



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

**Second Review of Child Safeguarding Practice**

**in the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly**

**undertaken by**

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

**Date of Review Report: February 2022**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Background: .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction: .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Process of Review: .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments: .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations: .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant: .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent: .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe: .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message: .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards: .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Conclusion: .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (National Board) was established in 2006

- to provide advice, services and assistance in furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland; and
- to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice; and
- to report on these activities as 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 2016, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland*.

In order to assess compliance, Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly of Cashel and Emly invited the National Board to undertake a Review of child safeguarding practice in December 2021. The Archdiocese was previously reviewed in May 2013. The report of the first Review can be found on the National Board's website [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).

The purpose of this second iteration of reviews is to assess the practice against the Catholic Church in Ireland's current standards as detailed in *Safeguarding Children, 2016, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, and make statements based on evidence that provide:

- Public confidence that the Church body is safe for children;
- Affirmation to Child Safeguarding personnel that they are doing the right things well;
- Confirmation to the Church authority that what they want to be done is in fact being done;
- Independent verification of Self-Audit – or correction and/or improvement of Self-Audit;
- Opportunities for learning.

The process of review was initiated through a letter of invitation from Archbishop O'Reilly to the National Board and the signing of an MOU and data processing deed. The latter allowed the National Board reviewers to access all material held by the archdiocese relating to safeguarding children and case management. There were two pre-fieldwork video meetings with the archbishop and the Director of Safeguarding to agree the parameters of the Review and to gather background information, all of which is detailed in this report. Archbishop O'Reilly and the Director of Safeguarding for the Archdiocese took responsibility for ensuring access to all records and relevant personnel in the Archdiocese, with children, young people and their parents, complainants and respondents.

As part of the quality assurance approach adopted by the National Board, a copy of the Review Report has been shared with Dr Helen Buckley to ensure that assessment is based on evidence and that any recommendations are appropriate.

Archbishop O'Reilly has confirmed that the reviewers have had access to all case material available in the Archdiocese.

### **Introduction**

The Metropolitan Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly in the mid-west of Ireland is in the province of Munster, and it includes most of County Tipperary and part of County Limerick.

The Province of Cashel is one of the four ecclesiastical provinces that together form the diocesan Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, the other provinces being Dublin, Tuam and Armagh. Its metropolitan bishop is the Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. The suffragan dioceses of the province are Cloyne; Cork and Ross; Kerry; Killaloe; Limerick; and Waterford and Lismore. Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly was appointed in November 2014.

The Archdiocese of Cashel is divided into eight deaneries, each of which is divided into a number of parishes (or combined parishes). In total, there are forty-six parishes (46), comprising eighty-four (84) churches in the Archdiocese, with a Catholic population of 78,878. There are seventy-five (75) priests incardinated in the archdiocese (including Archbishop O'Reilly and the Archbishop Emeritus), of whom sixty-eight (68) are active diocesan priests; two (2) work in other dioceses; one (1) man is not in active ministry due to ill health.

Two (2) priests are out of ministry, one of whom lives in the archdiocese, and the other lives in another diocese.

There are four (4) non-diocesan priests retired and living in the diocese.

There are approximately fifty (50) members of four (4) male Religious Orders, and approximately ninety (90) Sisters from Religious Orders working or living in the archdiocese.

### **Previous Review**

The Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly was reviewed by the National Board in May 2013 when it was assessed against the 2008 standards. The National Board Report contained the following seven recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The designated person from Cashel and Emly Archdiocese should consult his colleagues in the metropolitan area with a view to developing a process flowchart to guide action in all cases where there is an allegation of child abuse.

Recommendation 2: The designated person should employ the NBSCCCI case file template for future cases, ensuring that a narrative account of all actions is recorded.

Recommendation 3: Archbishop Clifford must initiate all Church action through formal decrees and ensure that there are written precepts on file outlining the restrictions on a priest's ministry.

Recommendation 4: Archbishop Clifford must ensure that the newly appointed support person is offered induction and support in her role and that a written protocol is developed which clarifies how this role will assist complainants.

Recommendation 5: Archbishop Clifford should develop a written agreement with all religious congregations within his archdiocese whereby he is informed of information that a member of the religious order has been removed from ministry following an allegation/concern of child abuse.

Recommendation 6: The Safeguarding Committee inclusive of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should consider how to develop child friendly awareness raising to empower children and create a greater awareness of who to go to if they have a concern about abuse within the Church setting.

Recommendation 7: The designated person should promote the services of the support person amongst existing and new complainants, and consider developing a protocol for support services.

The reviewers have confirmed in this Review that the above recommendations - with the exception of Recommendation 5 - have been implemented.

In the case of Recommendation 5, the reviewers understand that the sharing of the information required to implement it is now questionable in light of the impact of GDPR

## **Process of Review**

This Review was commenced and undertaken during a time when government restrictions in relation to Covid-19 continued to be in place. In effect, this meant that on- site visits were kept to a minimum and most interviews with Church personnel took place on-line via Zoom, or by telephone. The Reviewers undertook a visit to the Archdiocesan Offices in Thurles on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021; and interviews via Zoom and telephone took place on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

When the easing of government restrictions allowed, a second site visit took place on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, which included arranged visits to two parishes. These visits gave the reviewers the opportunity to meet with relevant Parish personnel, along with altar servers and their parents.

