



Review of child safeguarding practice
in the religious congregation of
Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

undertaken by

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

Date: January 2016

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Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (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 child 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 Child Safeguarding Practice within the religious congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd* 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 Province Leader, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the Province. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the Province Leader has confirmed this.

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

The review took place over the course of a day in December 2015. A second short visit took place in February 2016, at the request of the Province Leader, who requested the reviewer examine a further file relating to a second concern for completeness (even though that second file fell outside the terms of reference of the review as it related to a complaint of physical and emotional abuse).

Introduction

Profile

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, founded by St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier in Angers, France in 1835, has its origin in the Order of Our Lady of Charity founded in Tours, France, 1641.

The Order of Our Lady of Charity was founded by St. John Eudes in response to the needs of many girls and women he met on his missionary travels throughout France, who were exploited and wished to escape from situations of poverty and prostitution. The mission of the Order was to offer refuge and new possibilities to these women. To stress the importance of this mission, St. John Eudes gave the Sisters a fourth vow of zeal, by which the Sisters committed themselves to holding on to the belief in the dignity and potential of each person.

During the French Revolution, religious life was suppressed in France. St. Mary Euphrasia joined the Order of Our Lady of Charity after the revolution, and soon received many requests for new foundations worldwide. It was clear that the many young Sisters who joined the Order at that time would have to be available to go where they were most needed. St. Mary Euphrasia realised that a generalate was needed to facilitate this rapid expansion. This new initiative resulted in the founding of the new Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd.

The Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Charity and the new Congregation remained faithful to the shared vision of their founders. While existing side by side for more than a hundred and fifty years and retaining individual entities, they sometimes collaborated on common programmes and projects. Today the Sisters have a presence in 70 countries in the world.

Order of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland:

The first Sisters of Our Lady of Charity arrived in Dublin in 1853, at the invitation of Fr. John Smith. They were asked to run St. Mary's Asylum in High Park, Drumcondra, which provided care for women who were destitute or were deemed to be in "moral danger." This and another home for women in Sean McDermott Street (formerly known as Gloucester Street), were the two main projects run by Sisters of Our Lady of Charity during their first 100 years in Ireland. However, additional services were also developed at various locations in Dublin over the years.

These services included:

- Refuges
- Reformatories and Industrial Schools
- Teenage residential services
- Childcare
- Transitional Care
- Counselling Service
- Pastoral Ministry

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in Ireland:

The first Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd came to Ireland in 1848. They began their work in Limerick and additional houses were founded as follows:

- 1858: Waterford
- 1860: New Ross
- 1868 Belfast
- 1872: Cork (2nd house opened in Cork in 1912)
- 1919: Derry

- 1945: Newry
- 1955: Dunboyne
- 1967: Dublin

The Good Shepherd Sisters are an international, apostolic religious institute of pontifical right. The sisters choose to commit themselves to either an apostolic lifestyle or a contemplative lifestyle.

There is one contemplative community in the Irish Province.

Historically the services provided in Ireland included:

- Industrial schools
- One reformatory school
- St. Mary's Centres for women and girls
- Mother and baby homes

Both congregations each have an extensive hundred and fifty year history in Ireland. The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity based in Dublin and the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd (together with other female Congregations) were the subject of a report commissioned by the Government in 2013 and chaired by former Senator Martin McAleese. This report sought to determine the level of State involvement in routes of entry to residential institutions with a “laundry” component for women, and concluded that more than a quarter of all official referrals were made by the State. The last of these facilities based in Sean Mac Dermott Street was closed by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in 1996.

Both Congregations employ archivists to help collate their records.

