

## DOWN AND CONNOR REVIEW OF CASES OF ALLEGED CLERICAL ABUSE

### SECTION 1

#### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 In 2009 an internal review of practice was conducted by Mrs Barbara McDermott, Director for Safeguarding, and Mrs Catriona Rooney.
- 1.1.2 In the summer of 2011 Bishop Treanor, to ensure compliance of the Diocese with Standard 7 of the 'National Board for Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, commissioned an independent review into how the Diocese had handled all allegations made against a total of 38 priests (18 of whom are living, 20 of whom are deceased) over a fifty-year period (1961 to 2011).
- 1.1.3 The Review was conducted by **Marion Reynolds MBE, BSc, Dip Soc Work, CQSW, Cert Adv Soc Work**, an Independent Social Worker with 38 years' experience of working at practitioner, management, policy and commissioning grades within Health and Personnel Social Services at Trust, Board and Departmental levels; and **Dr John Devaney BA, MSc, PhD, CQSW, PQ Award, Advanced Award**, a Social Work academic with 23 years' experience at practitioner, management and commissioning levels.
- 1.1.4 The Reviewers were asked to examine the documentation held in respect of the allegations made. Unlimited access was afforded to the Diocesan Case Files.
- 1.1.5 The Report in its entirety was an independent report.

#### **1.2 Purpose of the Review**

The purpose was:

- To review the child protection procedures applied in relation to the investigation of allegations made against the 38 priests (18 of whom are living, 20 of whom are deceased);
- To quality assure the processes employed by the Diocese in its management of allegations made against its clergy;
- To ensure compliance of the Diocese with Standard 7 of the 'National Board for Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

### **1.3 Scope of the Review**

The Review was to consider:

- The action taken by the Diocese in relation to the allegations as measured against the Child Protection Policy and Procedures *pertaining at the time* the allegations were brought to its attention;
- The steps taken to address safeguarding issues in respect of alleged respondents and their victims;
- Any further action required to address safeguarding issues identified in the course of the review;
- Any developments which could be put in place to enhance best practice in safeguarding.

### **1.4 Methodology**

The methodology of the Review was established by the Safeguarding Office. It required:

- The review of case material provided in respect of the allegations made against the priests;
- The consideration of the findings from an Internal Audit conducted by the Safeguarding Office in 2009;
- The assessment of actions taken in terms of the level of compliance with the Child Protection procedures extant when complaints came to the attention of the Diocese;
- The making of recommendations to enhance future practice.

## **SECTION 2**

### **2.1 Statistics**

2.1.1 Over the past 50 years (1961 to 2011) the Diocese has handled a total of 40 complaints, allegations and suspicions raised against diocesan clergy. Two further complaints were received since the Review was completed.

2.1.2 The vast majority of complaints are historic and were reported to the Diocese on average 29 years after the alleged event. This finding is consistent with the recent findings of the John Jay College Research Team, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the City University of New York, March 2011, into "The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010".

2.1.3 The current status of 20 living priests against whom allegations were made is as follows:

<b>Current status</b>	<b>Number</b>
In ministry	6*
Out of ministry pending outcome of civil/canonical process	8**
Out of Ministry following prosecution and conviction	2
Retired	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

\* These six remain in ministry following the satisfactory conclusion of a civil and canonical investigation.

\*\* Two of these eight cases came to light post the Independent Review (cf. 2.1.1).

### **SECTION 3**

#### **3.1 Conclusions**

- The reviewers have identified significant improvement over time and especially in the last two years in the handling of allegations, complaints and suspicions against clergy;
- The level of contact with statutory authorities has improved greatly as has the legislative compliance, reporting and information sharing.

### **SECTION 4**

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

The Review urges the Diocese and the Safeguarding Office to take initiatives to ensure Child Protection in the following areas:

- 4.1.1 To continue to work closely with National Board and strive to widen scope of this work to include Vulnerable Adults;
- 4.1.2 To implement a file recording pro forma and case file structure;
- 4.1.3 To enhance monitoring and management of priests against whom allegations have been made;
- 4.1.4 To liaise with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and conduct the appropriate canonical process;

- 4.1.5 To review procedures to ensure that in all cases reporting is made to the Safeguarding Office without delay;
- 4.1.6 To review structures to enhance increased accountability in the work and operation of the Advisory Panel and the Safeguarding Office.

## **4.2 Steps Taken**

- 4.2.1 Many of the recommendations have already been implemented in part;
- 4.2.2 An "Implementation Group" has been created to develop the recommendations and apply them within the Diocese.