In November 2021, the reviewers joined and observed a diocesan training session via Zoom, at the invitation of the Director of Safeguarding.

Follow-up contact with the Director of Safeguarding took place during the report-writing phase.

The following is a list of those with whom the reviewers met and interviewed during the course of this Review:

- Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly
- Director of Safeguarding / DLP
- Vetting Administrator
- Safeguarding Committee
- Youth Forum – four (4) members, including Director of Pastoral Planning and Development
- Safeguarding Trainers
- Archdiocesan Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage -Youth Organiser, Spiritual Director and Director of Archdiocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage
- Priest Advisor
- Telephone calls - with complainant, and with their family support person
- Telephone call with Music School Director
- Two (2) Parish Priests
- Organiser of children's Liturgy
- Three (3) Parish Safeguarding Representatives
- Four (4) Altar Servers
- Sacristan and Deputy Sacristan
- A Parish Administrator

The reviewer's attendance at the safeguarding training session in November 2021 brought them into contact with a range of Church personnel, clerics and lay volunteers.

The reviewers would like to thank Archbishop O'Reilly and his safeguarding personnel sincerely for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to them, and for the preparation and organisation undertaken in advance of this Review.

### **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: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*. Cashel and Emly Archdiocese agreed to adopt *Safeguarding Children 2016* as its child safeguarding policy through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016.

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*

Each Standard contains a list of indicators, which ensure that the standards are met. To support implementation of the Standards, the National Board has produced detailed guidance. The Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly has adopted in full the guidance of the National Board.

This review does not assess written procedures, but concentrates on practice through a review of written records, interviews with church personnel, communication with children; 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 Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly requires that all Church personnel and volunteers whose work brings them into contact with children must undergo a safe recruitment process. Central to this process is Garda vetting, which takes place in the archdiocese in accordance with the legislation *National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Adults) Act 2012*. All vetting applications for the archdiocese are processed through the administrative offices within Archbishop's House in Thurles, which is staffed by two part-time staff.

Both parish and school based vetting requirements are administered from this diocesan office. The Cashel and Emly website contains an updated 2020 document Garda on Vetting Policy and Procedures, at <https://cashel-emly.ie/safeguarding/garda-vetting-2/>. A supporting guidance document, *Who Needs to be Vetted* (May 2021) ensures clarity regarding which roles need to be vetted. It states that:

*Any person, whose work or activity involves access to children or vulnerable adults, whether in a full-time, part-time or voluntary capacity with the Diocese, must be vetted.*

Two lists then follow outlining which roles require vetting and which do not. The reviewers were informed by safeguarding personnel that the question as to who requires vetting had been a constant one asked by parish personnel, and that a lack of clarity has possibly been a hindrance to attracting potential volunteers. This was also mentioned to the reviewers by participants at the online archdiocesan training event; and they explained that there is now more certainty and confidence around the requirements for vetting than before, and that this has encouraged the recruitment of volunteers.

During the summer of 2021, the Director of Safeguarding, along with the vetting administrative staff examined vetting records of all parish personnel, clergy, staff and volunteers; and they formulated a full colour coded (green, amber, red) database of those vetted, those soon to be re-vetted, and those whose vetting has/is about to expire. Each parish was then sent the status of vetting information relevant to them for their attention, and for subsequent action if required. In this way, each parish has a greater sense of ownership of their database. This was confirmed to the reviewers during the parish visits when parish personnel had a clear understanding of the vetting requirements and process.

The main vetting database administered from the diocesan offices was explained to the reviewers, and the Director of Safeguarding expressed confidence that vetting requirements at the time of review were fully up to date; and this was confirmed on inspection by the reviewers. Files containing vetting paperwork were seen by the reviewers to be stored securely. The system that is in place in the event that a disclosure of a conviction is returned was explained to the reviewers, and they judged this effective.

The numbers of parish personnel vetted since 2016 is as follows:

2016 - 2020: 1,346

2020 - To date: 230

Re-vetting of parish personnel takes place at three yearly intervals in the archdiocese.

All priests ministering in the archdiocese are Garda vetted, and are issued with a *celebret*, which allows them to minister away from their home parish / diocese. In this way, no *celebret* is issued without up to date Garda vetting in place. Visiting clergy are required to present their *celebret* if they wish to minister within the archdiocese. This practice was confirmed as being understood and in place in both parishes visited by the reviewers. Another priest informed the reviewers that this practice was routinely carried out in his parish during summer months in pre-pandemic years. Being a popular religious tourist destination, the parish church was booked frequently for once-off services. The reviewers were informed that on these occasions the sacristan in attendance would request and note the visiting priest's *celebret* card and ensure that the priest also signed the sacristy registry.

A central file in relation to visiting priests wishing to minister in the diocese is retained in the diocesan offices and is maintained by the Diocesan Secretary. This file contains a letter from the visiting priest's bishop in his home diocese confirming his good standing, as well as a record of the priest's participation in child safeguarding training.

