and returned to the Cistercian monastery. The reviewers have been informed that specific details of the allegations were not made known to the Order for some 3 years after his return. He was subsequently laicised and left the Cistercian Order. Monk B was convicted on child sexual abuse charges. According to the file he served a 2 year prison sentence, and a further 3 year suspended sentence for other sexual abuse offences. There is no record that a canonical investigation was considered or implemented when details of the allegations first came to light, or that restrictions were put in place in the period between his return to the Cistercians and his laicisation. More recently, the Order has been in communication with the civil authorities regarding further concerns which came to their attention regarding this case.

Three Cistercians monks accused of child sexual offences have remained within the Order.

An allegation was made against Monk C in 2009 that he had abused a young boy in the monastery 25 years before. Previous allegations in the case of this monk were addressed through the Redress Board and fall outside the remit of this review. The allegation was reported promptly to the civil authorities, and the Order commissioned an independent social worker to meet with the victim to enable him to tell his story. Monk C was the subject of restrictions and a risk management plan which was drawn up in consultation with the HSE and the independent social worker, and has a Support Person. The plan is currently reviewed on a quarterly basis. Monk C is not a priest, and does not exercise any ministry.

In the case of Monk D an allegation of child sexual abuse of a young boy was received in the mid-1970s. The file records that a canon law precept was issued very quickly by the Abbot, giving Monk D a canonical warning. He was referred for assessment over a decade later, which concluded that he could continue his work in the monastery (as he had been doing for some time). The case was not referred to the civil authorities until approximately 30 years after the alleged event. Monk D, who carries out ministry within the confines of the monastery, is currently the subject of restrictions and a risk management plan, which is reviewed quarterly. The reviewers have noted that the risk management plan in this case needs to be more comprehensive.

Child abuse allegations have been made against Monk E, concerning incidents which allegedly occurred between the 1950s and 1990s. The file records that there was a DPP decision in 1994 not to pursue prosecution in respect of the allegation made the previous year. The reviewers noted a number of issues of concern in this case relating to sharing of safeguarding information, and consistency of case management. This monk transferred from one monastery to another in the early 1960s, and information about the first incidents did not come to light until the allegations relating to the latter incidents emerged. Risk assessments were commissioned on four separate occasions over 16 years following initial disclosure at the beginning of the 1990s. Restrictions on the monk were put in place over a period of 8 years, but were removed by an incoming Abbot. The most recent risk assessment, commissioned following concern about Monk E which emerged during a Visitation (regular formal review by the Abbot of the founding monastery) to the

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monastery, concluded that there was a low risk of sexual offending but recommended that he remain out of ministry and did not have unsupervised contact with children. This was not acted upon, and restrictions were not re-imposed for a further 3 years, after the Father Immediate had commissioned an ad hoc advisory group and consulted with the NBSCCCI. It was explained to the reviewers that there were a number of temporary superiors in the monastery during this period, which had disrupted the safeguarding governance in the monastery. A supervision contract with Monk E containing restrictions has been in place since 2013, which is reviewed annually by the Abbot's Council. Monk E is not a priest and does not have any ministry. The file records that this case was reported to the civil authorities in the mid-1990s. Victim contact by the Order in this case appears to have been largely managed via legal representatives, and there is minimal reference to outreach or provision of counselling.

Three men (including Monk B) who were accused of child sexual offences as Cistercian monks have been laicised and have left the Order.

Monk F left the Order in the late 1970s prior to an allegation almost 30 years later that he abused a young boy over a number of years in the monastery. The monastery does not hold a safeguarding file on this case, but does have a victim file. The victim file records that extensive counselling was provided. The reviewers were informed that this case was reported to the civil authorities by the victim more than 20 years after the monk had left, and that a risk assessment was then carried out by the civil authorities.

Monk G left the Order in the 1960s, prior to an allegation 30 years later that he had sexually abused a young boy. The file records correspondence between the Order and the victim, attempting to ascertain details of the allegation and offer support and counselling. This case was not notified to the civil authorities for another 9 years.

