



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

Second Review of Child Safeguarding Practice
in the Diocese of Clogher
undertaken by
The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the
Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board)

Date of Review: 20th December 2022

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Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church Ireland (National Board) was established in 2006 to provide advice, services and assistance in the ongoing development of safeguarding children within the Roman Catholic Church on the Island of Ireland; to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice; and to report on these activities. This is comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

Church authorities who have entered into an agreement with the National Board through signing a Memorandum of Understanding have committed to following *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*.

In order to assess compliance, the **Diocese of Clogher** invited the National Board to undertake a review of practice, which took place in November 2022.

The Diocese of Clogher was previously reviewed in November 2012 under the *Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2008*. The report of the first Review can be found on the National Board's website www.safeguarding.ie/publications. This current Review is an opportunity for the National Board to confirm that recommendations from the previous Review (2012) were implemented.

The recommendations from the previous Review (2012) are set out below, along with the status of implementation:

Recommendation 1: Bishop McDaid must ensure that the safeguarding policy should include a definition of a vulnerable adult, which provides sufficiently clarity to enable those involved in safeguarding to decide whether an individual falls within the scope of the policy.

Implemented - *This recommendation is outside the scope of this review, however, Reviewers had sight of the document "Diocese of Clogher, Adult Safeguarding, Diocesan Policy and Procedure 2018, which contained the definition of a vulnerable adult.*

Recommendation 2: Bishop McDaid in consultation with the other bishops involved in the Advisory Panel must ensure that the Operational Guidelines for the Advisory Panel should be amended to specify that the recommendations from the panel to the relevant bishop should be in writing and should also reference the information presented to them upon which their advice is based.

Implemented - *As a result of this recommendation the above guidelines and arrangements were discontinued. There was evidence on case files of the use of the National Board's National Case Management Reference Group from 2013.*

Recommendation 3: The designated person must follow the NBSCCCI case file template and ensure that the recording of safeguarding practice within the case files should include telling the narrative of the case as an aid to understanding.

Implemented - *The National Board's case file template was used for all case files examined during the review. Information was understandable and easy to read.*

Recommendation 4: Bishop McDaid should ensure that each of the roles created and referenced in the safeguarding framework for the diocese should have a role description, which details what are the tasks and responsibilities associated with each of them.

Implemented - *Reviewers had sight of job descriptions for safeguarding roles in the diocese, which were drawn from the National Board's guidance documents.*

Recommendation 5: Bishop McDaid, in consultation with NBSCCI should develop an induction programme for the two new lay volunteers who occupy the roles of "diocesan designated person". This may include engaging with more experienced occupants of the role from neighbouring dioceses.

Implemented - *All current and previous DLPs have received specific DLP training through the National Board.*

Recommendation 6: Bishop McDaid should consider creating a communication strategy for safeguarding in the diocese that could include an annual volunteer conference as a means of thanking them and strengthening them in their efforts in taking forward this vital work.

Implemented - *The Safeguarding Committee have produced comprehensive communication strategies for the diocese and currently have a dedicated Communication Sub-group. The diocese also employ a Communications Director. Annual events for safeguarding volunteers to update on practice guidelines and provide support in their roles also takes place.*

Recommendation 7: Bishop McDaid, in consultation with his safeguarding team should enhance the Implementation Plan for 2013 to include how each objective will be approached and who will be responsible for that work.

Implemented - *The Safeguarding Committee produce annual reports with clear implementation plans for safeguarding in the diocese.*

Introduction

The Diocese of Clogher has a population of 111,700 (2019) with a faithful of over 100,000 parishioners spread across 37 parishes. The current bishop is the Most Reverend Lawrence Duffy who was appointed by the Holy See on 8 December 2018 and ordained bishop on 10 February 2019. He replaced Bishop Liam McDaid who was Bishop during July 2010 to October 2016.

The diocese encompasses all of County Monaghan, most of County Fermanagh and portions of Counties Tyrone, Donegal, Louth and Cavan. The main towns are Monaghan, Enniskillen and Carrickmacross. The Diocese is part of the Ecclesiastical Province of Armagh.

The Diocese of Clogher currently have sixty-five (65) priests incardinated in the diocese of whom (49) are active diocesan priests; three (3) work in other capacities outside of the diocese; eleven (11) are retired and two (2) are out of ministry. There are approximately sixty-nine (69) members of three (3) female religious orders and (9) male members of (3) religious orders/congregations. There are five (5) priests working or living in the diocese from other dioceses or religious orders/congregations.