Safe recruitment practice is not only about vetting. In Cashel and Emly all personnel engaged in ministry with children/young people are required to sign a *Code of Behaviour for Adults* as well as a *Safeguarding Agreement form* and *Confidentially Declaration Form*; the latter is completed by all who have access to the personal data of other people. These forms are data protection compliant, and they are retained and securely filed in their local parish office. This practice was confirmed to the reviewers by parish personnel in the parishes visited.

Children and young people attending activities and groups are required to agree to and sign a *Code of Behaviour*, which is co-signed by a parent or guardian. This requirement is for all children and young people, including young people wishing to volunteer as helpers for the annual Lourdes Pilgrimage and for those wishing to participate in the Pope John Paul II Award programme. These forms were shown to the reviewers, and they contain the required information.

The reviewers spoke with a group of altar servers who were aware of the rules of behaviour for themselves and for the adults they encounter in the parish. As an enthusiastic and committed group of young people, they expressed confidence in the safe organisation of their activity and the knowledge of whom to go to if they felt uncomfortable or unsafe.

The Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes is a long-standing annual event until it was subject to Covid Restrictions in 2020. The last Pilgrimage took place in June 2019 and the next one is anticipated to take place in 2023. The adult section comprising pilgrims, staff and volunteers accounts for over four hundred people. A youth section - involving roughly seventy young people aged approximately 17-years, along with ten youth leaders - travel to help with the assisted pilgrims.

The organisers of the youth section of the Pilgrimage have between them been involved in its organisation for a significant number of years, and this is reflected in the high level of preparation and organisation outlined to the reviewers which takes place many months in advance of the pilgrimage. The number of youth places available is determined by the overall pilgrimage requirements. Young people are selected mainly through their schools, with a small number nominated by their parish. In 2019, 72 Youth Group members travelled, who were drawn from 16 second level schools (Transition Year students), and from 33 parishes. The Youth Group were under the direction of a volunteer Director accompanied by ten experienced volunteer Youth Leaders and two priest chaplains. The Youth Group met for training / information and Safeguarding days in the months prior to the pilgrimage.

There is a social, care and spiritual dimension to the involvement of the young people. Application forms are signed by young people and their parents; Codes of behaviour for young people and their adult leaders are agreed in advance; and parents/guardians are invited to a meeting as part of the preparation. Parents are required to consent to their children's involvement as a youth helper, and they are informed that an archdiocesan safeguarding policy is in place. All adult volunteers are Garda vetted through the Archdiocesan Office. Adult to young person supervision ratios are adhered to according to diocesan safeguarding guidelines. When the pilgrimage is abroad, a Designated Liaison Person is appointed drawn from the adult youth leaders; and this person is identified and made known to the young people for them to contact should a safeguarding concern arise for them.

The reviewers were satisfied based on their discussions with the Pilgrimage personnel that robust organisation and experience governs and drives the youth section of the Lourdes Pilgrimage, and that the risks and hazards associated with taking a group of young people on a trip abroad are properly assessed and allayed.

Reviewers noted that safeguarding training in 2019 for Youth Group adult leaders was accessed through Tusla's *Children First* e-Learning module, and that this was the system in place over the years, with little training input being provided from the archdiocesan Director of Safeguarding or the training team. In the interest of best safeguarding practice for a Church-related activity, stronger linkage with the resources of the archdiocesan training team and specific Church-related safeguarding training would enhance and strengthen what is a robustly organised programme.

The uptake of the Pope John Paul II Award programme is limited at this stage, due to its relatively recent introduction in the archdiocese. To date, only a small number of schools are involved, but it is hoped that this will increase in the coming years. The reviewers met with the diocesan director in charge of the roll out of this award programme, and reviewed the application forms and related paperwork associated with it. The reviewers were reassured that the required knowledge of and commitment to diocesan safeguarding policy and procedure is in place and is being followed in the organisation of these awards.

In addition to the above-mentioned ministries, other children's / young persons' activities include altar servers, youth choirs, children's liturgy, and a faith-based youth group. Pre-sacramental classes generally take place within the schools rather than being parish based.

No specific arrangements were discussed for participation of children with special needs; however, the reviewers were informed by the Director of Safeguarding that work is ongoing with all parishes and priests to ensure that they are fully aware of the guidance around safe care for children. The 2021 Report from the Safeguarding Committee to Archbishop O'Reilly includes the following commitment: *The Safeguarding Committee will ensure that training sessions will include guidance on the safe care of children with specific needs.*

The reviewers were informed by diocesan personnel that Youth Ministry across the archdiocese is not developed as fully as they would like. The Diocesan Plan for the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, *Seeds of Hope* 2021-2026 was published in autumn 2021. This plan is the culmination of several years of a listening and consultation process initiated by Archbishop O'Reilly in 2015. The promotion of the areas of faith formation at primary and secondary school levels, as well as engagement with young people including youth leadership programmes, is given significant emphasis under the overall plan.

