



**Private and Confidential**

**Review of Safeguarding Practice**  
**in the**  
**SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS (SMA)**  
**Irish Province**  
**undertaken by**

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

**The content of this Report is not to be accessed or shared without the  
consent of Father Fachtna O Driscoll, Provincial Leader of SMA**

**Date: March 2013**

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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 (CORI) and the Irish Missionary Union (IMU), 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, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* 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 Irish Province of the Society of African Missions (SMA)* 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 us by the Society of African Missions, along with interviews with selected key personnel who contribute to safeguarding within the SMAs. The NBSCCCI believes that all relevant documentation for these cases was passed to the reviewers, and the SMA missionary society has confirmed this.

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

## **Introduction**

At the request of Fr. Fachtna O'Driscoll SMA, Provincial Leader, staff from the NBSCCCI engaged in a process of reviewing safeguarding children policy and practice on December 4th and 5th, 2012. Over the two-day fieldwork period, case files were examined and interviews with key personnel in the society's Safeguarding structure took place. The fieldwork team want to acknowledge the commitment of Fr. O'Driscoll to the Review process and his cooperation with them. They also want to acknowledge the assistance to the review given by all of the other people involved in safeguarding with the society who made themselves available for interview.

## **The Society of African Missions**

The headquarters of the Irish Province of the SMA missionary society is in Cork. From here the work of the province in Ireland and abroad is administered. The campus in Cork also contains significant accommodation and nursing care services for retired members of the society. SMA Irish Province is engaged in missionary activities in 7 African countries. [SMA international works in 16] As well as its core missionary activities, the Irish Province of SMA runs two parishes in Cork city (at Blackrock Road and at Wilton), and it operates a large Retreat and Conference Centre in Dromantine, Co. Down. SMA did have responsibility for the parish of Neilstown in the Dublin Archdiocese, but its involvement there ceased in July 2012.

SMA worldwide is made up of six separate provinces, as well as a number of established districts and districts-in-formation, making up 15 units in total. While all of these SMA units share a common founder and overall philosophy, each province operates as a separate stand-alone entity. SMA internationally has a Rome based Superior General.

Fr. Melchior de Marion Bresillac, a French priest, established SMA in December 1856. The first Irish SMA house was opened in Cork in 1878 by Fr. Francois Devoucoux and the current headquarters was built in 1882. The Irish Province was formally established in 1912 and celebrated its centenary last year. The Irish Province of SMA has 193 members, of who approximately 140 are still working, in African countries but also in Australia, the Unites States, England, the Philippines and Italy and in administrative, fundraising or parish activities in Ireland. 53 members, c. 28% are retired.

## **The Review Process**

While the NBSCCCI only undertakes a review by invitation from a Church authority, awaiting the arrival of the NBSCCCI reviewers and their findings can cause a degree of anticipatory anxiety to the people most centrally involved in leadership and Child Safeguarding activities. The review process can seem daunting, at least from a distance. The reviewers would like to record their appreciation for the welcome and hospitality that was received by everyone in the SMA Provincial House in Blackrock Road, Cork. The cooperation and openness that was shown to the reviewers by Fr. Fachtna O'Driscoll and his SMA colleagues made the task uncomplicated and allowed the reviewers to maximise the use of their time on site.

In preparation for this review, Fr. Fachtna O’Driscoll, Provincial Leader placed notices on the SMA website and in the two SMA parish newsletters and had 24,000 hard copies sent with mailings about the review, in which any person “...who may have concerns about Safeguarding Practice within the SMA...” was invited to make contact with the NBSCCCI and any survivor of abuse perpetrated by a member of the SMA who had not yet come forward was invited to do so, to the SMA Designated Person, or to the statutory agencies or to the NBSCCCI. Contact details for all of which were included. No person came forward in response to these notices.

The purpose of the review is set out within the Terms of Reference that are appended to this report. It seeks to examine how practice conforms to expected standards in the Church. Two separate but related aspects of child safeguarding are examined during a review. The first is how abuse concerns about priests and religious were managed both at the time an allegation was received and currently. The second focus of a review is on the structures and processes that have been put in place to ensure the safety of children in the present and into the future.