Process of Review

The Diocese of Clogher Review fieldwork was undertaken on November 7, 8 and 9, 2022. The review focused on safeguarding arrangements and practices through examination of written materials, information and observations gathered from meetings with the Bishop, church personnel, volunteers, parents and young people in the diocese. Invitations to meet or write to the Reviewers in relation to safeguarding in the diocese was widely communicated through parish newsletters and on the Diocesan Website. The following is a list of those with whom the Reviewers met or had feedback from during the fieldwork for this Review:

- Bishop Larry Duffy
- Director of Safeguarding/Designated Liaison Person
- Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs)
- Priest Advisor
- Vetting Administrator
- Diocesan Safeguarding Committee
- Director of Communications
- Youth Ministry Leader - Clogher don Óige
- Parish Priests in two parishes
- Local Safeguarding Representatives (LSRs) in two parishes
- Members of Local Safeguarding Committees
- John Paul 2 awards- Leaders
- John Paul 2 awards- young person who participated
- Children's Choir Leaders
- Children's Choir members and their parents
- Church View Day Care service Leaders
- Altar servers and their parents in two parishes

- Diocesan Secretary
- Representative of Tusla
- Representative of An Garda Síochána's National Protective Services Bureau
- Representative of the Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Representative of Western Trust Children's Gateway Team

The Reviewers would like to acknowledge everyone's willingness to participate, and openly discuss their experience of safeguarding practice in the diocese. We were impressed with the level of commitment and understanding of safeguarding from diocesan to parish level. We would like to thank the Bishop and his safeguarding personnel, particularly the Director of Safeguarding, for their hospitality and for providing the Reviewers with a comprehensive itinerary and access to all required information. We acknowledge the work that went into preparations for this review.

STANDARDS

The Standards are a level of practice required to ensure good child safeguarding arrangements. Each standard is self-contained and supported by indicators to evidence if safeguarding arrangements and practice meet the required standard. The National Board has produced detailed Guidance, which is accessible on its website (<https://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance>).

The seven Standards are:

Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant

Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent

Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe

Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

Standard 7: Quality-Assuring Compliance with the Standards

This Review concentrates on practice through evaluating written records, interviews with Church personnel and young people; information from complainants and respondents.

An assessment of practice under each Standard is set out below.

Standard 1 - Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Church bodies provide an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. They provide access to good role models whom children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

The diocese has fully adopted the Church's policy, *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

There was excellent record keeping in relation to Standard 1 in the Diocesan Office, which made it possible for Reviewers to evidence adherence to the requirements of the standard.

Documentation included hard copies of safeguarding policies and procedures, safeguarding posters and leaflets, codes of behaviour for adults and children, recruitment and Garda vetting forms, all of which were also available on the diocesan website. Reviewers examined vetting, training and parish audit records. There was guidance in place for clerics/religious who have ministry with children in an external organisation/Church Body.

A comprehensive resource pack, *Diocese of Clogher, Safeguarding Resources - Ministry with Young People* is made available to each parish, which includes all guidance, documentation and public posters and leaflets required for child safeguarding at parish level. A checklist outlining the actions to be taken and documentation required informs the parish audits that have taken place each year. In 2019, the last audit before the pandemic, the diocesan audit report records that all 37 parishes returned local audits to the Director of Safeguarding.

The Director of Safeguarding has visited over two thirds of the parishes this year to support the upcoming 2022 audit. In relation to support from the Diocesan Office to the parishes, feedback from Parish Priests, LSRs and other volunteers on parish visits indicated that the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator is accessible, supportive and provided good advice.

It was also stated that the Bishop is supportive, committed and leads out on child safeguarding. We commend the proactive work of the Safeguarding Director in relation to support to the parishes.

During parish visits by the reviewers, Parish Priests and LSRs demonstrated a clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They showed great enthusiasm and commitment to safeguarding in their parishes. With particular note, the reviewers believe that the Parish Safeguarding Committees set up in the diocese were working very well. These local committees, which included Parish Priests, LSRs, Sacristans and volunteers involved in youth ministry held regular meetings, at which identified actions could be reviewed and minuted. Minutes of these meetings were available to Reviewers.

