



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

**Review of Safeguarding Practice  
In the Religious Congregation of  
The Faithful Companions of Jesus  
undertaken by**

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

**This review was undertaken at the invitation of Sr. Margarita Byron  
Provincial**

**July 2014**

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## **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was asked by the Sponsoring Bodies, namely the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland.

The NBSCCCI is aware that some religious congregations have ministries that involve direct contact with children while others do not. In religious congregations that have direct involvement with children, reviews of child safeguarding have been undertaken by measuring their practice compliance against all seven Church standards. Where a religious congregation no longer has, or never had ministry involving children and has not received any allegation of sexual abuse the NBSCCCI, reviews are conducted using a shorter procedure. The size, age and activity profiles of religious congregations can vary significantly and the NBSCCCI accepts that it is rational that the form of review be tailored to the profile of each Church authority, where the ministry with children is limited or non-existent. The procedure for assessment of safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the contents page of this report. The NBSCCCI welcomes that in order to have full openness, transparency and accountability, religious congregations that do not have ministry with children have made requests to have their safeguarding practice examined and commented upon.

The purpose of this review remains the same and it is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each of these Church authorities is reviewed through an examination of policy and procedures and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to the religious congregation.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Congregation of the Faithful Companions of Jesus* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Faithful Companions of Jesus along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review involved access to one case file relating to an allegation of sexual abuse. This case was managed in its entirety by another jurisdiction and therefore does not fall within the Terms of Reference of this review. Nevertheless the reviewer examined the case records and was satisfied that all appropriate safeguarding action has been taken. Upon return of the sister to Ireland, the designated person notified the HSE and sought advice from the NBSCCCI.

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The independent reviewer is satisfied that there are no outstanding safeguarding matters to be addressed.

A second case file relating to allegations of emotional abuse by a teaching sister, then deceased, was reviewed, notwithstanding that same was not within the Terms of Reference. In that case appropriate supports were offered and An Garda Síochána was notified. In normal practice, cases involving emotional abuse allegations would not be notifiable to An Garda Síochána.

The review takes into account the status of the one case that does not fall within the Terms of Reference and will therefore be primarily based on policies and procedures made available. Key safeguarding personnel were also interviewed during the review process; these were the Designated Person and the Assistant Designated Person.

### **1. Introduction**

The Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) came to Ireland in 1842. Marie Madeleine d’Houet the founder of the FCJ society had already established two schools in London when Dr Kirwan, the parish priest of Oughterard went to them appealing for funds to refurbish his church and presbytery. In England he saw the Faithful Companions of Jesus at work and decided he must persuade them to come to Ireland. When Marie Madeleine heard the news of his proposal she sent Mother Julie Guillmet to examine the possibility of a foundation and by 1844 a novitiate and a school had been established at Oughterard. The school was very successful and already by the summer of 1844 it had enrolled 300 pupils. However, it very soon became clear to Marie Madeleine that for the expansion of the society in Ireland and recruitment of subjects, it needed to be in a more central location. The sisters left Oughterard in 1844.

### **2. Role Profile (past and present role with children)**

#### **Schools:**

##### ***Laurel Hill Limerick 1844- to the present day.***

When the administrator of St. John’s Parish invited her to make a foundation in Limerick, Marie Madeleine d’Houet saw this as providential. There would be two schools, a day school and a boarding school. These would cater for the needs of children of parents who up to this time sent their children to England to be educated. Madame d’Houet came to Limerick herself to ‘see every detail regarding the foundation’.

The day school was opened at No. 1, The Crescent on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1845 with 33 pupils. By the summer of the same year, the property of Laurel Hill had been purchased and a boarding school was opened there in 1845 with 11 pupils. So obvious was the need for more space that a major extension to the original building was planned, which was opened in 1846. The school prospered, pupil numbers increased and the foundation had the warm support of the clergy and bishop of the diocese.

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In the ensuing post famine years, the school continued to be successful. Numerous building programmes were undertaken to cater for the steadily increasing numbers. The Irish Free State was inaugurated in 1922 and by the 1930's the Irish government had begun to promote education through Irish in all areas outside the Gaelteacht. In 1935 the FCJ accepted the invitation to engage in a significant educational initiative and an 'A' school (now called the Colaiste) was opened.