A Youth Forum has been in place since 2018, described as a *Think Tank* by some of its representatives who met the reviewers. This has the remit of looking at how Youth Ministry can be developed in a strategic way within the archdiocese. Archbishop O'Reilly is joined on the forum by approximately 14 members who are drawn from clergy and lay people from varied backgrounds who have a common interest in promoting youth work and young people's activities. The reviewers note that the recently appointed Director and Assistant Director of Pastoral Development and Planning - in line with the Diocesan Plan - are members of the Youth Forum and provide the link to the Safeguarding Committee, of which both have recently become members. This is a positive step, as any discussion about developing and promoting youth ministry must have at its core a fully considered, integrated and robust child safeguarding culture, policy and procedure.

The anticipated expansion and growth of youth ministries under the Diocesan Plan will create a corresponding need for safeguarding awareness raising and training of personnel. It is important that the projected expansion of youth ministry be adequately addressed in the Safeguarding Plan through the provision of safeguarding resources.

In conjunction with this point, the reviewers note that the Director of Safeguarding is also the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), and the accredited Trainer, as well as taking on the Director of Safeguarding role for Vulnerable People, which has recently come within the safeguarding remit; and all of this is carried out on a part-time basis. This person demonstrates a high degree of competence and professionalism in how she discharges her various safeguarding responsibilities; but notwithstanding this, the appointment of a support person, such as a deputy Director of Safeguarding or deputy Designated Person, might be considered to allow a better resourcing and sharing of this wide range of safeguarding tasks.

Cashel and Emly Archdiocese has a policy and procedure in relation to the use of Church property by external organisations, which was updated in August 2017. This topic was discussed in some detail at the training event attended by the reviewers, and participants displayed an understanding of the requirements of this indicator.

A number of procedures are in place that have not needed to be activated yet in Cashel and Emly Archdiocese. These include written procedures for whistleblowing, and for complaints. The reviewers are confident that the diocese has the correct policy and procedures in place for both situations, in the event of them requiring to be utilised.

The Social Media Policy, introduced in 2017 - scheduled for updating in 2022 - is accessible on the Safeguarding section of the Cashel and Emly website. The reviewers note that there is extensive guidance for all users, including parents, on the use of different media platforms, including the particularly relevant *Cashel and Emly Online Communications Guidance (2021)* which commences thus:

*The Coronavirus Pandemic restrictions undoubtedly resulted in increased usage of online platforms to stay in touch. While there are amazing benefits to these platforms for educational, professional and personal use, some aspects need to be considered when communicating with these platforms.*

It is reassuring to note that up to date guidance is in keeping with trends in communication. The Safeguarding Director confirmed that the requirements of Indicator 1.10 are in place. Parish audits help to identify any priests who minister to children in an external ministry or organisation. At the time of this Review, and according to the 2021 Parish Audit returns, no archdiocesan priest was identified as wholly working in an external organisation. One priest, who also works in a parish, holds a position in a third level college. Priests who have volunteer positions in community organisations are identified in the parish audit and are followed up by the Director of Safeguarding to ensure they are complying with the safeguarding policy of that organisation.

The Safeguarding Committee has ten members, including the Director of Safeguarding/DLP, who is also a trainer for the archdiocese, the two other trainers (making up the full complement of three trainers), and five independent members. There is a good balance of gender, age and professional background; and in November 2021, the committee was joined by two new post holders, the Director and the Assistant Director of Pastoral Planning and Development. There is currently one clerical member, who is also a diocesan trainer. The Director of Safeguarding is accountable to the Safeguarding Committee. Most committee members have been involved in the committee's work for approximately four years. The committee is chaired by an independent layperson, and its work is guided by a written constitution. Minutes and records are kept of all meetings held. The reviewers had access to these records; and they note the consistency of work and the high level of engagement of the members of this committee.

The reviewers attended a meeting of the Safeguarding Committee and were impressed by the efficient and focussed content of the meeting, and by the enthusiasm and commitment of the members. The committee oversees the Safeguarding, Communications, and Training Plans, all of which the reviewers have examined, and which are considered by them to be in keeping with National Board standards. In addition, the committee oversees the completion and analysis of the Annual Parish Audits.

This committee has adopted and integrated National Board guidance; and it has ensured that child-friendly information leaflets and posters have been produced and made available.

The reviewers conclude that all policies and procedures are in place in line with the requirements of Standard 1, Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments.

This standard is therefore 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.*

The Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly was last reviewed by the National Board in 2013, the Review Report being published in May of that year. The archdiocese has since joined with other constituent Church bodies in adopting the 'one-Church' approach represented in *Safeguarding Children; Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

For the purposes of the current Review, the reviewers examined all case management files in relation to priests of the archdiocese against whom new allegations of abuse were made in the period since the last Review (May 2013). In this category there were allegations made against four (4) men. Of these, two men were deceased by the time the allegations against them became known to the archdiocese. The identity of the respondent priest in the third case could not be confirmed, but it is believed probable that this priest was also deceased at the time the allegation was made. The priest in the fourth case is living at the time of this Review.

