**Summary of the Review of Safeguarding Practice in the Diocese of Kerry undertaken by The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church**

The Reviewpublished today is the most comprehensive, independent review undertaken to-date of safeguarding practice in the Diocese of Kerry. It is the result of an on-site audit of safeguarding practice in the Diocese conducted by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) at the request of Bishop Murphy. The review was carried out during May 2013. It measures current safeguarding practice in the Diocese against 48 criteria under the 7 National Safeguarding Standards. These Standards have been developed by the NBSCCCI in line with statutory guidance and best practice in the area. As well as reviewing the proactive safeguarding measures and structures in the Diocese the auditors reviewed case files and conducted interviews with key safeguarding personnel. The review had a dual objective of

1. Establishing how concerns or allegations of clerical child sexual abuse have been managed in the past and

2. Evaluating the efforts that are being made to create safe environments for children to ensure their current and future safety.

The review makes recommendations for improvements as considered appropriate.

The report discusses the findings of the review under the seven safeguarding standard for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

**Standard 1**

**A written policy on keeping children safe**

The Review found that the diocese is committed to child safeguarding, as demonstrated by the policy statement and the information on the diocesan website:

*We recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children and young people. We are committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God.*

*In keeping with this, we undertake to do all in our power to create safe environments for children and young people, and to ensure their protection from either physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.*

*We recognise that all involved in working with children and young people have a special duty of care towards them. We are committed to putting procedures in place through which this care is put into effect so that the rights of children and young people to safely and actively participate in the life of the Church are upheld.*

The report points out that the Kerry policy document published in 2010 is already out of date and does not meet all of the criteria in the current standard, for example, a written protocol for dealing with priests against whom an allegation is made is required. The updated policy document will be published later in 2013.More correct and up- to-date information is on the Diocesan website.

*Recommendation 1 Update the policy document and the website*

**Standard 2**

**Management of allegations**

The Reviewprocess dealt with all complaints and expressions of concern against clergy received from January 1975 to May 2013 a period of 38 years. The Review is satisfied that notifications have been made to An Garda Síochána and the HSE (previously SHB) in all of the reported cases.

It states that in general, cases of clerical child sexual abuse in the Diocese of Kerry have been appropriately managed, with improved practices evident since the introduction of guidance in 1996. Bishop William Murphy has met his responsibilities well in this regard.

The Review draws attention to a previous review commissioned by Bishop Murphy in 2009 of all known cases of clerical child sexual abuse in the Diocese. This 2009 review was very thorough and was of assistance in conducting this current review. The independent consultant made a number of recommendations pertaining to specific cases.

*Recommendation 2 Ensure all recommendations made in the 08/09 report be acted upon in full*

*Recommendation 3: Complete the construction of comprehensive case files*

An Garda Síochána and the HSE declared themselves very satisfied with the level of openness and cooperation provided by the Diocese of Kerry.

*Recommendation 4: Maintain a register of visiting and retired priests*

**Standard 3**

**Preventing Harm to Children**

The Review finds Vetting is up to date in the diocese.

*Recommendation 5: Transfer the vetting files to diocesan offices*

The diocese has put in place a safe system of volunteer recruitment for work in Church activities with children and young people. This is commended. The significant work undertaken by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator is acknowledged.

**Standard 4**

**Training and Education**

*Recommendation 6: Include a dedicated chapter on Training within the revised policy document*

There is clearly a commitment to appropriate Child Safeguarding training in the diocese and this is commended.

*Recommendation 7: Carry out training needs analysis with key personnel and implement the recommendations*

**Standard 5**

**Communicating the Church’s Safeguarding Message**

The Diocese of Kerry is committed to openness and transparency in their Child Safeguarding work.

There is an extensive network of Safeguarding people in the diocese including 130 Child Safeguarding Parish Representatives. These trained people provide an impressive channel of Safeguarding communication. It is also very apparent that Bishop Murphy has provided leadership in relation to proactive safeguarding work within his diocese and the volunteers interviewed spoke of his acknowledgement of their roles and contributions.

**Standard 6**

**Access to Advice and Support**

The Diocese of Kerry has well developed professional working relationships with An Garda Síochána, the HSE and the NBSCCCI. Through these contacts, training events and conferences, good and effective links are established with the relevant agencies to provide support and assistance.

The Diocese of Kerry has demonstrated a genuine commitment to communicate a message of wanting victims of clerical abuse to come forward and receive support and assistance. The review saw evidence of a real concern for victims, demonstrated through the provision of counselling and other pastoral supports. Additional work needs to be done on victim outreach and support responses.

*Recommendation 8: That a set of clear and achievable goals for the next three years be established within a Three Year Plan.*

**Standard 7**

**Implementing and Monitoring Standards**

The Diocese of Kerry has a very good track record in conducting internal audits of compliance at parish level with the Safeguarding Children Standards.

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**Invitation to Read and Reflect on the *Review* in Full**

The full *Review* is available at [dioceseofkerry.ie](http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie) and on the NBSCCCI website at [safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).

**Contact Information**

Anyone who has a child safeguarding concern may contact the following:

***Designated Persons - Diocese of Kerry***

Jim Sheehy: Tel: (087) 6362780

Fr. Padraig Walsh

**HSE:**

**Tralee** Social Work Department, Rathass, Tralee, Tel: (066) 7184500  
**Killarney** Social Work Department, St. Margaret's Road, Killarney, Tel: (064) 36030   
**Mallow,** Social Work Department, Tel: (022) 21484

**West Cork,** Social Work Department, Tel: (028) 40447

Office hours are 9.00am - 5.00pm Outside Working Hours all matters should be referred to An Garda Síochana.  Under the protocols developed by An Garda Síochána and the HSE, all cases of suspected child abuse would then be referred to the HSE in the normal way.

**The Gardaí:**

Tralee (066) 7102300, Killarney (064) 6671160, Caherciveen (066) 9473600, Listowel 068) 50820, Kanturk (029) 20680, Bantry: (027) 20860

Or Contact your local Garda Station or Garda Confidential Service Tel: 1800 666 111

***Support/Counselling***

*Towards Healing* is an organisation which provides telephone counselling and a counselling and psychotherapy referral service for people who have suffered physical, emotional or sexual abuse when they were children, by persons working for the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Diocese of Kerry supports the work of the *Towards Healing* service, which can be contacted by calling: free phone: 1800 - 303416 from anywhere in Ireland or 0800 - 0963315 from Northern Ireland or the UK. Or visit their website [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

*The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS)* is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge in all regions of the Health Services Executive. Our client group are adults who have experienced trauma and abuse in childhood with priority given to adult survivors of institutional abuse in Ireland. Free phone 1800 234 116 Kerry & Cork

Further information is available on <http://www.hse-ncs.ie/en/>

**Ends**