In 2006 a consultation process was begun internationally to explore the possibility of integrating the two Congregations. This reunification involved merging the Order of Our Lady of Charity into the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. This was canonically formalised in June 2014. In many countries, including Ireland, the civil integration is still in process, as legal requirements are being set in place. In Ireland the amalgamation of the two Congregations has brought together some twenty-two members of Sisters of Our Lady of Charity and one hundred and one Good Shepherd Sisters. Taking into account lay staff and volunteers directly associated with the two Congregations, the number of those connected with the new integrated Congregation is not insignificant. The Province leader took up her role in July 2014 after spending many years in overseas ministry. She has brought together a Province Leadership team (PLT) comprising four apostolic Sisters and two contemplative Sisters. The Province team has a mandate to remain in place for six years. The Province Leader acknowledges that overseeing the smooth integration of the two groups has been a main focus of her work to date. She emphasises that the new unified Congregation continues to be an evolving entity with new situations arising such as staff getting to know each other, and moving to new province offices as an example of practical issues.

The Current Reality of the Integrated Congregation

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd is an apostolic Congregation with two lifestyles: apostolic (Sisters in active ministry) and contemplative (Sisters who have devoted their lives to praying for those served by the apostolic Sisters).

Good Shepherd ministries have evolved over time, alongside developing professional practice and standards. Until the 1970s services provided were mostly residential. Since 1961 the Sisters have had more opportunities for professional training. Smaller communities were founded in parishes and many Sisters became more inserted in local communities. They played key roles in developing community projects and developed networking, nationally and internationally. Accommodation and support services continue to be provided for vulnerable women in Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick. These services are now run by independent voluntary organisations, and in some cases there are nominees at board level.

Good Shepherd Services based in Cork provide services to over 700 women and children each year who are homeless or vulnerable to becoming homeless. An integrated and comprehensive service from emergency to long term accommodation and the necessary supports to get vulnerable women and children out of the cycle of homeless and into independent living is provided through a number of accommodation facilities known as Edel House, Riverview, Bruac Eile and Baile an Aoire. Aftercare and outreach is also provided for former residents. Presently one Sister is an employee of this service. In relation to Baile an Aoire (which is a social housing complex for homeless women) management of this project is currently the responsibility of the Province Leadership Team, but it is in the process of being transferred to Good Shepherd Services. The transfer is expected to be completed soon. Currently one resident is a teenage boy who lives with his mother in Baile an Aoire. Family and friends visit the residents and can include children.

In Limerick Bergerie Trust Ltd is the independent voluntary charity delivering services previously delivered by the Good Shepherd Sisters. The board of Bergerie Trust Ltd comprises of representatives from local business, and two Good Shepherd Sister nominees. The aim of that Trust is to provide accommodation for homeless elderly adults.

Ruhama, founded in Dublin in 1989, was a joint venture of the Order of Our Lady of Charity and the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. It provides services for women and girls affected by prostitution and trafficking, and the Congregation continues to have nominees at board level.

Other Good Shepherd projects with no service specifically for children include the Sharing Fair project which is sponsored by the Congregation to better the lives of women in developing countries. One Sister based in Belfast is involved with this project on a full time basis. Nationally, the Good Shepherd Sisters have made a decision to create a Mission Development Office. Its purpose is to create a structure for the ongoing support of overseas projects run by Good Shepherd Sisters, and to ensure best practice in province based ministries (Ireland). It is also intended that the Mission Development Office will help create visibility, accountability and validity to work done by Good Shepherd ministries. A pilot micro finance project, based on a model created by Good Shepherd Sisters in other parts of the world and with particular success in Australia is currently being established.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity provide nursing home care through an independent company in a purpose built 40 bed centre providing long term care to persons under and over the age of 65 and

dementia care. There are presently 10 Sisters in residence in this centre whose average age is 94 years and 11 residents who have been served by the Sisters long-term. The centre is part of a campus which consists of two sheltered houses providing accommodation for an additional 8 long-term residents. The original convent forms part of the campus.

Other areas of work with which Good Shepherd Sisters have involvement include

- Waterford Immigration Network a befriending and support service for asylum seekers - one Sister and
- Legion of Mary, Waterford- 1 Sister president of the presidium
- Support for family with special needs child -1 Sister.
- Pastoral outreach is provided in London for the Congregation's former service users.

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

Profile of Members:

The Irish province currently comprises 117 Sisters: 114 live in Ireland and 3 serve internationally at Congregational level. 28 Sisters are currently in Nursing Homes. 86 live in communities in Ireland. The average age of the Sisters is 80.5 years.