The following Table 1 represents allegations received by the archdiocese of Cashel and Emly since the last review in 2013:

**Table 1 – Allegations reported to the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly since 2013**

Cleric	Gardai notified	Tusla notified	National Board notified	Appropriate canonical action taken
1	Yes – within a day	No	Yes – within a day	N/A
2	Yes – within two months	Yes – within two months	Yes – within three months	N/A
3	Yes – within three months	Yes – within three months*	Yes ^	N/A
4	Yes – within a day	Notified by Tusla	Yes – within a day	Yes

\* Delay due to difficulty in identifying correct respondent - ^ National Board consulted upon receipt of allegation



In the cases of two deceased men, there were delays in notifications to the statutory authorities and to the National Board of between two and three months. The reviewers were advised that due to the limited information available upon receipt of the allegation, it took some time to identify the respondents and therefore delays in notification to the statutory authorities ensued. Given that both respondents were deceased, there was no risk to children caused, and the notifications were made as soon as was practicable.

In the other two cases, notifications were made on the same day that the reports of the allegations were received.

These cases will be discussed under Standard 4 below.

All allegations relate to incidences of abuse alleged to have occurred in the 1970's and 1980's.

The reviewers note that the management of allegations by the archdiocese has been in line with Church guidelines and that there has been no failure in this regard.

Archbishop O'Reilly has consulted with the National Board in relation to a number of matters. Concerns referred to the National Case Management Committee (NCMC) of the National Board are documented in the relevant files, which record the steps taken to ensure that the advice of the NCMC has been followed in each case.

In spite of efforts by Archbishop O'Reilly and the DLP, the statutory authorities are no longer willing to engage in formal interagency meetings. Archbishop O'Reilly understands that the geographical area covered by the archdiocese, which encompasses a number of statutory agency administrative areas, has made this task difficult to achieve. The reviewers are of the opinion that through her professional contacts and from evidence documented in case files, the DLP links appropriately and effectively with local statutory agencies and organisations when necessary. The Reviewers commend the efforts of the Archbishop and DLP in maintaining good interagency links; however, the absence of a formal interagency forum is regrettable.

Case files are well constructed and well documented, with a high quality of recording, all of which allows the reader to understand easily the file content, the actions taken, and the chronology of events in each case. The files are safely secured in a central filing system.

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 advance of this Review, Archbishop O'Reilly placed a notice on the Cashel and Emly website to inform people of the forthcoming Review; and inviting anyone to come forward to the diocese or to the reviewers if they wished to express any opinions relating to child safeguarding practice in the diocese, or if they wished to report a concern. There were no contacts made in response to this notification.

The evidence in the case files indicates that there is an immediate response to complainants by the DLP where the identity of the complainant is known to the archdiocese. Where the complainant remains anonymous - for example, if a third party such as a solicitor is involved - the diocesan response is to send a letter to the complainant through the intermediary inviting the complainant to come forward to the diocese. The reviewers were informed by the DLP that an offer of counselling support with Towards Healing is always made to complainants, whether they make direct contact with safeguarding personnel or whether their complaint comes indirectly to the archdiocese. This was confirmed by the reviewers when they examined the case management files.

The reviewers noted many documented examples of a compassionate, supportive and sustained response by the DLP to complainants, whether by email correspondence, phone or personal contact. In one matter the DLP made immediate plans to travel abroad to meet with a complainant following their contact with the diocese. In this case, the complainant chose not to attend the arranged meeting; and despite documented efforts of the part of the DLP to persuade them to make further contact, they did not do so. In another case, a complainant living abroad engaged in email correspondence and telephone calls with the DLP in an effort to share their personal story. The archdiocesan response was compassionate, understanding and supportive in tone.

It is also clear from examining the case files that not all complainants choose in the first instance to come forward directly to the archdiocese, or choose to continue their engagement with the archdiocese if they do come forward. However, in circumstances where the possibility for engagement with a complainant existed, the evidence is that all efforts were made by safeguarding staff to establish contact and communication with the view of providing a compassionate and supportive response.

The reviewers had the opportunity to speak at length with one complainant, and separately with their support person, about their experience when they made contact with the archdiocese. The reviewers were made aware of a positive, respectful, and compassionate response that they received from the DLP, and from the Archbishop who they met. This person's experience of the diocesan response was that they were 'listened to and believed', and for them, this was their greatest wish. The reviewers were left in no doubt of the positive impact that the personal contact with the diocese had on this complainant, or of their sincere gratitude for the welcome response that he received. They were provided with counselling and other practical supports from the Archdiocese.

The archdiocese has in place a Support Person who has been trained for the specific role she holds and who is available, if necessary, to provide support. She is in role for a number of years, but to date she has not been called upon to provide support. The DLP is the first line of support to complainants, and she makes them aware of the availability of the nominated support person if they wish to use her services.

The evidence from files and from personal contact with a complainant leaves the reviewers assured that complainants are welcomed by diocesan safeguarding personnel with a compassionate, non-judgemental and supportive response.

The diocesan website sets out an extensive list of supports available to complainants. The reviewers note that the professional background of the DLP equips her for her role in meeting and supporting complainants in the first instance, and with her readiness and ability to link in with other statutory agencies and organisations when necessary in the absence of a formal interagency forum - referred to in Standard 2 above.

The evidence supports the finding that there is a genuine compassionate and pastoral response offered to complainants who come forward to the diocese; and therefore this standard 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.*

In the section above on Standard 2, the archdiocese's response to the receipt of allegations against four priests was briefly described. This section now provides more detail on the case management workload of the archdiocese in relation to these and other men.