Diocesan safeguarding posters were clearly displayed in church entrances and in areas where children were involved in choir or altar serving. Codes of Behaviour leaflets for children and adults were also displayed and made available to children and their parents when they began Church activities. Reviewers had sight of signed consent forms and sign in registers for children and those coming into the sacristy. Display of *celebret* notices in the sacristies visited were also noted. Accident and Incidents forms, complaints forms and completed risk assessments (Hazard assessment forms), were also viewed along with documentation required by external organisations using parish premises. The parishes were aware of the complaints and whistleblowing policies in place, but there had been no situation where they had to use either policy. Information technology guidance to parishes and guidance on webcam use was available in Parish information packs. Reviewers observed notices in relation to use of webcams in the churches visited.

Reviewers were impressed by the good working relationships between the Parish Priests, the LSR's and other volunteers in the two parishes visited. Also by the volume of work undertaken by LSR's in relation to compiling documentation for parish audits. It was evident that there was a collective responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

In both parishes visited, the reviewers had an opportunity to meet with young people and their parents involved with altar serving, children's choir and Pope John Paul II awards. The children and young people were able to discuss who they would go to if they had any concerns and were able to talk about the codes of behaviour and the arrangements that were in place to keep them safe. Importantly, there was positive feedback from the young people on how they enjoyed the activities they were involved in and how they were happy to be involved. In relation to the Pope John Paul II awards, leaders and a young person who participated gave feedback on how important it was for the parish to see young people contributing to the community. The young persons outlined how they had loved meeting with other participants and had grown in confidence as a result. Parents outlined their satisfaction that children's activities were run well, that all safeguarding arrangements were in place in the parish, and they stated that this is now what they would expect when their children are participating in any Church activity.

Youth ministry in the diocese includes the Pope John Paul II Award Scheme; Lourdes Pilgrimage; Taizé pilgrimage; summer camps, and participation in World Youth Day. All youth activities are run under the auspices of Clogher don Óige, which has a full time Youth Ministry Director. Clogher don Óige was created in 2003, and it provides a wide-ranging, varied programme of activities, events, initiatives and pilgrimages for young people. The service "...hopes to inspire our young people, giving them opportunities to grow in faith, confidence and self-esteem.... to show and help the young people of Clogher Diocese that they are recognised as being important in a welcoming Church: that values them; their gifts; their ideas; their creativity and their call as disciples". The establishment of this ministry demonstrates the importance placed on youth participation by the bishop and the diocese. All safeguarding requirements for youth activities are coordinated between the Director of Safeguarding and the Youth Ministry Director.

They work together to ensure all documentation is completed and preparations put in place before youth activities happen.

The reviewers would like to commend the creative use of technology by the Youth Ministry Director to remain engaged with young people during Covid-19 restrictions. Through Zoom and other platforms, young people were able to prepare for confirmation through creating videos that involved the bishop. Also, a virtual Lourdes pilgrimage took place using recorded liturgies and an online virtual candle-lit procession. Reviewers were impressed with the planned approach to the re-start of full youth ministry activities in the diocese.

It was evident to the reviewers that the comprehensive safeguarding plans developed at diocesan level were being implemented at parish level and in youth ministry. These were supported by the Director of Safeguarding and the Director of Youth Ministry.

There are robust procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of volunteers as required in Standard 1. Reviewers had sight of recruitment documentation including application forms, declaration forms and vetting forms in the Diocesan Office and in the parishes, which corroborated this. Both in the Diocesan Office and in the parishes visited there was evidence of secure storage of all documentation and records.

The diocese has a dedicated Vetting Co-ordinator who has been in post since September 2017, and provides vetting for parishes in the two jurisdictions, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Parish personnel reported that they received good support from the diocesan Vetting Co-ordinator who was accessible for advice and guidance. The Vetting Co-ordinator reports to and receives support from the Director of Safeguarding.

The current requirements for re-vetting in Northern Ireland are that they be completed every three years. These arrangements are already in place for the Republic of Ireland. As outlined in Table 1, vetting figures in ROI increased due to re-vetting in 2021.*

All notifications of criminal disclosures are reported by the Vetting Co-ordinator to the bishop and the Director of Safeguarding for action.

Reviewers were provided with evidence of up-to-date vetting records in the Diocesan Office and on parish visits. Documentation viewed was held securely and complied with GDPR requirements. Local Safeguarding Committees provide updates in relation to vetting compliance as part of parish self-audits.