The Congregation no longer runs services for children in Ireland. However, some Sisters work with children under the umbrella of parishes or other organisations as follows:

Ministry specifically for children

1. Derry (Glendermot Parish): Sacramental Preparation (1 Sister working voluntary)
2. Derry (Clarendon Ashmore Night Shelter for homeless women and children):
1 Sister — Supervision of women and children (voluntary)
3. Cork (Good Shepherd Services): 1 Sister employed as a pastoral worker for vulnerable and homeless teenagers and children
4. Limerick (Bedford Row Family Project): 1 Sister — Prison Visitors Hospitality Service (voluntary)
5. Limerick (Ascent Domestic Violence Project): support to women affected by domestic Violence 1 Sister — employed full-time work in which Sisters may have informal contact with children

Parish Ministry

- Belfast: 1 Sister
- Derry: 3 Sisters
- Cork: 2 Sisters
- Dublin: 1 Sister
- Limerick: 3 Sisters
- Waterford 2 Sisters

Formal aftercare with former residents of services run by the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

- Cork: 1 Sister
- Dublin: 1 Sister
- Limerick: 2 Sisters

Several other Sisters keep in contact with former residents informally.

The current safeguarding structure within the Congregation of the Good Shepherd Sisters is undergoing a reforming process echoing the changes that have been undertaken in the Congregation generally. The Province Leader has committed to putting in place the highest standards of safeguarding practice set down in Safeguarding Children Guidance published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCCI 2009) and readily acknowledges that there is much potential for the improvement and enhancement of current structures and practice. The ‘evolving’ nature of the safeguarding structure and practice within the Good Shepherd Congregation means that the Congregation falls short in meeting *some* of the criteria under the 7 standards. Other criteria are deemed *not met* because the criteria are adjudged not to be applicable to the Congregation.

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 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 Religious Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd.

The seven Standards are:

Standard 1 A written policy on keeping children safe

Standard 2 Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Standard 3 Preventing harm to children:

- recruitment and vetting
- running safe activities for children
- codes of behaviour

Standard 4 Training and education

Standard 5 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message:

- to children
- to parents and adults
- to other organisations

Standard 6 Access to advice and support

Standard 7 Implementing and monitoring the Standards

Each Standard contains a list of criteria, which are indicators that help decide whether this Standard has been met. The criteria give details of the steps that a Church organisation - diocese or religious order - needs to take to meet the Standard and ways of providing evidence that the Standard has been met.

Standard 1

A written policy on keeping children safe

Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

Compliance with Standard 1 is only fully achieved when a Congregation meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
1.1	The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.	Met fully
1.2	The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation (e.g. the Bishop of the diocese or provincial of a religious congregation).	Met fully
1.3	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.	Met fully
1.4	The policy is reviewed at regular intervals no more than three years apart and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or legislation.	Met fully
1.5	The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work e.g. within a church building, community work, pilgrimages, trips and holidays.	Not applicable
1.6	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Met fully
1.7	The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.	Met fully
1.8	The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.	Met fully
1.9	The policy should be created at diocese or congregational level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the diocesan or congregational policy and approved by the relevant diocesan or congregational authority before distribution.	Met fully

The Province Leadership Team of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd Sisters approved, adopted and issued new policy guidelines in October 2015 entitled *Policy Handbook for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults 2015*. Its content is drawn from policy documents used by both orders prior to their amalgamation. It is an overall comprehensive policy document which is based on the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2009).

The Good Shepherd Policy document also includes two concise documents entitled *Congregational Policy for the Reconciliation of Allegations of Abuse* issued in 2008 at Congregational level and one which has been adapted by the Irish Province in the same year which outlines clearly the response the Province must implement upon receipt of an abuse allegation. This document is entitled: *Implementation of the Congregational Policy for the Reconciliation of Allegations of Abuse at Province Level – General Norms for Unit Level*.

In relation to Criteria 1.5 the Good Shepherd Congregation no longer has a specific role/ministry in relation to children and therefore this criterion is no longer applicable. However it is recognised that separately Good Shepherd Sisters may have contact with children in their employment or ministry outside of the Congregation.