It is an expectation of the NBSCCCI that key findings from the review will be shared widely so that public awareness of what is in place and what is planned may be increased, as well as confidence that the Church is taking appropriate steps to safeguard children.

The review was initiated through the signing of a data protection deed, allowing full access by staff from NBSCCCI to all case management and other child safeguarding records. This access does not constitute disclosure as the reviewers through the deed were deemed to be nominated data processors of the material for the provincial leader.

The process involved the fieldwork team reading all case management records of living priests who are members of the Irish Province of SMA - or who are from another branch of SMA but are residing in an Irish Province house - and against whom a child-safeguarding allegation had been made or about whom a concern had been raised. The reviewers also read a variety of policies.

In addition, interviews were held with Fr. Fachtna O’Driscoll, Provincial Leader, the Designated Persons, three members of the Safeguarding Committee, the Director of Youth within SMA (who had also been the Support Person for a victim) and a Priest Advisor.

An interview was also held with a senior manager in HSE Child and Family Services, and a telephone discussion was had with a senior members of An Garda Síochána at the Sexual Crimes Management Unit in Harcourt Square in Dublin.

The final part of the review was an assessment of the *2012 Safeguarding Children SMA Policy Standards and Procedures* document and other documents related to SMA child safeguarding activities.

The review process uses the seven standards outlined within the NBSCCCI *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* as an assessment framework. The report below, therefore, highlights the findings by the fieldworkers under each standard and draws conclusions regarding the

effectiveness of policies and practices in the province to prevent abuse, as well as the ability of the relevant personnel within the province to assess and manage risk to children. Where appropriate, recommendations for improvements are made.

## **STANDARDS**

This section provides the findings of the review. The template employed to present the findings are the seven standards, set down and described in the Church guidance, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance 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 Society of African Missions (SMA). 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, Religious Order or Missionary Society - 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 Church organisation 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.	Met fully
1.6	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.	Met partially
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 relevant SMA document is called *Society of African Missions SMA Irish Province – Safeguarding Children – SMA Policy Standards and Procedures (2012)*. In addition to this document, the Irish SMA Provincial Leader has a file with the title *Standards*. This latter document incorporates the publicly available 2012 *Policy Standards and Procedures*, and in addition has more detailed guidance on steps to be taken by the leadership of SMA in the event of a concern being raised.



The reviewers saw the Minutes of a 22/02/1996 meeting of the SMA Irish Provincial Council at which the structures were put in place to give effect to the 1996 *Framework for a Church Response* policy and procedures document. In June 2003 the society had published its original child safeguarding guidance under the title *The Society of African Missions SMA Irish Province Dealing with Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse SMA Guidelines*, and the 2012 document is the second revision of this earlier version. [first revised in 2009 after the NBSCCCI document “Safeguarding Children”, the Standards Document was adopted by the SMAs]

On page 4 of the 2012 *Policy Standards and Procedures*, Fr. Fachtna O’Driscoll, Provincial Leader has signed the *SMA Safeguarding Policy Statement*, which is clear and unequivocal. It states that

*Based on the Gospel teaching, the leadership team wishes to state that as a Society all our members are committed to the belief that the life of each individual person is precious. We affirm that our members and employees are committed to ensuring that life will be cherished and nurtured at all times.*

*In particular we state that each child will be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with inherent rights to dignity and bodily integrity which will be respected, nurtured and protected by all.*

*We fully accept the Standards and Guidance Principles laid down by the National Board for Safeguarding Children. All our members and employees are bound by the same Standards and Guidance Principles.*

The document then outlines the seven standards from the NBSCCCI 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and states how each of these will be met and maintained within the society. There is a written undertaking in the document that the official SMA Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually.

Regarding NBSCCCI Standard 1.5, which requires that the policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work, the two SMA run parishes in Cork adhere to the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Cork and Ross; the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre has its own detailed specific child safeguarding structures and procedures, in addition to and consistent with the SMA Irish Province ones. This situation also ensures that NBSCCCI Standard 1.9 is fully met.