In 1986 the boarding school was closed and extensive renovations were undertaken to modernise the facilities and make room for increased numbers. Now, two schools operate on the Laurel Hill campus, one teaching through the medium of Irish and one teaching through the medium of English. The school is now administered by a lay trust.

***Bruff Co. Limerick 1856-2012.***

St. Mary's Convent, Bruff held the distinction of being the last foundation established by Marie Madeleine d'Houet. The parish priest of Bruff, in 1856, applied directly to Madame d'Houet asking her to send sisters to look after schools in the parish. The school began with 25 boarders subsequently both primary and secondary schools were built. The school population became co-educational in 1969.

Over the years the school grew in size and complexity as alterations were needed to meet with the demands of the Department of Education and the increased numbers of students. Although day pupils had been accepted since 1896, it was not until the introduction of free secondary education that the number of secondary students increased noticeably. In 1969, responding to local needs, the school became co-educational. The boarding school closed in 2001 and in the following year, the first lay principal was appointed. By 2009 it became clear that the FCJ's could no longer keep on the trusteeship of the school and, in the absence of alternate trustees, it was decided that the school would close in 2012 after 156 years of involvement in education in Bruff Parish.

***Bunclody, Co. Wexford 1861- present day***

In 1861, Father Parle, the curate in Bunclody, approached the FCJ Superior General with a request that she send sisters to found a school in his parish. In due course, the sisters took over the running of the primary school in Bunclody.

The sisters then made preparations for the foundation of a boarding school for the education of older female students. The school thrived from the beginning and it seems that a significant number of Church of Ireland students attended the day school from the start. The school is now administered by a lay trust.

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***Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Dublin 1922-1999***

This was opened in 1922 as a house of studies for those attending university or other courses in Dublin. Many Irish FCJ's and some from other countries have passed through its portals over the years.

The spirituality of the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus is Ignatian, and ministry undertaken by the sisters always takes into account the current needs of the Church and the world. During the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century one of the greatest needs was the provision of education. Since the 1960's change has been more rapid than at any other time in history. There is now a well-educated Catholic laity and free state-funded education. In addition, there has been the challenge of Vatican 2 to renewal of life in the Church. For the FCJ sisters it is now possible to be open to a far wider range of ministries – any ministry that is 'for the greater glory of God'.

New ministries often require the establishment of smaller communities and a number of these have been opened in Ireland in Ireland since 1987:

1987 Cherrywood (Clondalkin, Dublin) – residence opened for a small community of sisters involved in the local parish and school.

1990 Wedgewood (Sandyford, Dublin) – residence opened for a small community of sisters involved in the local parish and schools.

1991 Gouldavoher (Limerick) – residence opened for a small community of sisters involved in local parish ministry and in the Laurel Hill schools.

1995 Westbourne (Clondalkin, Dublin) – residence opened for a small number of sisters involved in local parish ministry, in the local school and in diocesan work.

1998 Laurel Hill Court (Limerick) – residence opened for small community of sisters involved in the Laurel Hill schools, parish ministry, and in literacy and refugee projects in Limerick.

1999 54, Kennilworth Square closed and FCJ Provincial House relocated to Kimmage, Dublin.

1999 Ballycragh, (Tallaght, Dublin) – residence opened for the FCJ sisters involved in parish and other ministries.

2002 Ballgrennan (Bruff, Co. Limerick) – residence opened for the sisters who have been living on the school campus.

2009 The residences of Cherrywood and Clondalkin were closed.

**Worldwide**

The FCJ's are an international congregation and have extensive missions outside of Ireland, including Britain, Continental Europe, Canada, United States, Australia, South America, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, (Myanmar) and the Sudan.