Monk H, who is deceased, was made the subject of restrictions following two allegations, one of which was later withdrawn. The case was not reported to the civil authorities for a number of years, nor was any canonical process considered.

In relation to the remaining 3 deceased monks whose files were reviewed, the reviewers are satisfied that all display appropriate actions.

The reviewers looked at one file relating to a priest from another religious congregation who was convicted for sexually abusing two boys, and who came to a Cistercian monastery after serving a prison sentence. The file records, that he lived until a few months before his death, in the monastery under restrictions agreed by the Abbot, and supervised by the Abbot's Council.

The 5 Cistercian monasteries in Ireland are autonomous, both canonically and functionally, and all Cistercian monasteries have existed as such for centuries. There is an internal process under way to review this configuration in the light of changing realities and demographics, but this is not expected to conclude before 2020. From a child safeguarding perspective, the autonomous structure of the monasteries means that there is no pivotal accountability within the Order in



Ireland for the safety and well-being of children and young people. The allegations and cases documented in Table 1 above as a composite number have been managed historically by individual Abbots, without an agreed common safeguarding policy. The reviewers have seen evidence that the levels of awareness of child safeguarding within the Order have improved over the past decade, with much enhanced levels of reporting, the use of safety plans, victim outreach and the review and development of the safeguarding policies. It is encouraging that there have been no new allegations relating to any incidents since the mid-1990s. The review of files however points to a number of areas relating to case management where best practice requires consistency across the monasteries of the Order in Ireland – prompt reporting, application of canonical process, filing structures, safety planning, communication of information are examples. This is also the case for the range of preventative requirements – training, vetting, and communication and so on, which are discussed later in this report. The reviewers consider that, given the declining numbers of monks within the Order and the small size of the communities, that the safeguarding effort is very diffused and that there is unnecessary duplication. The reviewers have raised the following issues with the Abbots:

- The nomination within organizations of a single point of accountability for child safeguarding is a key safeguarding principle. The feasibility of the Abbots of the monasteries to come together formally in their safeguarding roles, to collectively review and discharge their accountability for the safety and well-being of children and young people, should be considered.
- The role of a Designated Liaison Person being carried out by one person, nominated across the 5 monasteries, facilitating the development of knowledge and skills should also be considered.
- The Abbots should review how to best organize a process for assessing and reviewing their accountability for child safeguarding. Could the Abbots consider the creation of a single Cistercian Safeguarding Committee (lay membership plus a representative from each monastery), which could provide an annual safeguarding overview report for the 5 monasteries. Such an overview report could review the aggregated data on new referrals/incidents, monitor the implementation of the (pending) common policy, co-ordinate training plans, vetting and communication, develop victim outreach policy and comment on any other relevant matters.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: The Abbots of the five monasteries should give consideration to the feasibility of a more centralized safeguarding structure featuring a single child safeguarding committee and a single Designated Liaison Person to better integrate safeguarding practice across the monasteries, as suggested in the bullet points above.**

### **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 an Order meets the requirements of all twelve criteria against which the standard is measured. These criteria are grouped into three areas, safe recruitment and vetting, codes of behaviour and operating safe activities for children.

#### **Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>3.1</b>    | There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.   | Met fully                                    |
| <b>3.2</b>    | The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.  | Met fully                                    |
| <b>3.3</b>    | 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 partially                                |

The reviewers consider that both Cistercian policies fully met the requirements of Criteria 3.1 and 3.2 in relation to policy, best practice and vetting process. Criterion 3.3 is assessed as partially met at present because it has not been possible for all 5 monasteries to develop satisfactory processes for completion of vetting. It is noted that one monastery uses its diocesan safeguarding offices for access to vetting and that this arrangement is satisfactory to both parties. Two other monasteries have direct access to Garda vetting, but 2 do not. Whilst there has been recent communication between the Cistercians and An Garda Síochána regarding this issue, it has not yet been satisfactorily resolved because of the Order's limited contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should discuss with the NBSCCCI the most efficient way of conducting vetting throughout all their monasteries.**