SMA internationally published the document *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults* (which is written in both English and French) in September 2011. The reviewers saw a booklet of SMA Irish Province Extraordinary Provincial Council, held in Cork from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2011, in which it is recorded under the agenda item Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults that

*The protocol adopted by Plenary Council 2011 is mandatory for all SMA Units. Irish Province members in Africa are asked to commit themselves fully to all workshops and education programmes that will be organised in Regions towards the implementation of this Protocol.*

In relation to NBSCCCI Standard 1.8, the SMA 2012 *Policy Standards and Procedures* clearly sets out on pages 6 and 7 how allegations are managed and by whom, and that referral to the appropriate statutory agencies and to the NBSCCCI are required without delay.

The specific requirement under NBSCCCI Standard 1.6 to state "...how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed" is not met, in that this procedure is not detailed in written form, and this needs to be corrected. The actions of SMA leadership however evidence their ability to properly manage their society members who are deemed to pose a risk to children.

The Provincial Leader's *Standards* file contains a SMA Reporting Flow Chart, which shows in graphic format the pathways that should be followed in responding to a concern about the abuse of a child by a member of the society.

### **Recommendation 1**

**Given that the SMA intends to review and revise its 2012 *Policy Standards and Procedures* in 2015, the SMA Irish Provincial Leader and his child safeguarding personnel should liaise with HSE South to ensure that its practices are consistent with the 2011 revised *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* and with the 2011 HSE *Child Welfare and Practice Handbook*, and these documents should be referenced in the SMA policy document.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the SMA Irish Provincial Leader ensures that written guidance be developed on how an SMA member who is deemed to pose a risk to children is managed and that each person who is out of ministry has an individual management plan that is reviewed annually.**

## **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 Church organisation meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

### **Criteria**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or 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 partially
<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

**Table 1**

**Incidence of Safeguarding allegations received within SMA Irish Province from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to December 2012**

1	Number of SMA Irish Province priests against whom allegations have been made since the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the Review	<b>21</b>
2	Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána involving SMA Irish Province priests since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 – this figure Includes some allegations that were notified by An Garda Síochána to SMA Irish Province	<b>32</b>
3	Number of allegations reported to the HSE (or the Health Boards which preceded the setting up of the HSE) involving SMA Irish Province priests of the since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 - this figure includes some allegations that were notified by the health services to SMA Irish Province	<b>29</b>
4	Number of SMA Irish Province priests against whom an allegation was made and who were living at the date of the review	<b>10</b>
5	Number of SMA Irish Province priests against whom an allegation was made and who are deceased	<b>11</b>
6	Number of SMA Irish Province priests against whom an allegation was made and who are out of ministry or who have left the priesthood	<b>6</b>
7	Number of SMA Irish Province priests 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	<b>1</b>
8	Number of SMA Irish Province priests against whom an allegation was made and who are in ministry, or are retired.	<b>4</b>

**Footnote:** The term allegation in this table includes complaints and expressions of concern

The discrepancy between the figures returned at 2 and at 3 above is explained by an earlier reliance by SMA Irish Province on the 1995 protocol for *Notification of Suspected Cases of Child Abuse between Health Boards and Gardai*, whereby it was the understanding of the society that if they reported to An Garda Síochána, this would automatically result in An Garda Síochána notifying the health services, but this is not how the protocol operated in practice.

Of the 10 SMA Irish Province priests about whom concerns about their abuse of children exist and who are still living, two have been laicised and an application is being processed in Rome for the laicisation of a third.

Three other members about whom concerns were raised remain in some form of ministry in mission countries. All of these cases were fully examined and assessed and the outcome in all three cases was that there were no safeguarding children issues to be addressed.

In discussion with Fr Fachtna there was recognition of the need to ensure that the safeguarding standards which apply in Ireland are implemented by all SMA members internationally. In this regard the operation and oversight of the 2011 document, *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults* is very important.

Because SMA is an international organisation, some priests of the Irish Province against whom allegations have been made live outside this jurisdiction. It is conceivable that priests from other units of SMA about whom there may be concerns of their having abused children outside this jurisdiction could live in an SMA Irish Province house. SMA internationally needs to review the overall situation to ensure that all members against whom allegations have been made are being properly assessed and managed, wherever they originate from and wherever they now reside.

The reviewers examined 15 case files on SMA priests about whom a child protection concern had arisen. The files have been organised in a logical manner and are easy to read and follow. Reference has been made to delays in reporting to the health services in the Republic of Ireland due to an interpretation of the 1995 Garda – Health Boards reporting protocol. The health services in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland have been notified of all cases of child safeguarding concerns about SMA priests of the Irish Province. Reports to An Garda Síochána and the PSNI have been made without any unnecessary delay in all cases examined by the reviewers.