In one case, the complainant informed the archdiocese of their alleged abuse by a priest who was already deceased at the time of the complaint. This most recent complainant had not come forward prior to the Review of 2013. Their allegation was immediately notified to Gardai and to the National Board.

The case file relating to another deceased priest indicates that the allegation of retrospective abuse was made through a solicitor. The respondent was not the subject of any allegations in the past. Notifications were made to the statutory authorities within a two-month timeframe and to the National Board within three months. There is no direct complainant contact thus far.

In a further case, retrospective allegations were received, and the respondent priest was stepped aside to allow investigations to be conducted.

There was difficulty in positively identifying the respondent priest in another case in which there was a retrospective allegation. Statutory notifications were delayed by two months while the diocesan enquiries were being made.

At the request of the archdiocese, the reviewers examined the file of a case that had been previously reviewed in 2013. The reviewers' assessment is that appropriate steps were taken to report and respond to the situation presenting, and that there is no current risk to children.

In addition to the cases described above, the archdiocesan DLP has collaborated at the request of other dioceses, in the active management of several men from those dioceses who reside - or have resided - in the Archdiocese during the timeframe covered by this Review. The files indicate the DLP's willingness and availability on behalf of the archdiocese to provide a monitoring and management role for those dioceses which are unable to do so themselves because of the distances involved. The files record visits and other actions taken by the DLP. The reviewers commend the professional attitude adopted by and the support provided by the designated person in undertaking this additional responsibility.

Archbishop O'Reilly has appointed a Priest Advisor whose role is to provide care and support for a fellow priest against whom an allegation of abuse has been made. The priest advisor has been in role for 6 years and received role-specific training following his appointment as priest advisor.

The reviewers met with the priest advisor to hear first-hand his experience of being in the role and the impact that providing support and care for a fellow priest can have. He saw his role of advisor extending to that of an encourager; a link between the respondent and diocesan safeguarding personnel; to help with clarifying of information when necessary; and providing advice and guidance. The reviewers were impressed with the knowledge and non-judgemental attitude the priest advisor held. They were assured of the man's compassion, supportiveness and the level of professionalism he held in carrying out his role.

In advance of this Review, National Board respondent questionnaires were sent by the archbishop to several priests to ascertain their perception of how they were treated and managed by the archdiocese following an allegation against them.

The responses were diverse and opposite.

Despite the diversity in opinion from the respondents to the questionnaire, their situations have been addressed by Archbishop O'Reilly and his DLP in a similar way. They have been supported, while their behaviour has been managed, with actions taken where necessary to mitigate against identified risk to children. The reviewers were satisfied with the quality and detail contained within risk assessments, which are documented on all files. They note the regularity of monitoring undertaken by the DLP, evidenced in the written documentation relating to cases. In addition to the DLP monitoring, the respondents are also visited by Archbishop O'Reilly.

The appropriate canonical process has been followed in cases, and this is clearly recorded in the case files.

The reviewers conclude that all appropriate actions are and have been taken by Archbishop O'Reilly in relation to the assessment and management of risk to children. There is a strong recognition by Archbishop O'Reilly and safeguarding personnel of their responsibility to protect children; and the reviewers are satisfied that they have sufficient evidence of a blend of support and risk management which together contribute to the meeting of this standard.

## 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.*

The Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly has three (3) National Board accredited trainers. The reviewers met with all three trainers via Zoom interview. The reviewers also attended via Zoom a refresher training session delivered by two trainers. All three trainers are members of the current Safeguarding Committee and impressed the reviewers with a high level of knowledge and experience, and competency in the delivery of safeguarding training.

Safeguarding training within the archdiocese follows the schemes of training outlined in the National Board Training Strategy, and current training requirements are followed. This means that for new clerics, staff, and volunteers, a full 1-day training must be attended, followed by a shorter refresher/information session every 3 years. Typically, before the onset of Covid restrictions, the 1-day course was held twice yearly and the refresher sessions four times yearly. In pre-pandemic times, the one-day course included a shared lunch, which the trainers considered was an important element of the day, bringing the participants together as a group. The 1-day course has also been presented over 2 nights to cater for participants who would otherwise have difficulty in attending for a full day.

The onset of Covid restrictions required adjustments to the training schedule in terms of the frequency of training sessions and the mode of delivery of the training. All training was cancelled in March 2020 for the remainder of that year. In 2021, the full one-day training course was cancelled, but refresher-training sessions were delivered via Zoom. For the duration of the restrictions period, new persons whose ministry involves contact with children were requested to complete the *Tusla E learning* module, as well as completing a diocesan refresher course. This was seen as the best alternative available while people could not meet in face-to-face training sessions. The Safeguarding Committee has compiled a full safeguarding information pack for distribution to all newly appointed parish priests.

In 2021, refresher-training events were delivered online as follows:

Course	Details	Numbers involved
Information / support webinars	For local safeguarding representatives and priests 12 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	45 personnel
Safeguarding Children Refresher Training	Thursday 4th November 7-9pm Tuesday 9th November 7-9pm Saturday 13th November 2-4pm	80 personnel

## Review of Safeguarding Practice in the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly – February 2022

	Attended by a cross section of church personnel including priests, safeguarding representatives, sacristans, choir leader;	
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Training records for the years 2017 - 2021 were made available for the reviewers, which include evaluation sheets completed by attendees. The training team expressed confidence in their ability to identify all those who have received safeguarding training, as well as those who need training.

