

## **NBSCCCI Annual Report Published**

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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

During the 2016/17 period, 86 new allegations were received including 72 new allegations relating to sexual abuse as well as 10 allegations of physical and emotional abuse, 1 relating to boundary violation and 3 where the abuse was unspecified. The bulk of these allegations relate to the period from the 1950s through to the 1990s, with a sharp drop in numbers after the year 2000. This represents a significant reduction on previous years; from 153 during 2015/16 and 265 new allegations during 2014/2015.

“The downward trend in allegations being made that we highlighted last year continues,” said Teresa Devlin, CEO, NBSCCCI. “But an examination of the trend dating back as far as 2009 when we started compiling these figures shows that we cannot assume the work is complete. Over those years there have been years where the figures rose and only constant vigilance will keep children safe.”

Following the completion of the first set of reviews of practice and extensive consultations with affected parties, a revised set of standards was created along with a revised set of protocols for the next round of safeguarding reviews. This Annual Report emphasises two of the revised standards in particular.

In recognition of the need to do more to care for complainants, the new Standard 3 ‘Caring for and supporting complainants’ was developed to be a core part of the Church’s child safeguarding ministry. To assist with the implementation of this standard, National Office staff have delivered training for Support Persons – those who provide a pastoral response to those who have been abused by clergy and religious. The National Board will develop further guidance on how to implement this standard in 2017.

The second new standard – Standard 4 – relates to the care and management of the respondent. During 2016, National Board staff met with respondents and their representatives, as well as delivering training on it. The National Board’s National Case Management Committee also provided guidance to Church authorities on how best to put in place safety plans in situations where it was clear that there was a case to be answered in relation to allegations of abuse and guidance here will also be further developed in 2017.

“Improving practice in the Church in these two areas have been set as two of our primary goals for 2017/2018,” said John Morgan, Board Chairman. “We will also introduce a revised review process, to monitor implementation of the revised set of safeguarding standards adopted in 2016.”

**ENDS**

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