In the case of one priest more than twenty years ago however, there seems to have been a lengthy delay of up to six years in An Garda Síochána fully investigating the allegations made against him. The society and the priest cooperated fully with the eventual Garda investigation. When the matter first came to light the Society immediately removed the priest from ministry and he was psychologically assessed. SMA has shared all of the information on this case with the HSE and a more recent assessment of the priest has been conducted at the HSE's request. This assessment did not identify any concerns about the priest.

There is evidence on file that the SMA society removed all priests from ministry while investigations were conducted into the complaints raised against them.

There is also evidence that priests' cases were dealt with through appropriate canonical procedures, in that written precepts were issued, and notifications were made to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in Rome.

The reviewers' finding that NBSCCCI Standard 2.2 is only partially met is based on the issue highlighted in Recommendation 1 above, i.e. that the Society's policy and procedures need to be checked for compliance with the 2011 *Children First* National Guidance.

The reviewers saw no evidence of a specific Complaints Procedure in the various policy and procedures documents that they examined during the fieldwork. As a result, NBSCCCI Standard 2.5 is only partially met. There is reference to a Complaints Procedure in the documents specific to the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, but this has to be strengthened and developed in a more detailed form.

**Recommendation 3**

**That the Irish Provincial Leader and his safeguarding personnel develop a written Complaints Procedure as part of their revision of Policies and Procedures and ensure that this is made operational in all SMA Irish Province houses and activities.**

The reviewers are satisfied that SMA Irish Province has a good understanding of the need to keep accurate records, to protect the confidentiality of such records and to store them safely and securely. The role of the Designated Person is clearly defined and understood and written guidance on the steps to be followed in dealing with concerns is good. This situation is commended.

### **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 Church organisation 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.

SMA Irish Province operates two parishes in Cork city. The reviewers checked with the Child Safeguarding personnel in the Diocese of Cork and Ross and were assured that the SMA priests involved in these two parishes fully comply with the child safeguarding policies and procedures of that diocese in all of their activities, including those that fall within the scope of Standard 3. This review does not examine the situation overseas, and therefore the only other relevant SMA Irish Province service that involves children is the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, which is situated five miles north of Newry, Co. Down.

The reviewers interviewed the SMA Irish Province priest who manages the youth camp at Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, and the child safeguarding policies and procedures specific to this centre were examined. The determination of how the SMA Irish Province complies with Standard 3 is based on this assessment of the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre.

The SMA priest who manages Dromantine camp is the Society's Director of Youth. Part of this youth remit is the running of six weeks of summer camps for children at the Dromantine centre, three for boys and three for girls. Activities involved at these camps include sports, singing, dancing and prayer. All who work with the children in Dromantine have been vetted through Access Northern Ireland. The youth leaders who support the children have themselves previously attended summer camps and are selected on the basis of being known and trusted. All youth leaders and other camp personnel have to attend training prior to the summer camps being run, and this training involves child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices. A designated person for child safeguarding is appointed for each summer camp that is run.

The priest manager has retained two professional child protection practitioners to assist him in developing the *Dromantine Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures*, to assist with training and to consult on any child safety or welfare concerns. The centre has two night staff who remain awake and on duty every night that children overnight there.

Child safeguarding is explained to the parents of children who apply for places on the summer camps. Children who attend are generally members of families that support the SMA Irish Province through membership of the Family Vocations Crusade.

**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 fully

**Criteria – Codes of behaviour**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met fully or Met partially or 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 fully
<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 fully
<b>3.9</b>	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.	Met fully



**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 fully
<b>3.11</b>	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.	Met fully
<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.	Not met

**Recommendation 4**

**That the *Camp Dromantine Child Protection Policy Draft Guidelines* are reviewed and amended as required, are formally adopted and endorsed by the Society Leader and are published on the SMA Irish Province web pages that deal with the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre. In amending these guidelines, the priest manager of the camp needs to ensure that the requirements of 3.12 above on the use of information technology are fully addressed.**

**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 Met partially or 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 fully
<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 fully
<b>4.4</b>	Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.	Met fully

Apart from the two Cork parishes and the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, the SMA Irish Province does not engage in any activities that bring its priest members into contact with children. The Diocese of Cork and Ross child safeguarding training is provided to the SMA parish personnel in Cork, while the Dromantine centre plans and provides appropriate training for its staff. The SMA designated person, the priest adviser and the priest manager of the Dromantine camp have all attended NBSCCCI training courses and briefings.