The document clearly states that

“All Sisters, staff and volunteers are required to comply with this Policy Handbook. This obligation applies save and except where the report, allegation, complaint, disclosure, suspicion or concern (current, historical or anonymous) is received by that member of the Congregation/employee/volunteer during the course of their employment/ministry outside the Congregation. In circumstances where the individual is legally or contractually obliged to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy in force in their place of employment /ministry where such employment/ministry is outside the Congregation the terms of this policy Handbook shall not apply.”

The policy document clearly indicates that in these circumstances the Safeguarding Policy specifically pertaining to the place of employment or ministry applies.

Appendix 3 of the Policy Document entitled *Guidelines for Professional Standards in Good Shepherd Ministries (May 2008)* aims to promote the spirit of Good Shepherd values within Good Shepherd ministries. Its Code of Conduct states clearly “*that all programs will comply with local and governmental requirements*”.

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 a Congregation meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
2.1	There are clear child protection procedures in all Church organisations that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child (historic or current).	Met fully
2.2	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.	Met fully
2.3	There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.	Met fully
2.4	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.	Met fully
2.5	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.	Met fully
2.6	There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute.	Met fully
2.7	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI.	Met fully

There is clear guidance within the Good Shepherd Policy Document in respect of this standard. The Congregation has two policy documents of note in this respect. The previously mentioned *Implementation of the Congregational Policy for the Reconciliation of Allegations*

at Province Level outlines the procedure regarding the management of an allegation of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse or emotional abuse of a minor by a Sister in accordance with Canon Law. The Congregation has developed a Code of Behaviour for all Good Shepherd Sisters, employees and volunteers. The Code sets out complaints procedures to deal with complaints relating to unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint. That Code clarifies that it only deals with complaints about unacceptable behaviour which do not amount to child abuse, because “a complaints procedure would be an entirely inappropriate mechanism for dealing with allegations/complaints of *child abuse*”. The Code clarifies that a complaint relating to child abuse must be dealt with under the *Policy Handbook for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults 2015* and *inter alia* must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for the Congregation, and that person is responsible for attending to civil reporting without delay.

The Good Shepherd Sisters have two Designated Safeguarding Officers. One Sister has been in the role for several years. The other Sister has been recently appointed by the Province Leader and will be charged with the role of designated officer for Northern Ireland. Prior to her appointment in this role she acted as assistant to the Designated Officer. The Designated Officer who has been in role for several years impresses as a Sister who has many years of experience in managing child safeguarding matters within the Good Shepherd Sisters. She has an unparalleled knowledge of safeguarding history and issues. She is a member of the Province Leadership Team and is valued by the Province Leader as a link person between the past and the present in terms of safeguarding matters. The role description for the designated officer in the policy document is unambiguous but expansive. The reviewer welcomes the fact that a second designated officer has been appointed by the Province Leader and it is hoped that the work generated by the role and the extensive knowledge gained by the original designated officer can be shared in a mutually supportive way.

Table 1

Incidence of Child Safeguarding allegations received within the religious congregation against Sisters from 1st January 1975 up to time of review.

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd.

1	Number of Congregational Sisters against whom allegations have been made since the 1 st January 1975 up to the date of the Review	5 ¹
2	Total number of allegations received by the Congregation since 1 st January 1975.	5
3	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Siochana/PSNI involving Sisters since 1st January 1975	5
4	Number of allegations reported to Tusla/HSE/HSC (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE,) involving Sisters the Congregation since 1 st January 1975.	5
5	Number of Sisters (still members of the Congregation) against whom allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review.	2
6	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased.	3
7	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation has been made and who are in ministry.	1 ²
8	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who are 'Out of Ministry', but are still members of the Congregation.	0
9	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation has been made and who are retired.	1
10	Number of Sisters against whom an allegation was made and who have left the Congregation.	0
11	Number of Sisters of the Congregation who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young person since the 1 st January 1975.	0

Footnote: *The term allegation in this table includes complaints and expressions of concern and includes one allegation of emotional abuse.*

1 One Complainant, four Sisters named in the complaint.

2 Investigation eliminated this Sister as she was not in the alleged location where abuse was stated to have taken place.

