

Summary of NBSCCCI Report for Down and Connor Diocese

1. The diocese of Down and Connor is the second largest on the island of Ireland with 88 parishes and a population of 336,272. There are 150 churches served by 130 priests. 48 priests are either retired, sick, on study leave or working in other dioceses. In addition, a number of religious orders are present within the diocese: 54 priests, 28 brothers and 233 sisters.
2. The reviewers have assessed the diocese's compliance with the 48 criteria that make up the seven standards and commend the diocese in meeting 46 of these fully. This is an excellent result and indicates the very successful and effective investment of time and resources by the Diocese of Down and Connor in its Child Safeguarding services over the last five years. (p. 5)
3. The diocese has a well-resourced team retained by the Bishop. They are supported by a large number of committed and enthusiastic volunteers who together make up the safeguarding of the diocese. (p. 4) [There] is a very strong central child safeguarding team and is evidence of a commitment to and an investment in child safeguarding by the Bishop and the diocese. (p. 15)
4. The experience of the diocese in originating a new structure can inform the Irish Church in its review and revision of its ratified and adopted *Safeguarding Children* document. (p. 8)
5. The policy and guidance produced by the diocese is of a high standard. (p. 8)
6. The review of the case material indicates that current practice places an emphasis on a timely reporting of the concerning information to the PSNI and to the relevant HSC Trust. (p. 10)
7. The development of the diocesan Safeguarding Office brought about significant improvements in communication and cooperation with these important (Statutory) bodies. This is exemplified in the workings of the Multi-Agency Group, where the Diocesan Safeguarding Office, the PSNI and the Trust's social work services meet together to share information on cases as soon as these are notified to the Safeguarding Office. This arrangement is commended. (p. 11)
8. All 14 concerns or allegations [since the appointment of Bishop Noel Treanor to the diocese in June 2008] have been properly managed. (p. 12)
9. The diocese is to be commended for having developed a specific piece of guidance on whistle-blowing, something which the reviewers have not encountered in the course of reviews elsewhere. (p. 20)
10. The information contained on the diocesan website related to training activities for safeguarding children is of an exceptional standard. (p. 22)
11. The make-up of the Advisory Panel contains a good mix of relevant skills and expertise. (p. 16)
The reviewers are aware of and commend the manner in which risk assessment is not seen as a single event but is on-going and open cases are brought to the Advisory Panel for reviewing on a continuing basis. (p. 27)
12. The diocese of Down and Connor is very well supported by approximately 470 committed, trained and enthusiastic volunteers who together make up an effective safeguarding structure...This structure (PSC and VST) clearly requires a great deal of support and maintenance from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office, which is commended. (p. 19)
13. The diocese is to be commended in regard to the investment that it has made in training for volunteers...The numbers being trained is impressive - over 2,000 people in a three-year period. (p. 22)
14. The Diocese of Down and Connor published a Communications Policy in May 2012. The policy is on the diocesan website. This lucid document establishes standards for diocesan safeguarding communications and sets out goals to be achieved. This is commended. (p. 24)
15. The diocese has established a designated resource for the provision of support to those who have been harmed. This is in addition to the services offered through 'Towards Healing'. (p. 25)