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**Criteria – Codes of behaviour**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>3.4</b>    | The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.   | Met fully  |
| <b>3.5</b>    | There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).  | Met partially*                                       |
| <b>3.6</b>    | 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 fully  |
| <b>3.7</b>    | 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.  | Met fully *  |
| <b>3.8</b>    | 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 partially*                                       |
| <b>3.9</b>    | Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.   | Met partially*                                       |

*\*Denotes acceptance by the reviewers that this criterion does not have active application at this time because of the very limited interaction between members of the Order and children and young people.*

Both Cistercian policies contain detailed codes of behaviour for adults towards children, and Criterion 3.4 is fully met. The reviewers consider that Criterion 3.5, in relation to an anti-bullying policy, does not currently have active application in Cistercian monasteries. It is noted, however that the issue is addressed in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”, which commits the monastery to developing a policy in the event of children becoming involved in monastery activities. The criterion is assessed as partially met. Both policies contain guidance on *Whistle Blowing* and Criterion 3.6 is fully met. Criterion 3.7, relating to processes for dealing with children’s unacceptable behaviour, whilst it does not have active application, is addressed in both policies, but more fully in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”, and the reviewers consider that it is met fully. Criterion 3.8 requires a clear anti-discriminatory statement, which is addressed in full in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”, and in a summarized form in the “*Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*”. The reviewers consider that this criterion, which does not have active

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application, is met partially. The reviewers consider that Criterion 3.9, in relation to intimate care of children with disabilities, is addressed in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*” (which commits the monastery to developing such a policy when/if needed) but not specifically in the “*Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*”. It does not currently have application, and the overall assessment is that it is met partially.

**Criteria – Operating safe activities for children**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>3.10</b>   | There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.  | Met partially*                               |
| <b>3.11</b>   | When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.   | Met partially*                               |
| <b>3.12</b>   | 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 fully*                                   |

*\*Denotes acceptance by the reviewers that this criterion does not have active application at this time because of the very limited inter-action between members of the Order and children and young people.*

The reviewers accept that Criteria 3.10 – 3.12 do not currently have active application in Cistercian monasteries at present. Nevertheless it is noted that Criterion 3.10 (*Assessing risks when working with children*) and Criterion 3.11 (*Supervision and protection*) are addressed in both policies, but in greater detail in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”. Overall the reviewers have assessed these criteria as partially met. Criterion 3.12 relating to information technology is assessed as fully met in both policies - although it also does not have current application.

The reviewers note that it is re-assuring that the Cistercian monasteries have taken steps to address a number of criteria relating to prevention which are not current or live issues within the monasteries, demonstrating their commitment to all aspects of child safeguarding.

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**Standard 4**

***Training and Education***

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

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|---|--|
| <b>4.1</b>    | 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  |
| <b>4.2</b>    | Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.                                       | Met partially  |
| <b>4.3</b>    | 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 partially  |
| <b>4.4</b>    | Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.  | Met partially  |

Both Cistercian policies state that all Church personnel should be offered training in child protection. The “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*” states that all staff are expected to undertake induction training and sign acceptance forms to this effect; that training needs will be assessed and updated training provided. The “*Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*” provides for annual review of training. Both refer to the completion of a Training Register.

The Cistercian Order does not have a nominated trainer for child safeguarding. Training in one monastery has been provided via the local diocesan training programme, but training records were not available in the monastery. In 3 monasteries the basic programme of raising awareness of the policies and procedures has been carried out by the Abbots. In the fifth monastery the Designated Liaison Person is also an NBSCCCI accredited trainer. Training records are kept in the latter four monasteries.

The reviewers are content that Criterion 4.1 is met fully in that awareness training has been provided to all personnel of the basic child safeguarding policy content. Beyond the basic level, however, the reviewers have concluded that practice across monasteries in relation to training is variable. Access to training for staff with additional responsibilities has been opportunistic rather than planned. Criteria 4.2 and 4.3 are partially met. Criterion 4.4 is also partially met, as not all training has followed NBSCCCI guidance. The reviewers consider that the approach to

safeguarding training across the 5 monasteries would benefit from a more co-ordinated approach with one accredited programme, one register, and one training plan based on an annual updated assessment of need. The Abbots of the five monasteries should consider mandating a single co-ordinated approach to safeguarding training, including training needs assessment; across the Cistercian monasteries of Ireland (see Recommendations 6 and 7). The use of diocesan trainers should be explored.