The Good Shepherd Congregation has been involved with a number of cases which came before the Residential Institution Redress Board (RIRB) and which as a consequence do not fall under the remit of this review.

In November 2015 the Congregation was informed by the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry Board (HIA) set up in Northern Ireland under Sir Anthony Hart that their Congregation was to be examined as part of that inquiry. This Inquiry has a remit to investigate historical institutional abuse and systemic failings by institutions or the State in

their duties towards children in Northern Ireland over a 73 – year period (1922- 1995). A request was made by the HIA to the Congregation for their cooperation in the provision of records to that Inquiry. The Congregation was informed in December 2015 that some complaints were received by the HIA in respect of the Congregation’s past ministries in Northern Ireland, However the HIA received no complaints of sexual abuse against any Good Shepherd Sister. The Province leader and designated officer informed this reviewer that no knowledge of allegations arising out of their children’s services work in Northern Ireland had been previously known to them, prior to engagement with the HIA. Prior to the commencement of the HIA Inquiry the Congregation had placed an advertisement in local media in Northern Ireland requesting people to contact the PSNI if they had knowledge of any allegation associated with the Congregation’s ministries in Northern Ireland.

For the purposes of this review undertaken by the NBSCCCI, the Congregation made available files in respect of two complainants. In this document, I will call those two files, File (A) and File (B).

The first complainant (A) named four Sisters whom she alleged caused emotional and physical abuse. Eight years after making the initial complaint, complainant A also claimed sexual abuse when she was a resident in one of the ministries of the Congregation.

In the second case (B) the complainant alleged that she was the victim of physical and emotional abuse.

The complaint relating to Case A first became known to the Congregation in 2004 by means of a solicitors letter making a generic allegation of historical “various abuses” without giving any specific details. No further details were given, and no Sister was named. The Sisters requested further information about what historical “various abuses” the person was complaining of, and who she was making the complaints about. No further details were given at that time. The Congregation (through her solicitor) offered the lady access to the CORI helpline which was available at that time and asked whether she wished to have a pastoral meeting with members of the Congregation. The file indicates that no response was forthcoming until 8 years later when contact was again made to the Congregation through solicitors. At that stage, the complainant alleged she had been “physically, sexually, and emotionally” abused. Through their solicitors, the Sisters requested further information to allow the matter to be investigated. In the response, the Complainant named four Sisters, but gave no details of the alleged abuse. The Congregation responded through its solicitors with an offer of pastoral meeting and information was given for *Towards Healing* counselling service.

The complainant’s solicitors named four Sisters. Two Sisters were deceased before the complaint was received in 2004. Following investigations carried out by the Congregation, a third Sister was excluded from further investigation as the records showed that she was not in the location where the alleged abuse was said to have taken place. Tusla concurred with that assessment. The fourth Sister is in poor health.

The Congregation reported the allegation to An Garda Siochana in March 2013. In late 2013 the complainant made contact directly and arrangements were made for her to meet with the designated officer for the Congregation. The matter was not reported to Tusla until March 2015 when a review of the file took place.

Two further meetings of a pastoral nature were convened with the complainant during summer 2015. At this point the complainant made a general disclosure of sexual abuse in addition to earlier disclosures of physical and emotional abuse. The complainant declined to name any particular person or give any details so that the matter could be further investigated. No criminal complaint has been made to An Garda Siochana by the complainant. The file indicates that the Congregation updated its notifications to both Tusla and An Garda Siochana in July 2015 and correspondence on the file indicates good communication and sharing of information with the civil authorities. The matter remains open. The file shows evidence of good file management and is formatted according to the NBSCCCI recommended file template. There was a significant delay in notifying Tusla. Tusla has stated in writing that there are no immediate child protection concerns.

The Congregation have engaged in lengthy interaction with Tusla in respect of all aspects of risk-assessment and risk-management. This case is on-going.