Table 1 - Vetting figures for Clogher Diocese

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Access Northern Ireland	66	70	28	78	44	3	16
National Vetting Bureau Republic of Ireland	31	134	83	76	28	151*	79

The reviewers were impressed with the comprehensive procedures and arrangements in place in relation to Standard 1, as detailed above. There is a clear link between diocesan safeguarding procedures and plans and implementation at local level in in the parishes and youth ministry.

Standard 1 is met.

Standard 2 - Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

Church bodies have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.

There are currently three (3) DLPs in place in Clogher Diocese. This includes the Director of Safeguarding who also holds the DLP role. One very experienced DLP is due to stand down, and there has been a period of handover, which has been beneficial in relation to continuity and support to the incoming DLPs. The bishop maintains an active involvement in respect of decision-making and pastoral response to both complainants and respondents. Regular meetings to discuss case management between the bishop and Director of Safeguarding are scheduled. All DLPs advised that they were fully supported in their work by the bishop. The diocese uses the services of the National Board's Case Management Committee (NCMC) for guidance in relation to allegations received, issues regarding case management, and canonical processes.

There was clear evidence of consultation by DLPs with statutory bodies and with the National Board in relation to case management in all nine (9) files examined. The bishop and DLPs reported that they valued the accessibility, advice, and support provided by the National Board.

Reviewers received positive feedback from Tusla, Western Trust Children's Gateway Team, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána in relation to their respective contact with the diocese. All agencies stated that they had positive working relationships with diocesan safeguarding staff, that reports had been made in a timely fashion, and that there had been open exchange of information in relation to any notifications made.

Table 2 overleaf sets out the allegations and concerns notified to the diocese since the first Review in 2012.

Table 1- Allegations reported to the Diocese of Clogher since 2012

Cleric	Current Status	Number of Complainants	Gardaí / PSNI notified	Tusla / Trust notified	National Board Notified	Appropriate and timely canonical action taken
Deceased clerics						
1.	Deceased	1	Yes - 5 days	Yes - 6 days	Yes – 5 days	N/A
2.	Deceased	2 Allegation 1 Allegation 2	Yes – 9 days Yes – 13 days	Yes – 9 days Yes – 13 days	Yes – 9 days Yes – 13 days	N/A N/A
3.	Priest 1 deceased Priest 2 deceased	1 Allegation 1 Allegation 2 (cross reference with Other Church Body)	Yes – regarding both (It took 35 days to identify both of the respondents, but once identified, notification was immediate)	N/A N/A	Yes - regarding both (It took 35 days to identify both of the respondents, but once identified, notification was immediate)	N/A N/A
4.	5 deceased priests	1	Yes - 12 days	N/A	Yes - 12 days	N/A
5.	Deceased	1	Yes - same day	Yes - same day	Yes - Same day	Preliminary Investigation. Referred to CDF. Case closed due to respondent's death
6.	Deceased	1	Yes – 14 days	N/A	Yes – same day	N/A
Living clerics						
7.	Out of ministry	1 Allegation 1 Unidentified complainant	Yes – same day	Yes – 2 days	Yes – 1 day	

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		Allegation 2	Yes - 3 days	Yes - 3 days	Yes - 3 days	CDF notified - 8 days - Canonical process awaiting outcome of statutory investigation
Case from previous Review (2012)						
8.	Permanently out of ministry since last Review (2012)	1 New allegation since last review (2012) Complainant unidentified	Yes – 71 days	Yes – 71 days	Yes – 70 days	Penal precept already in place - permanently removed from ministry
Other Church bodies						
9.	Deceased	1	Yes – 4 days	Yes – 4 days	Yes – 4 days	N/A
(Same respondent as Priest 2 in case 3 above)	Priest 2 deceased	Allegation 2	Yes – 35 days	N/A	Yes - 35 days	N/A

The reviewers were satisfied that allegations received since the last review were processed in accordance with Standard 2. Nine (9) case management files met the criteria for review. The files were examined where they related to ongoing statutory investigations, support of complainants, management of respondents, or ongoing canonical processes since the last National Board Review in 2012.

The files examined related to twelve (12) deceased priests and two (2) living priests. Eight (8) cases related to allegations of sexual abuse and one (1) to an allegation of physical abuse. In five (5) of the cases outlined, the respondents were deceased at the time the reports to the diocese were made. They related to retrospective abuse from the 1950s to the 1980s.

