

NBSCCCI 2014 Annual Report

(28th May 2015)

The National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) published its annual report today. It details the work done by the Board and its National Office during the year ending 31st March 2015.

The Board has set itself the task of completing the reviews of the religious in Ireland by the end of this year and has indicated that an updated version of the Safeguarding Standards and Guidance will also be completed, though its implementation date is yet to be decided.

During the 2014/15 period, 184 new allegations, suspicions or concerns have been shared with the National Office. The allegations relate to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. In addition, 81 allegations of physical and emotional abuse, previously reported to the civil authorities by one religious congregation were reported to the Board.

Abuse allegations against Diocesan clergy relate to 1950 up to 1997, with one case noted outside this timeframe where the abuse is alleged to have taken place in 2006. In the case of Religious Orders and Congregational priests and religious, abuse allegations relate to 1950 up to 1990, with one case where the abuse is alleged to have taken place in 1999.

The Board has received no allegations of abuse taking place after 2006 in the year under review.

All allegations notified to the Board have been passed to the Gardaí/PSNI and where appropriate to the HSCT/TUSLA.

Ms Teresa Devlin, CEO welcomed the continued improvements in prompt reporting of all allegations to the civil authorities and commended the Church Authorities for maintaining their focus on safeguarding children.

“We are acutely conscious of the significance of the phrase ‘who watches the watchmen’,” said Ms Devlin. “During the year under review, The Board commissioned Dr Ann Marie Nolan from Trinity College Dublin to examine all Diocesan reviews. We need to make sure that we have been consistent, that we applied our standards correctly and to highlight any recurring issues that we should address.”

While highlighting some difficulties in conducting a full comparative analysis, Dr Nolan identifies a number of areas of good practice in her conclusions, stating that this comparative analysis reveals “a high level of compliance with the Church’s safeguarding standards”. The Board’s audits indicate that the requirement to report promptly allegations to the statutory authorities is now fully complied with. She compliments the commitment and dedication of safeguarding staff and volunteers, stating that this is paramount to the achievement of the safeguarding objectives and one of the critical success factors in the high level of compliance with the standards within Dioceses.

“The findings of Dr Nolan’s research and evaluation are very welcome to the National Board and will help influence developments in good audit practices by the Board” said John Morgan, Chairman, NBSCCCI.

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