A second complainant (Case B) made contact in recent years with the Congregation initially seeking information about her time in residential care within a unit run by the Congregation in the 1970's. The review of the file suggests that appropriate action was taken by the Congregation commencing with their response to the request for general information relating to the complainant's history in the residential unit. At the time of this initial contact there is no record of a complaint of abuse being made by the complainant. This information was also given to the complainant's solicitors who subsequently requested this information without making a formal complaint of abuse at that time.

A period of approximately one year lapsed before the Congregation was contacted by an advocate working on behalf of the complainant and by her solicitors who eventually named their client and outlined the nature of the allegation which consisted of physical and emotional abuse. The accused Sister was not alive at the time of the complaint. The file indicates that the civil authorities were notified by the complainant's solicitors/advocate. The NBSCCCI was also contacted by the complainant's advocate. The case file indicates that the Congregation followed guidelines and advice of the NBSCCCI in the provision of pastoral support for the complainant. A meeting with the complainant accompanied by an advocate working with her was convened when a member of the Congregation who had been a member of staff in the unit at the time the complainant was a resident returned to the country from overseas ministry. The Congregation was in subsequent contact with the complainant who advised that she had participated in some but not all avenues of support suggested to her.

Several months later the advocate working on behalf of the complainant contacted the NBSCCCI complaining about the Congregation's response to the complainant.

This matter remained current at the time of writing of the NBSCCCI's review report (February 2016). The on-going nature of the complaint restricts the reviewer from commenting further. The reviewer is satisfied that the Congregation responded to the complainant with offers of pastoral support and with the facility of meeting with members of the Congregation.

Recommendation: The Province Leader in conjunction with the designated officer should ensure that all complaints of abuse are notified to the civil authorities, An Garda Siochana, Tusla in a timely fashion.

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 a congregation 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

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.1	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.	Met fully
3.2	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.	Met fully
3.3	All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as required by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.	Met fully

Criteria – Codes of behaviour

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.4	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.	Met fully
3.5	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).	Met fully
3.6	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.	Met fully
3.7	There are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or	Not applicable

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	humiliating treatment.	
3.8	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.	Met fully
3.9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Not applicable

Criteria – Operating safe activities for children

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
3.10	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.	Not applicable
3.11	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.	Not applicable
3.12	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, the Internet) to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation.	Not applicable

**Not applicable to the current ministry of this Congregation.*

The Congregation of Good Shepherd follows the guidance of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* in respect of their recruitment process and selection of staff and volunteers.

The principle is outlined in their policy document that “it is the policy of the Good Shepherd Sisters to create safe environments that protect children and vulnerable adults against abuse and neglect, by having a safe recruitment and vetting process, Congregational codes of Behaviour and operating safe activities for children and vulnerable adults”. The document further dates that as the Congregation currently has no direct ministry with children there is no specific guidance in respect of the following:

- Child to Child Code of Behaviour.
- Child to Child Anti-Bullying procedures
- Guidelines on physical contact.
- Guidelines on personal/intimate care of children with disabilities.
- Policy on taking children on trips, overnights stays, pilgrimages etc.
- Guidelines re mobile phones internet, filming and photography of children
- Guidelines on supervision ratios.

In this respect Criteria 3.7, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12 are deemed not applicable to this Congregation at present.

The policy states that if the Congregations ministries were to change these matters will be considered at that stage.

In respect of the vetting situation of members of the Congregation and their immediate employees it is important that the Province Leader gives attention in due course in bringing up to date and keeping current the vetting situation of all concerned.

The Congregation adheres to two specific Codes of Behaviour as follows:

1. Code of Behaviour for all Good Shepherd Sisters, employees and volunteers
2. Code of Conduct for all Sisters for interaction with adults in ministry, parishes and in Good Shepherd communities.

These are excellent resources.

Standard 4

Training and Education

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

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
4.1	All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.	Met fully
4.2	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.	Met partially
4.3	Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person.	Met partially
4.4	Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Met fully

The Province Leadership Team produced their new Policy Document in October 2015. This is the first child safeguarding policy document produced since the amalgamation of the two Congregations. The reviewer was informed that to date fifty Sisters have received training and induction in the new procedural document. The Safeguarding personnel/PLT informed this reviewer that it is their aim to travel to all their communities to help promote the safeguarding message. It is stated in their policy document that it is the policy of the Good Shepherd Sisters to provide induction training and periodic refresher training to all Good Shepherd Sisters, staff and volunteers in order to achieve best practice and quality care provision.