The following summarises numbers who availed of diocesan training:

Course	2017	2018	2019	2020
Full training	20	19	89	Cancelled – pandemic
Information Session	14	40	20	Cancelled – pandemic
LSR* support training	30			
Priests - Mandated Person training		19		
Ursuline music school and boarding house			20	
Faith Group)			32	

\*LSR = Local Safeguarding Representatives

**2017-2021 –Total number, adding both tables together, is 428**

The reviewers observed a refresher training session. The evening session was delivered by two of the diocesan trainers via Zoom, and it was attended by approximately twenty-two (22) people, clerics, staff and volunteers. The content of training was comprehensive and competently delivered in an engaging and interesting style. The format followed National Board guidelines. The reviewers noted that the group work exercises used allowed for interaction between the participants and opportunity for shared learning and discussion. What was abundantly clear to the reviewers was the competence and expert skill of the trainers, and their ability to sustain the interest and attention of their attendees during the course of the session.

The *Safeguarding Training Plan for 2022* (updated December 2021) outlines planning for the following training programme:

- One (1) x Full-day Safeguarding Training in September for Priests and Safeguarding Representatives, who have not completed the full day training,
- One (1) x 3-hour Refresher training for Priests Safeguarding Representatives and Parish Volunteers who have not attended training in the last 3 years;

One (1) x Support session via Zoom for Priests and Safeguarding Representatives.

[Diocesan trainers also provide information training sessions for those who have ministry with vulnerable adults. This is in line with the archdiocese Adult Safeguarding Policy, which has been in place since summer 2021.]

The *Safeguarding Training Plan 2022* includes National Board training to be accessed by the diocesan trainers.

Role-specific training at diocesan level is no longer delivered, as has been the case in previous years. However, the diocesan trainers provide training for specific groups, such as smaller catholic communities and organisations in the archdiocese who would not otherwise have their own in-house training resources.

The Safeguarding Committee, of which all three trainers are members, assesses training requirements and plans for future training based on the analysis of the annual parish self-audit returns and the trainers' own identification of current training needs. The trainers believe that the diocesan website has greatly clarified for parishes and their priests who needs training and when. The Questions and Answers section on the website is comprehensive, and trainers get a lot of contact and feedback from people regarding their understanding of training and vetting requirements. In the opinion of the trainers, Church personnel in general are more confident and feel well supported in undertaking their roles. The Safeguarding Director and other trainers are available to answer questions and provide informal training for any who request this; and this was confirmed to the reviewers by many volunteers and Church personnel during the course of this Review who spoke of the immense support given to them by the trainers in carrying out their various roles.

In addition to planned training sessions outlined above, the Safeguarding Director (who is also a member of the training team) is invited by Archbishop O'Reilly to make a short safeguarding presentation to clerics at their formal deanery meetings, which take place throughout the year.

The reviewers obtained sufficient evidence during the course of this Review that the availability and accessibility of the Safeguarding Director and trainers, as well as their provision of ongoing support and informal training is an invaluable and much appreciated resource for everyone engaged in child safeguarding within the archdiocese.

This standard is met.



## **Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message**

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

In order to assess how the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly fulfils the requirements of this standard a number of criteria were examined. These include a detailed *Communication Plan 2020 / 2023*, which is in place and is reviewed annually by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee. The commitment to develop an annual Communications Plan was outlined in the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly *3 Year Safeguarding Strategy Plan January 2020 to December 2022*.

The Safeguarding Communications Plan is a comprehensive and well-developed 3-page document, which is available to view on the safeguarding link of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly website. It sets out clearly *what* actions are to be taken, *how*, and by *whom*, and who is the target audience. Defined *timeframes* with *review* dates are outlined. This plan forms an integral part of the executive function of the diocesan safeguarding strategy.

The safeguarding link of the Cashel and Emly website at [www.cashel-emly.ie](http://www.cashel-emly.ie) provides an all relevant safeguarding information under 8 headings: *Statement and FAQs; Forms and Policies; Personnel/Roles; Contacts and Supports; Reporting a Concern; Updates/Reports/Newsletters; Garda Vetting; and Training Resources*. The layout of the Safeguarding section of the website suggests that much thought has gone into its development to allow for easily accessible and comprehensive content. The FAQs section is especially useful and relevant, a point which was made to the reviewers by participants of the training course attended by them.

Safeguarding posters are in use across the archdiocese. These include one poster especially aimed at the younger age group, and local Safeguarding Representatives are asked to display this at eye-level for children. The Safeguarding Statement is displayed in A4 and A3 format, the latter size allows for inclusion of the names of local representatives. A poster displaying the requirement for priests to produce their *Celebret* card has to be displayed above the sacristy register; and posters displaying details for the 'Towards Healing' Counselling have to be in place. All of these were observed by the reviewers during their parish visits.

Safeguarding leaflets entitled *Safe and Sound in the Catholic Church* are in use and are given to children when they join an activity. A corresponding safeguarding leaflet is given to their parents. The reviewers confirmed that this is the case in discussion with parents and children during the parish visits.