### **3. Profile of members**

There are a total of 26 FCJ sisters in Ireland. The age profile is as follows:

Under 60 years	1
60-70 years	6
70-80 years	7
80+ years	12

As can be seen from the above age profile the majority of the Irish-based sisters are retired. Three of the sisters are working still in the educational sector. One is doing catechetical work in the Laurel Hill schools and has a role as a school chaplain. One is a career guidance teacher in the school in Bunclody. One is Associate Director of Pastoral Theology SPCM Maynooth. Some of the sisters, although retired, are still involved in voluntary work, in parishes, schools and community-based organisations. In these ministries, the sisters follow the safeguarding policy of the diocese, Department of Education etc.

### **4. Policy and Procedures Document**

The policy and procedures document for the FCJ Congregation is titled *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults: Policies and Procedures 2013*.

This document is written in a clear and readable form and was signed off by the Provincial Leader Sr. Margarita Byron. During the review detailed feedback was given to the Designated Person and the Assistant Designated Person as to suggested amendments which would clarify and improve the document, none of these are substantive but are referred to in the recommendations below. A final revision of the document should not take place until the revised version of the NBSCCCI standards is issued.

In a general context all the relevant information and appropriate safeguarding guidance is largely within the document but the reviewer would feel that key information is at times held within the appendices and should be in the main text. This applies in particular to definitions of all types of abuse which should be in the main text.

The role of the designated person is clearly set out in the safeguarding policy and procedures document. This is not the case for the role of the support person or advisor. Complainants coming forward should be able to access a support person who is not the designated person, and an accused sister should have access to an advisor, who is also not the designated person. There is not an identified structure in place to deal with either of these situations.

With regard to safe recruitment and vetting of volunteers the document deals with this issue comprehensively. One issue that the reviewer would raise however is that all volunteers who have substantial unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults should be vetted;

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not just 'long-term' volunteers as the current safeguarding document states. This has been raised already with the congregation during the initial feedback.

From the perspective of safeguarding training, a schedule of training attended by the designated persons and the provincial leader was presented, as evidence, to the reviewer. There was a full day's safeguarding training delivered to the FCJ sisters by NBSCCCI in November 2013.

It was noted that the issue of intimate care required development within the safeguarding policy and procedures. However in discussion with the designated persons it was clear this will be developed when the legislation on 'Vulnerable Persons' is enacted.

The issues of an anti-bullying policy, whistle-blowing policy, Code of Behaviour, Operating Safe Activities for Children and the Creation of a safe environment for Vulnerable Adults are addressed in full in the safeguarding document. In addition, there is a comprehensive communications strategy in place both in hard copy and on the web in respect of the safeguarding practices of the FCJ sisters.

Finally in terms of the safeguarding policy and procedures document it is noted that the congregation is committed to an annual review of this document. Alongside this process the congregation would benefit from an annual audit which would review the sisters' status in respect of ministry, Garda vetting and training attended. This would assist in the overall monitoring of standards by the provincial leader.

It was recognised that the FCJ sisters do have a safeguarding plan in place.

**Recommendation 1**

**In carrying out the 2014 review of the safeguarding document the congregation should consider the following:**

- a) Inserting all key safeguarding information and guidance into the main body of the document.**
- b) Inserting information about support personnel for complainants and advisors for respondent sisters**
- c) Ensuring that all volunteers who have substantial unsupervised contact with children and/or vulnerable adults involved in activities linked with the congregation should be Garda vetted prior to commencing working with children and/or vulnerable adults.**
- d) An annual audit of safeguarding within the Congregation.**



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## **5. Structures**

The primary roles in safeguarding within the FCJ Congregation are carried out by the designated person and the assistant designated person, both FCJ sisters. They link closely with the FCJ Provincial Leader, for Europe, in respect of any safeguarding issues. Effectively these three individuals are the Safeguarding Committee within the Congregation.

There is no formal Advisory Committee in place and to date any advice required has been sought from the NBSCCCI. When there is a need, in the event of a new allegation, the FCJs should formally join the National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG) organised by the NBSCCCI.

## **6. Management of allegations and liaison with the statutory authorities.**

As previously noted within the terms of reference the FCJ sisters in Ireland have not been required to process any allegations within the relevant time period.

In terms of contact with the statutory authorities the congregation notifies An Garda Síochána in Harcourt Square, Dublin and the relevant Area Managers within TUSLA, child and family agency.