The policy document continues with "*Effective protection requires regular review of training.*" Although the Congregation has no direct corporate ministry with children it is recognised that various members of the Congregation have contact with children through their employment/other ministries. The PLT is clear that these Sisters have full awareness that they follow the child safeguarding policy, practice and training provided in their respective agencies/host agencies.

A record of general training events and attendance of relevant personnel was provided to the reviewer. It was noted that nearly half of the training undertaken by members of the Congregation and staff with safeguarding responsibilities was undertaken in 2015. This is considered a very positive situation and it is recommended that relevant members of the Congregation will continue to attend and participate in relevant training once the new safeguarding structure within the

Congregation is formalised, and when the Catholic Church's new policy and standard is implemented in 2016.

The policy document indicates that a training register will be maintained and kept up to date. This is a useful tool for the PLT/Safeguarding team to adopt especially now that the two Orders have amalgamated and there is wider scope for training participation.

The reviewer noted that much work had taken place in the months prior to the review in collating information from all Sisters in relation to their various roles and in order to assess their contact with children(if any) with a view to assessing training needs and requirements.

Recommendation 2: The Province Leader and relevant personnel must attend induction training for the Catholic Church's new policy and standards in 2016 and attend regular national child safeguarding training relevant to their roles. The Province Leader should also ensure that all personnel who hold safeguarding roles within the Province, including members of the safeguarding committee receive recognised training and support for the role they hold.

Standard 5

Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

This standard requires that the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures be successfully communicated to Church personnel and parishioners (including children). This can be achieved through the prominent display of the Church policy, making children aware of their right to speak out and knowing who to speak to, having the Designated Person's contact details clearly visible, ensuring Church personnel have access to contact details for child protection services, having good working relationships with statutory child protection agencies and developing a communication plan which reflects the Church's commitment to transparency.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
5.1	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.	Met fully
5.2	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.	Met partially
5.3	Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.	Met partially
5.4	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts / Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person.	Met fully
5.5	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.	Met fully
5.6	Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.	Met fully

The Congregation of the Good Shepherd is deemed to fulfil all but two of the above criteria. At the time of the review Criteria 5.2 and 5.3 are met partially because an update of contact details for both designated officers had yet to be put in place on all safeguarding notices in buildings associated with the Congregation. When this is finalised all criteria under this standard will be met.

Standard 6

Access to Advice and Support

Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.

Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
6.1	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.	Met fully
6.2	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.	Met fully
6.3	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.	Met fully
6.4	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.	Met fully
6.5	Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.	Met fully

The level of pastoral support and guidance as evidenced in Case A suggests that there is a high quality of pastoral outreach at the core of the Congregational response. The Congregation contributes to the provision of counselling support through their share of funding to Towards Healing counselling service. There is evidence of good links with the civil authorities and the Congregation has sought advice in the past on case management. In this respect the Province Leader is encouraged to continue to draw on the services of Professional bodies such as the NBSCCCI for example, to seek advice in relation to best practice in case management and safeguarding structure. The reviewer noted that the Congregation did not benefit from the services of an advisory board in the past and it was indicated to the reviewer that the Congregation's legal advisors took on this role previously. Whilst there appears to be little justification for the creation of a separate advisory board presently the Province Leader and the safeguarding team would benefit from their continued liaison with the NBSCCCI and with the National Case Management Committee (NCMC) in particular.

The Congregation has a website (www.goodshepherdSisters.com) which is currently undergoing an upgrade to reflect the new configuration of the Congregation. The Province leader also indicated that

she wished to bring the website up to a more modern standard. In advance of this review the website displayed a notice on the site's home page indicating that the NBSCCCI review was to take place and supplied contact details for the two designated officers and for the civil authorities for those who may have a concern.

Recommendation 3: The Province Leader should consider formally joining the NBSCCCI's National Case Management Committee for independent advice on the management of cases.