In the cases of Cleric 3 and Cleric 9 (same respondent), information about unnamed priests was received from a social media platform which was pursued by the Diocese; but the complainant would not come forward to the Diocese. The Diocese consulted with police and social services, and with the National Board. When the complainant came forward to the Dioceses 35 days later with the identifying information, the allegation was reported formally and immediately to the statutory authorities.

A similar situation arose in relation to the case of Cleric 7, and on this occasion the person who reported the allegation made a third party report about an unnamed complainant. Police and Social Services and the National Board were all consulted. The respondent priest named was already out of ministry and had a comprehensive management plan in place, having been subject

to concluded statutory and canonical processes some years previously. The DLP sought advice from the National Board in relation to the management of the allegation. They were advised that in spite of not having full information, and following extensive efforts to obtain this, a formal report should be made to the statutory services, and this was done. However, as identification of a complainant was not possible, no further action was possible.

Regarding Cleric 8, a previous allegation that had led to him being withdrawn from ministry was examined in the first Review and was already subject to a permanent management plan.

A third party reporter who communicated the more recent allegation through the diocese's Facebook page did not identify themselves, and therefore it was not possible to establish if this second allegation, in November 2020, was about a particular priest, as the third-party reporter did not provide a name. They did not give a date of the alleged abuse either, making it impossible to establish whether this report was about a case that had already been dealt with. The diocesan DLP spoke with the Gardai and the PSNI, but she was informed by both police forces that there was insufficient information for them to be able to initiate any investigation. The DLP subsequently requested advice from the National Board in January 2021 and was advised to make reports to the two statutory authorities anyway, for their information, and this was done immediately. The third party reporter eventually came forward in person and provided the name of the priest as Cleric 8. With this new information, the DLP immediately notified the statutory authorities.

The permanent management plan for Cleric 8 was in place from the time of the first allegation, and the annual review of his management plan was up to date. Monitoring of this man continued, and monitoring activity was recorded.

Variance in notification of cases can be due to the need to gather and clarify information, while it is always necessary to establish whether any children might be at risk due to delayed notifications. It is evident from the files that the DLPs sought advice appropriately from statutory services and the National Board during the process of all cases. There is evidence of clear decision-making and appropriate information sharing. There is also evidence of regular case management meetings with DLPs, Director of Safeguarding and the bishop. The reviewers assessed that all case files examined were undertaken in a timely and diligent fashion, given the specific circumstances pertaining to each case.

All case files were laid out using the National Board's case management system and contained summary sheets which made them easy to read and understandable.

In all cases (where there were delays), consultation took place with the statutory authorities before formal notifications were made.

Standard 2 is met.

Standard 3 - Care and Support for the Complainant

Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.

In all case files where there were identified complainants, there was evidence of the offer of support through Towards Healing or other counselling services. There is a record in the period under review of bishops and DLPs reaching out to complainants, and of a compassionate and respectful approach to those who have been victims of abuse.

The diocese has identified Support Persons who would be available if required. However, DLPs have found that complainants have preferred to continue to receive support from the DLP, who first took their complaint, than have to repeat their story to another person. Ongoing follow up with offers of support to complainants after initial reports were received by the diocese was evidenced on case files.

One complainant provided a written response to the reviewers in relation to recent contact with the bishop and diocesan safeguarding staff. In the response it was outlined that the DLPs displayed “genuine sympathy, empathy and compassion” and there had been regular follow up in relation to the complainant’s wellbeing. The complainant stated that being believed by the bishop and the DLPs had lifted a weight from them.

The use of a ‘Candle of Atonement’ and the accompanying atonement prayer was initiated in Clogher Diocese. It is now widely used throughout the country and abroad. The prayer was written by a victim of clerical abuse in the diocese. The candle of atonement and the accompanying prayer have become a permanent feature in churches of the diocese and the reviewers saw evidence of this on parish visits. This is a poignant symbol for victims, an acknowledgement by the diocese of the need for continued care and support to victims, and it is hoped an encouragement for those coming forward with complaints.

Standard 3 is met.

Standard 4 - Care and Management of the Respondent

The Church authority has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents (cleric or religious) is provided.

Of the nine (9) cases reviewed, two (2) priests are subject to ongoing restrictions, and they are being monitored by the diocese.