The reviewers were informed that safeguarding information in poster and leaflet form is currently available in the English language only, as parish self-audit returns in past years have indicated that there are no children engaged in ministries whose first language is not English. In its 2021 Report to Archbishop O'Reilly, the Safeguarding Committee has made a commitment to ensure that leaflets will be available in Polish and Irish, as will a copy of the policy, if the need arises.

Parishes are encouraged to include periodically safeguarding messages and information in their Parish Bulletins. The Director of Safeguarding sends out relevant reminders with pre-prepared bullet point suggestions to the parishes to aid them in this task. The Safeguarding Committee sends newsletters containing updates of safeguarding information to the LSR's on a twice-yearly basis. A file containing this safeguarding communication/information was made available to reviewers, which demonstrated supportive and effective communication with parishes and parish personnel.

A recent initiative across the archdiocese is the designation of October as *Safeguarding Month*, during which parishes are asked to increase awareness and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures. To support parishes in this task, the Safeguarding Committee sends out information, with items for newsletters and ideas for how to highlight issues during liturgies in prayers and homilies. The onset of Covid-19 somewhat curtailed the development of this initiative, but plans are in place to continue with it to promote safeguarding awareness.

The Director of Safeguarding undertakes visits to parishes to support and assist Church personnel. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, six such visits took place in the final months of 2021. Records of these visits were made available to the reviewers.

There are good links with and neighbouring dioceses and with local Religious Orders. The Director of Safeguarding is a member of a group attended by safeguarding representatives of all dioceses in the Metropolitan area of Cashel and Emly. She also attends a peer supervision and support group with other Directors of Safeguarding from various dioceses in the country. Participation in such groups helps in the promotion and sharing of best safeguarding practices. The reviewers received evidence through their discussions with the Director of Safeguarding that she has developed good working relationships with the local and national statutory authorities. The reviewers received accounts from a variety of sources during this Review of the ability of the Director of Safeguarding /DLP to communicate with and to respond effectively and with assurance to, all stakeholders within the safeguarding structure.

The implementation of the Training Plan, the carrying out of the annual parish self-audits, the Annual Report written by the Safeguarding Committee and presented to the Archbishop, along with the DLP's written report to the Archbishop are all avenues for the communication of the safeguarding message.

The Director of Safeguarding acknowledged the importance of the administrative backup and practical assistance she and the Safeguarding Committee receive from the Archdiocesan Office in the promotion and distribution of safeguarding material to parishes and volunteers.

This standard 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.*

The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee oversees the annual parish self-audits. This audit did not take place in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions as churches in the archdiocese were closed for most of that year. Although a similar situation persisted throughout 2021, a self-audit did take place for that year. In a new development the 2021 self-audit was designed by the Safeguarding Committee and conducted by electronic means via the *Survey Monkey* platform. The outcome was that most parishes returned their results via electronic means, while a small number returned hard copies, which were then posted electronically by the Director of Safeguarding. At the time of this Review, the archdiocese had received almost 100% returns from the parishes. Initial feedback from the Safeguarding Committee from their using this new style of self-audit was positive, as the new system allowed for quicker channelling and collating of information from the audit returns. This information collected helps to inform changes in the overall Safeguarding Plan. A Safeguarding Committee report was then compiled for Archbishop O'Reilly.

The reviewers had access to the most recent audit returns report, as well as to earlier returns from the 2016-2019 period, and confirmed full compliance by the archdiocese in fulfilling the requirement of conducting parish self-audits and in adopting or implementing changes when required.

Safeguarding Committee Reports to Archbishop O'Reilly on the evaluation of implementation of *Safeguarding Children* 2016 in Cashel and Emly Archdiocese for the years 2017-2021 were examined by the reviewers, along with the DLP Case Management reports for the same years. Together, these reports provide full transparency and accountability, and provides the archbishop with evidence of the level of compliance with the seven standards.

The Safeguarding Plan, which was updated in December 2021 and remains in place until December 2022, has been discussed earlier in this report. It is a comprehensive and inclusive document. It contains the timescales for implementing actions, while also describing the strategic component, with the roles and responsibilities required for ensuring its implementation listed under a number of headings:

- Establishment of Safeguarding Structure;
- Case management Structure;
- Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

Its implementation will ensure best safeguarding procedures and practice in the archdiocese.

This National Board Review has identified further evidence of compliance by Archbishop O'Reilly and his safeguarding personnel with the standards.

This standard is met.

## **Conclusion**

This Review took place at a time when Ireland was re-emerging from twenty-two months of lockdown and from restrictions resulting from Covid-19. This meant that all Church activity was severely curtailed for most of the 2020 and 2021, resulting in closure of churches for long periods, as well as the cessation of youth ministries in parishes in the archdiocese. Even so, and despite the adverse situation, key safeguarding tasks continued under the direction of Archbishop O'Reilly, the Director of Safeguarding and the Safeguarding Committee. Working together, they supported the achievement of consistency and quality in adherence to safeguarding policy and practice. In the reviewers' opinion, there is the required commitment to and knowledge of how to provide a robust safeguarding system in the archdiocese.