Standard 7

Implementing and Monitoring Standards

Standard 7 outlines the need to develop a plan of action, which monitors the effectiveness of the steps being taken to keep children safe. This is achieved through making a written plan, having the human and financial resources available, monitoring compliance and ensuring all allegations and suspicions are recorded and stored securely.

Criteria

Number	Criterion	Met fully or Met partially or Not met
7.1	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.	Met fully
7.2	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.	Met fully
7.3	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	Met fully
7.4	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	Not applicable
7.5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met fully

The Province Leader along with her child safeguarding team has contributed to a highly practical and feasible Strategic Safeguarding Plan for 2015-2017. It was explained to the reviewer that this plan was formulated out of a sense of necessity against the background of the amalgamation of the two Orders. The strategic safeguarding plan is in itself a symbol of this new direction in the area of safeguarding which the Congregations sees itself taking. The plan is both practical and attainable with reasonable time frames and sets out clearly who takes the action and when, and to whom the action is accountable. It will, if adhered to bring about an organisational framework covering such areas as training, vetting and integration of the new NBSCCCI Standards and Procedures once they become approved in 2016.

The process of integration brought with it a major inspection and retrospection of all aspects of the two orders. The formulation of a safeguarding structure to encompass personnel from both orders and backgrounds is in itself a new process for both sides. The Province Leader has set about the task to establish a new safeguarding structure and key personnel from both orders have been identified and invited to come together to form a safeguarding committee. Because of their low numbers the Sisters of Our lady of Charity Order have in recent years availed of the services of non-religious members in their safeguarding structure and these professionals are now included in the wider safeguarding structure of the joint Congregation. This new child safeguarding committee will be distinct from the Province Leadership Team which has up to recently taken on an interim safeguarding role. The reviewer has met the personnel identified by the Province leader and is confident that their expertise, knowledge and commitment which they displayed will underpin good safeguarding practice within this Congregation into the future. The Province leader has overall

responsibility for the monitoring, auditing and ensuring the implementation of the seven standards in the Province.

The safeguarding committee should be charged with the overseeing of the implementation and monitoring of the application of the seven standards in the life and mission of the Province. The safeguarding committee should also audit the implementation of the seven Standards. In this way a team work approach will ensure effective implementation of the standards of the NBSCCCI.

Recommendation 4: The Province Leader should formally establish the child safeguarding committee and the role of safeguarding co-ordinator.

It has been a challenging time for this Congregation in recent years. Both Congregations have not been far from public attention as a consequence of their involvement in the provision of services to women in the past and the so called ‘Magdalene Laundries’ controversy. The Good Shepherd Congregation’s involvement in the provision of children’s services in the past ensured that their practice in certain cases also came under scrutiny. The Province Leader referred to a perception of low morale amongst some Sisters as a consequence but saw that the reunification of the two Congregation’s, whilst being a major preoccupation of her time in office to date has also served as an invigorating new direction presenting new opportunities. She speaks with clarity of her vision of a solid safeguarding structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation: The Province Leader in conjunction with the designated officer should ensure that all complaints of abuse are notified to the civil authorities, An Garda Siochana, Tusla and the NBSCCCI in a timely fashion.

Recommendation 2: The Province Leader and relevant personnel must attend induction training for the Catholic Church's new policy and standards in 2016 and attend regular national child safeguarding training relevant to their roles. The Province leader should also ensure that all personnel who hold safeguarding roles within the Province, including members of the safeguarding committee receive recognised training and support for the role they hold.

Recommendation 3: The Province Leader should consider formally joining the NBSCCCI's National Case Management Committee for independent advice on the management of cases.

Recommendation 4: The Province Leader should formally establish the child safeguarding committee and the role of safeguarding co-ordinator.

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 1st 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 1990¹ and later developed in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children, 1999) which state that “child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or that of others”. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- sexual exploitation of a child which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape,

¹ This definition was originally proposed by the Western Australia Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, 1987 and is adopted by the Law Reform Commission (1990) *Report on Child Sexual Abuse*, p. 8.

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 1st 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.