Respondents were given an opportunity to complete a questionnaire about their experience of the care and management they received. One response was received from a respondent who outlined that the support and care he had received from the diocese since the original allegation some years ago had initially been mixed, but that current communication is good; and he believes that he is being treated with fairness and respect, even though he is still subject to permanent restrictions.

In two (2) cases where respondent priests were alive at the time of the report, one respondent was removed from ministry after statutory and canonical processes and remained subject to case management until his death three (3) years later.

The second case related to an allegation of physical abuse. Notifications were made to the statutory authorities but the case did not proceed. The respondent died the following year. Two (2) living priests are currently out of ministry. In one case, canonical processes have begun but are awaiting the outcome of statutory investigations. The respondent is currently subject to a comprehensive management plan.

The second priest has been out of ministry for over 17 years and is subject to a comprehensive management plan.

The case files evidenced that respondents are offered support from a Priest Advisor, and their welfare is considered as part of case management. In one case, a diocesan DLP provides the role of monitor and has regular visits to the respondent. A second respondent has a Priest Advisor and monitor in place. In one case, the progression of canonical processes are awaiting the outcome of statutory investigation and assessment.

Both respondents have up-to-date management plans in place. One respondent has a permanent management plan, which takes account of his current circumstances.

The reviewers note that given prior relationships, for example between bishop, Priest Advisor, monitoring person, DLP, and a priest, there could be potential for confusion when an allegation has been made against that priest. It is important in such circumstances that the changes in roles are explained to the respondent so that boundaries can be and are maintained.

There was evidence in case files of respondents being kept up to date about the progress of their case as appropriate.

Cases had been referred to the National Case Management Committee and recommendations were followed through as required. Where management plans were in place, these were kept under review, and amendments made to reflect any change in the respondent's circumstances noted by the Priest Advisor. The DLP/Monitor was involved in all case reviews and monitored respondents as per the management plan.

The Reviewers had an opportunity to meet with a Priest Advisor who had only recently been asked to take on this role. He was clear about the role, the boundaries required, and the responsibilities attached to it. He had been provided with relevant information about the respondent he would be advising. The support needs for Priest Advisors was discussed with him, and he said that he would welcome ongoing support and guidance going forward. As he was new to the role, a training session was scheduled for him with the National Board.

Bishop Duffy and Safeguarding Director discussed with the reviewers the difficulty of being a Priest Advisor to a fellow cleric, and all acknowledged that guidance and support are needed for this role. The Safeguarding Director outlined that she is exploring with neighbouring dioceses establishing a pool of Priest Advisors, Support Persons and Monitors. This will allow for the development of experience and expertise; shared role specific training; and group mentoring/support. The reviewers believe that this would be a positive development.

Standard 4 is met.

Standard 5 - Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe

Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.

Reviewers examined the Diocesan Safeguarding Training Plan, April 2022 to April 2023. Training for the diocese is delivered by the diocesan training team. The diocese has four accredited child safeguarding Trainers who have been trained by the National Board, which is a great resource for the diocese. Training had ceased throughout the pandemic.

Due to updated guidance, a lack of training over the previous two years due to Covid-19, and new people involved in ministries working with children, a number of full day training sessions will be delivered throughout the diocese over the next 12 months. A recent full day training event was attended by over 60 people. The current three-year plan contains targets for information days, refresher training, mandated persons training, and training for youth leaders. To ensure mandatory and refresher training is up to date, trainings sessions are being scheduled to meet requests from parish safeguarding committees.

Table 2- Training figures 2016 – 2022

Year	Numbers attended
2016	237
2017	157
2018	97
2019	139
2020	14 (Pandemic)
2021	28
2022	192

It is acknowledged that the impact of Covid-19 affected the provision of training during 2020 and 2021. However, statistics for training for 2022 are encouraging, and this shows the commitment of the diocese and their training team to providing face-to-face training for clergy, safeguarding personnel, volunteers and those involved in youth ministry.

Standard 5 is met.

Standard 6 - Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

Church bodies appropriately communicate the Church's child safeguarding message.

The National Board Review was clearly advertised on the homepage of the diocesan website and within the Safeguarding section of the website as well.

The reviewers acknowledge the work that has been undertaken in communicating the safeguarding message in the diocese. A comprehensive Communication Plan, 2021 to 2024, is in place. A communication subgroup of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee has agreed a substantial number of actions, and the reviewers saw evidence of the work being undertaken in relation to updating the diocesan website, as well as the development of new safeguarding leaflets and materials, which were displayed on parish visits. Safeguarding information is available in both Irish and Polish. We note the development of safeguarding materials specific to Lough Derg pilgrimages and retreats included in the list of tasks set out in the plan.