**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 Met partially or 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 fully
<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

*The Safeguarding Children SMA Policy Standards and Procedures* are easily accessible on the society’s website home page. As previously mentioned, the children who attend the Dromantine summer camps and their parents are all briefed about Child safeguarding as part of the application process for participation in these camps. Clear information on contact details for the relevant statutory child protection agencies are provided in the policy and procedures documents.

In relation to 5.5 above, the reviewers have met with a senior manager of the HSE South Children and Family Services and have spoken with a senior Garda and both are very satisfied with the working relationships and communications that they have with SMA Irish Province Child Safeguarding personnel.

While the *Safeguarding Children SMA Policy Standards and Procedures* contains a reference to an established communications policy, the reviewers were not provided with a communications policy document and so cannot evidence compliance with 5.6 above.

**Recommendation 5**

**That the Society Leader and Child Safeguarding personnel develop and publish a Communications Policy, which sets out how safeguarding information will be disseminated throughout the Irish Province and to the lay faithful.**

**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
<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 fully
<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 SMA Irish Province has joined with the NBSCCCI's National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG) and uses this as their Advisory Panel. This is one source of advice, support and information for the society. The society also has access to advice and support from the child safeguarding personnel in the Diocese of Cork and Ross, HSE and An Garda Síochána child protection personnel and in the case of the Dromantine centre, NSPCC practitioners. SMA Irish Province has also used the assessment services of a number of specialist agencies in order to have written *Risk Assessment Reports* produced on priest members against who allegations have been made. The society is outward looking in respect of its child safeguarding responsibilities and accessing appropriate professional guidance and support is one indicator of this attitude and in this regard, it meets criteria 6.1 and 6.2 above.

The policy and procedures adopted by and implemented by SMA Irish Province provide clear guidance on how to respond sensitively and effectively to a child who is

alleged or suspected to have been abused, by whomever. The Designated Person has provided training to priest members of the society in each of their Irish houses. In addition, SMA Irish Province runs a summer school each year at which the attendance of members who live and work in Ireland, as well as priest members who are on home leave from the missions is strongly encouraged and Child Safeguarding is a core topic at these events. The clear and simple Reporting Flow Chart sets out the pathways for referral to members of the society who may have a concern about a child's safety and welfare. Criterion 6.3 is well met.

Criterion 6.4 addresses how well a Church authority understands and responds to the needs of victims. SMA Irish Province demonstrated a proactive approach to victim outreach through its various magazines and newsletters, as well as its website. The Provincial Leader has personally been very engaged with victims of abuse and has issued verbal and written apologies for the abuse and the harm caused by SMA priests.

One member of SMA Irish Province who is a clinical psychologist has developed an expertise in child safeguarding awareness raising and training and in the risk assessment of priests who are alleged to have abused children. He works in South Africa and has taken part in training events in Ireland and elsewhere. His knowledge and skills in working with both victims and perpetrators of abuse are extensive and while available to the society should be accessed more by the Provincial in dealing with individuals who have offended from the Irish Province.

The reviewers examined files to establish whether the society has been responsive to the needs of identified victims and found evidence of Support Persons being offered, counselling support being provided, and financial compensation being given in some cases. As already stated Fr. O'Driscoll, the Provincial Leader has taken personal responsibility in liaising with victims and apologising to them.

SMA Irish Province has utilised the services of Irish, UK, US and Canadian agencies and practitioners to assess and treat priests who are alleged to have or who are known to have abused and have met their responsibilities to these men. Risk Management is a long term commitment in relation to a small group of men and this is being undertaken. Priest Advisers are assigned to offending priests as a source of support and monitoring. Canonical processes have been used appropriately in most cases as an appropriate way to exercise control on priests about who there are on-going concerns.