**RECOMMENDATION 5: The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should undertake a training needs assessment across all monasteries, and consider the use of approved diocesan trainers in the delivery of programmes.**

The reviewers have noted that the “*Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*” contains a policy (Appendix 3) concerning monks in formation which sets out requirements for vetting, personal formation, psychological formation, training for best practice, and entry to the noviciate - all of which address the child safeguarding agenda. This is a commendable addition to the Order’s internal processes for ensuring the safety of children and young people.

**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**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>5.1</b>    | The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.   | Met fully  |
| <b>5.2</b>    | Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.  | Met partially*                                       |
| <b>5.3</b>    | Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.   | Met fully  |
| <b>5.4</b>    | 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  |
| <b>5.5</b>    | Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.  | Met Fully  |
| <b>5.6</b>    | Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.   | Met partially  |

*\*Denotes acceptance by the reviewers that this criterion does not have active application at this time because of the very limited inter-action between members of the Order and children and young people.*

Both policies demonstrate that safeguarding notices are displayed in prominent places, that the names of the Designated Liaison Persons are displayed, and that contact details for civil agencies are easily accessed, and Criteria 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4 are assessed as fully met. The reviewers note that information about the NBSCCC1 review was published in advance on the websites of the 5 Cistercian monasteries and displayed in the monastery

guesthouses and churches, and that this appears to have generated new referrals which came in during the fieldwork phase of the work. Criterion 5.2, relating to communication for children and young people, which does not have active application in Cistercian monasteries, has in fact been addressed in one monastery and is therefore assessed as partially met. Criterion 5.5 refers to the establishment of links with statutory child protection agencies. This is assessed as fully met. Criterion 5.6 concerning communications, is assessed as partially met, as the “*Four Communities Safeguarding Policy*” provides a summary position, and the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*” states that a written position is not needed because of their small size. It is recommended that the Abbots consider a common statement on communication as part of the safeguarding plan (see also recommendations 7 and 8)

**RECOMMENDATION 6: The Abbots of the five monasteries should consider a common statement on how safeguarding information will be communicated across all monasteries.**



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**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**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>6.1</b>    | Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.  | Met fully  |
| <b>6.2</b>    | 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 partially  |
| <b>6.3</b>    | 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  |
| <b>6.4</b>    | Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.  | Met fully  |
| <b>6.5</b>    | 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 reviewers have assessed Criteria 6.1, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 as fully met. Criterion 6.1 is met at the time of the review on the basis that the Cistercian Order formally joined the NBSCCCI's National Case Management Review Group (NCMRG) in early 2015, and this resource will be utilised in the future event that specialist advice or guidance is needed. Prior to 2015 the arrangements for accessing advice were variable, and in the opinion of the reviewers, did not lend themselves to consistency. One monastery relied on the local diocesan safeguarding office and on legal advice; another created an ad hoc advisory group as needed; another relied on the Abbot; and two did not have any process in place as it had not been required.

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It is noted that the reviewers were asked to consider the safeguarding environment across the 5 monasteries, and have already drawn attention to the extent to which it is, inevitably, diffused somewhat because of the autonomous structure. The reviewers have stated their view to the Abbots that the safeguarding environment would be enhanced through consideration by them of a single nominated Designated Liaison Person and the creation of a Safeguarding Committee at the level of the Order in Ireland as a whole. Viewed from a child safeguarding perspective, Criterion 6.2 is assessed as partially met but this will be corrected with the appointment of one designated person.