The diocese has employed a part-time Director of Communication who links with the Director of Safeguarding in relation to safeguarding messaging which is a significant resource to the diocese. The Director monitors diocesan Facebook and Twitter accounts, and provides advice regarding GDPR. Both are involved in the development and updating of the diocesan website.

The diocese has annual meetings in Enniskillen and Monaghan, attended by clergy and volunteers from parishes and delivered by the Safeguarding Director. These meetings include updates on best practice guidelines and policy changes.

In addition, the reviewers saw evidence of -

- Parish bulletins include safeguarding information on parish visits
- Safeguarding messages, which are read out by the chairperson of the local Parish Safeguarding Committee at Mass on Safeguarding Sunday every year.
- Plans for a letter of thanks from the Bishop to Parish Safeguarding Committees for December 2022
- Plans for an event of celebration and information-sharing for Parish Safeguarding Committees, to take place in February 2023
- Revision of all children's and adult safeguarding leaflets, to include QR code to link to safeguarding website, currently in draft, which were provided to Reviewers
- Plans for meetings in pastoral areas with LSRs and leaders involved in children's ministry on carrying out risk assessments.

Standard 6 is met.

Standard 7 - Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

The Church body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually. The Church body only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.

In line with the statutory requirements of the Children First Act, 2015 the diocese have a Child Safeguarding Statement which is displayed on the diocesan website. As per the requirements of section 2 of the Act, the diocese keep a list of Mandated Persons, of which there are 73 in the diocese.

Reviewers had an opportunity to meet with the Safeguarding Committee for the diocese, which has twelve (12) members. There is a mixture of both lay and clergy, bringing a broad base of skill and knowledge to the committee. It was evident to the reviewers that the committee members have good working relationships and that there is shared responsibility for safeguarding plans and decision-making. Members reported that they work well as a committee; they are confident to participate and to learn from each other. This was stated as enabling healthy and respectful challenge, group discussion and feedback in reaching collective decisions. The chairperson was described by committee members as being very effective in their role. The Committee has a Constitution in place, works from set agendas, and keeps comprehensive minutes of each meeting.

The committee is greatly assisted in its work by the comprehensive information gathered and provided by the Director of Safeguarding through the annual parish audits. This information has informed the current Training, Communication and strategic plans, which were made available to the Reviewers. Evidence of progress made in the implementation of tasks and goals outlined in the reports were available in the minutes of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, and on the site visits to parishes. All documents and minutes produced by the committee and viewed by the reviewers reflected a robust governance structure for safeguarding in the diocese. The reviewers commend the work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

The bishop was fully informed about safeguarding arrangements across the diocese and of the plans and actions of the Safeguarding Committee. He has not generally attended meetings of the committee; however, in discussion with the reviewers he undertook to attend one meeting of the committee a year to receive feedback in relation to the outcomes of the parish audits, as well as on the priorities for training, communication and vetting which are outlined in the Diocesan 3-year Strategic Plan.

Standard 7 is met.

Conclusion

Clogher Diocese, as with other dioceses, is emerging from a sustained period of lockdown, which has impacted on all Church activities. Despite this, the reviewers were impressed with the efforts made within the diocese to maintain contact with young people during lockdown by the use of technology. There was also evidence of, and commitment to, the restarting of children's activities, such as altar serving, children's liturgy, and choir and youth ministry. Clear strategic plans around training, communication and support to parishes were evident, and tasks underway to meet the goals set.

Reviewers evidenced robust governance and management of safeguarding structures through the bishop, the Safeguarding Director, DLPs, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. Commitment to youth ministry was evidenced through the activities and plans being undertaken through Clogher don Óige. Pastoral care to those who have been victims of abuse was evidenced in case files and the written submission; and the genuine and caring responses to those coming forward by the bishop, Director of Safeguarding and DLPs is of particular note. Case management processes were robust in relation to respondents.

Bishop Duffy and his safeguarding personnel, Safeguarding Committee, and all those involved in safeguarding at parish level and in youth ministry have developed consistent and quality safeguarding practices across all seven (7) standards. The proactive work undertaken and the positive inclusion of children and young people in diocesan and parish life is commended by the reviewers.