## 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 Met partially or 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.	Met partially
<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.	Met fully
<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 fully
<b>7.5</b>	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.	Met fully

SMA Irish Province is not alone in having suitable structures, policies and procedures in place and plans for future initiatives being discussed and agreed, but who have not formulated these into an agreed document that is published and available. It would not take the safeguarding personnel in SMA Irish Province long to produce such a written Child Safeguarding Plan. The reviewers met with the members of the new Safeguarding Committee who will be working with the society leadership in the development of policy and procedures and in the translation of standards into implementable actions. This committee, which was convened in February 2012, has been engaged in developing its terms of reference, work priorities and standing within the Society and is now in a position to bring forward a plan as envisaged in 7.1

#### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Society Irish Provincial requests the Safeguarding Committee with the assistance of the Designated Person to rewrite the Society's Child Safeguarding Policy, procedures and plan to be endorsed by the Provincial Leadership Team and to be adopted and published by the Society.**

The other criteria under Standard 7 are fully met. Any necessary financial support for child safeguarding within the society is met without question. The Designated Person and Provincial monitor compliance through their regular visitation to the Irish SMA houses and to SMA Irish Province priests who are working abroad. Consultation with

young people and their families is well developed in relation to the summer camps operated at the Dromantine centre. Cases files are well structured and maintained and are securely stored to protect their confidentiality.



## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

Given that the SMA intends to review and revise its 2012 *Policy Standards and Procedures* in 2015, the SMA Irish Provincial Leader and his child safeguarding personnel should liaise with HSE South to ensure that its practices are consistent with the 2011 revised *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* and with the 2011 HSE *Child Welfare and Practice Handbook*, and these documents should be referenced in the SMA policy document.

### **Recommendation 2**

That the SMA Irish Provincial Leader ensures that written guidance be developed on how an SMA member who is deemed to pose a risk to children is managed; and that each person who is out of ministry has an individual management plan that is reviewed annually.

### **Recommendation 3**

That the Irish Provincial Leader and his safeguarding personnel develop a written Complaints Procedure as part of their revision of Policies and Procedures and ensure that this is made operational in all SMA Irish Province houses and activities.

### **Recommendation 4**

That the *Camp Dromantine Child Protection Policy Draft Guidelines* are reviewed and amended as required, are formally adopted and endorsed by the Society Leader, and are published on the SMA Irish Province web pages that deal with the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre. In amending these guidelines, the priest manager of the centre needs to ensure that the requirements of 3.12 above on the use of information technology are fully addressed.

### **Recommendation 5**

That the Society Leader and Child Safeguarding personnel develop and publish a Communications Policy, which sets out how safeguarding information will be disseminated throughout the Irish Province and to the lay faithful.

### **Recommendation 6**

That the Society Irish Provincial requests the Safeguarding Committee with the assistance of the Designated Person to rewrite the Society's Child Safeguarding Policy, procedures and plan to be endorsed by the Provincial Leadership Team and to be adopted and published by the Society.

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

### **Terms of Reference**

(which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes)

1. To ascertain the full extent of all complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the diocese / religious congregation by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 to date of Review against Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and who are ministering/or who once ministered under the aegis of the diocese / religious congregation and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the diocese / religious congregation.
2. If deemed relevant, select a random sample of complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the diocese / religious congregation by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 to date of Review against Catholic clergy and/or religious now deceased and who ministered under the aegis of the diocese / religious congregation and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the diocese / religious congregation.
3. To ascertain all of the cases during the relevant period in which the diocese / religious congregation:
  - knew of child sexual abuse involving Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and including those clergy and/or religious visiting, studying and/or retired;
  - had strong and clear suspicion of child sexual abuse; or
  - had reasonable concern;and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the diocese / religious congregation.
4. To consider and report on the following matters:
  - child safeguarding policies and guidance materials currently in use in the diocese / religious congregation and an evaluation of their application;
  - communication by the diocese / religious congregation with the Civil Authorities;
  - current risks and their management.

## **Accompanying Notes**

### ***Note 1***

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

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

“While definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to context, probably the most useful definition and broadest for the purposes of this report was that which was adopted by the Law Reform Commission in 1990<sup>1</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;
- 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).

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<sup>1</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.

**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.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010 and must be selected randomly in the presence of an independent observer.

**Note 5**

**Civil Authorities:**

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