The policies contain guidance on how to respond to and support a child, and address the need for information to be accessible to those who have experienced abuse as required by Criterion 6.3. The reviewers suggest that this could be improved through the development of information leaflets for adults and for children, as part of a single communications plan. Both policies contain up to date information on agencies which can provide counselling and therapeutic support, and criterion 6.4 is assessed as fully met.

In relation to Criterion 6.5 both policies also address the support needs of those who have perpetrated abuse, including the need for therapeutic help and risk management planning. However practice in this area has been variable historically and the review has already documented how management and supervision of monks was allowed to ‘drift’, and how in one case there are no management records. Currently there is a need for supervision of monks in 2 of the 5 monasteries. In both cases supervision/safety plans are in place, but are different in format. The reviewers consider that there is need for a consistent and agreed process for supervision of men subject of abuse allegations where there is a semblance of truth, and for review and accountability. This has already been addressed in the report through the recommendation 3 relating to a single nominated Designated Liaison Person for the Order who would have responsibility for developing a standard format for a safety plan/contract.

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**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**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>7.1</b>    | 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  |
| <b>7.2</b>    | The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.   | Met Fully  |
| <b>7.3</b>    | Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.   | Not met  |
| <b>7.4</b>    | Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.                     | Met partially *                                      |
| <b>7.5</b>    | All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.  | Met fully  |

*\*Note: Limited applicability.*

The current decentralized approach to safeguarding children does not sit easily with the core requirements of Standard 7, which focus on implementation and monitoring of the standards. The reviewers consider that 2 of the criteria, relating to physical provision (of finance 7.2, and secure storage of records 7.5) can be assessed as fully met. Criteria 7.1 and 7.3, however, require processes – specifically functioning safeguarding committees - to be in place. The reviewers have noted that only one such body is in place, at monastery level. This body, comprised of very committed lay people, was established and functions as a parish level structure and was encouraged by the diocese in which the monastery is located. Criterion 7.4, whilst it does not have current active application, is addressed in the “*Bolton Safeguarding Policy*”, and is assessed as partially met

The role of a Safeguarding Committee is set out in Resource 1 of the NBSCCCI standards and guidance document, and is developmental, located at congregational level. This report has already commented on the need to improve 2 aspects of this role among the Cistercian monasteries in Ireland - the management of training and vetting. Criterion 7.1 refers to the need for an annual report/assessment of the state of readiness of the Order in relation to all aspects of the agenda of maintaining a safe environment for children, as the basis for setting priorities and action planning for the period ahead. The

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annual report should also comment on compliance with the Order's child safeguarding policy, in compliance with Criterion 7.3.

Any changes arising from this report need to be possible within the constitution of the Cistercian Order, and to be accommodated without compromising the autonomous structure of Cistercian monasteries or the authority of the Abbots. At the very least there needs to be a statement from the Abbots about how they receive reports and discharge their accountability for safeguarding children in each of the monasteries. This can be done on single monastery basis, or collectively. The reviewers recommend that the Abbots of the five monasteries consider the feasibility of forming a single safeguarding committee for the Cistercian monasteries in Ireland (see recommendation 3). This committee should have lay membership, as well as representatives from each of the 5 monasteries, and should be chaired by a lay person. It would benefit from input from a single Designated Liaison Person across the 5 Cistercian monasteries in Ireland, and would be briefed by him/her in relation to all safeguarding matters. It should meet at least twice yearly, and produce an annual safeguarding assessment and plan for formal consideration of the Abbots of the monasteries meeting as an accountable body for safeguarding children.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: The Abbots of the five monasteries need to state how their accountability for child safeguarding is to be discharged, and there needs to be an annual safeguarding report and plan for each of the monasteries, or for all of the monasteries, reporting data on safeguarding events, on adherence to the policies and on progress in developmental areas such as communication, vetting, and training.**

## **Recommendations**

There are 7 recommendations arising from this review, relating to 4 areas

- Management of cases
- Vetting and Training
- Communication
- Safeguarding Structure and accountability

The reviewers have commented in the report on the existence of 2 safeguarding policies within the Cistercian Order. One is a detailed resource document; the other is a broader summary of key safeguarding themes. The review has noted some differences in emphasis, but also that the policies are broadly compatible. Both will be superseded in the near future by a common Church policy, and are therefore not the subject of any recommendations.

**RECOMMENDATION 1: The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should ensure that the child safeguarding policies are amended to establish that all personnel transferring to and from monasteries are subject of a formal statement which addresses any child safeguarding concerns. This should be done on an interim basis pending the common Church child safeguarding policy.**

**RECOMMENDATION 2: The Abbot of one monastery should ensure that there is a filing system for recording the management of monks against whom allegations are made, according to NBSCCCI recommended format.**

**RECOMMENDATION 3; The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should give consideration to the feasibility of a more centralized safeguarding structure featuring a single child safeguarding committee and a single Designated Liaison Person to better integrate safeguarding practice across the monasteries, as suggested in the bullet points above.**

**RECOMMENDATION 4: The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should discuss with the NBSCCCI the most efficient way of conducting vetting throughout all their monasteries.**

**RECOMMENDATION 5: The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should undertake a training needs assessment across all monasteries, and consider the use of approved diocesan trainers in the delivery of programmes.**

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries should consider a common statement on how safeguarding information will be communicated across all monasteries.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** The Abbots of the five Cistercian monasteries need to state how their accountability for child safeguarding is to be discharged, and there needs to be an annual safeguarding report and plan for each of the monasteries, or for all of the monasteries, reporting data on safeguarding events, on adherence to the policies and on progress in developmental areas such as communication, vetting, and training.

**Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland**

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

1. To ascertain the full extent of all complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority (Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society) by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and who are ministering/or who once ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority, and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
2. If deemed relevant, select a random sample of complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious now deceased and who ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority.
3. Examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
4. To ascertain all of the cases during the relevant period in which the Church Authority
  - knew of child sexual abuse involving Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and including those clergy and/or religious visiting, studying and/or retired;
  - had strong and clear suspicion of child sexual abuse; or
  - had reasonable concern;
  - and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.

As well as examine

  - Communication by the Church Authority with the Civil Authorities;
  - Current risks and their management.
5. To consider and report on the implementation of the 7 Safeguarding Standards set out in *Safeguarding Children* (2009), including the following:
  - a) A review of the current child safeguarding policies and guidance materials in use by the Church Authority and an evaluation of their application;

- b) How the Church Authority creates and maintains safe environments.
- c) How victims are responded to by the Church Authority
- d) What training is taking place within the Church Authority
- e) How advice and support is accessed by the Church Authority in relation to victim support and assessment and management of accused respondents.
- f) What systems are in place for monitoring practice and reporting back to the Church Authority.

### **Accompanying Notes**

#### **Note 1: Definition of Child Sexual Abuse:**

The definition of child sexual abuse is in accordance with the definition adopted by the Ferns Report (and the Commission of Investigation Report into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin). The following is the relevant extract from the Ferns Report:

“While definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to context, probably the most useful definition and broadest for the purposes of this Report was that which was adopted by the Law Reform Commission in 1990<sup>3</sup> 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;

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<sup>3</sup> 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.



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- 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.”

**Note 2: Definition of Allegation:**

The term allegation is defined as an accusation or complaint where there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse, including retrospective disclosure by adults. It includes allegations that did not necessarily result in a criminal or canonical investigation, or a civil action, and allegations that are unsubstantiated but which are plausible. (NB: Erroneous information does not necessarily make an allegation implausible, for example, a priest arrived in a parish in the Diocese a year after the alleged abuse, but other information supplied appears credible and the alleged victim may have mistaken the date).

**Note 3: False Allegations:**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland wishes to examine any cases of false allegation so as to review the management of the complaint by the Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society.

**Note 4: Random sample:**

The random sample (if applicable) must be taken from complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse made against all deceased Catholic clergy/religious covering the entire of the relevant period being 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 to the date of the Review.

**Note 5: Civil Authorities:**

Civil Authorities are defined in the Republic of Ireland as the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána and in Northern Ireland as the Health and Social Care Trust and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.