Information was sought from TUSLA who advised:

*“This female Religious Order has been categorised as Category 2 meaning a single child sexual abuse allegation was made against a member and where there is no current risk posed. It appears the allegation was managed appropriately by the RO in another jurisdiction where it was reported to both civil authorities. No other allegations have been made against this member or any other member of the RO.*

*Of the 26 members in Ireland as of 31.03.2013 a total of seven members have part-time current ministry with children in the context of schools, college and parish pastoral ministry. FCJ schools are part of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust. Members are guided by the relevant guidelines.*

*The FCJ child protection policy has yet to be reviewed as part of our process. In the meantime we have no concerns about this RO.”*

Contact was also made with An Garda Síochána who stated that they had no concerns about the FCJs.

If it was a school based concern the Department of Education and Skills would also be notified.

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**7. Conclusion**

This review was limited to the extent that it was primarily a review of the FCJ congregation's safeguarding practice based on their safeguarding policies and procedures documentation. The recommendations suggested in respect of this document will bring greater clarity both to the members of the congregation and to the public around how they prevent abuse and respond to allegations. Their limited response to allegations to date has been appropriate, they have consulted with the relevant authorities and have been diligent in their efforts to ensure that risk is managed. The congregation in its documentation and from interviews with the designated persons displays a commitment to the safeguarding process and to an annual review of all safeguarding work which is acknowledged and commended.

**Small Religious Congregations**

**Terms of Reference (which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes)**

**Introduction**

In order for the National Board to be able to state that all Church Authorities on the island of Ireland have been evaluated in respect of their child safeguarding policies and practices, both historical and current, then some form of appropriate assessment has to be conducted of every one of these. It is rational however that the form of assessment is tailored to the profile of each Church Authority, and that needless expenditure of resources and unnecessary interference in the life of religious orders and communities that have no children-specific ministry would be avoided.

This Review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small Religious Congregations /Orders, and Missionary Societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the Congregations ministry.

It would also scrutinize practice within all known cases to ensure that they have been responded to appropriately.

The review's methodology is an adaptation of the methodology developed for all Dioceses and large religious congregations and missionary societies, where the ministry involves regular contact with children.

The proposed Review would consider the following:-

- (a) Former role with children
- (b) Allegations of child abuse against members and how these have been responded to
- (c) Existing relationships with statutory authorities such as the HSE, Gardai in the Republic and the HSCT or PSNI in Northern Ireland.
- (d) Policies in place and being applied for safeguarding children
- (e) Roles and responsibilities and where they exist the operation of Advisory Panels, and Safeguarding Committees

The objective of the Review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice match up to the standards set down in the Safeguarding

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Children Guidance published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the Review. In cases where the alleged or known offender is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

### **Guidance Documents**

The Review will be guided by the following:-

- (a) Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance;
- (b) Children First Guidance in ROI; and Regional Child Protection Guidelines in Northern Ireland;
- (c) Legislation that exists in each jurisdiction which contributes to safeguarding children and young people.

The Review will be undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

The Review process will be overseen by a **Reference Group** to whom the CEO will report on a regular basis. The membership of this **Reference Group** has been drawn from each of the statutory child protection agencies in both jurisdictions, along with eminent individuals in the field from academia. The current Reference Group consists of : Dr Helen Buckley (TCD); Mr Paul Harrison (Tusla), and John Toner (SBNI).

It is important to confirm that the value of the Review is dependent upon full and complete access to all relevant documentation and information relating to the abuse of children known to the individual Church authorities. The Review will proceed on the basis that willingness exists on the part of each of the subjects of the Review to provide full access to the fieldwork team, subject, where relevant, to the terms of the Data Processing Deed agreed between the Sponsoring Bodies and entered into between the parties hereto.

## **Step Guide to the Review Process**

### **Step 1.**

A letter of invitation to review is sent by the Provincial/Regional Superior or other person responsible for the Congregation/ Order or Missionary Society (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Ordinary’).

### **Step 2.**

The CEO will forward a survey to the provincial which will identify:

- Current number of members
- Past role with children
- Current role with children
- Total number of allegations received up to 2014
- Number of living members against whom there are allegations

### **Step 3.**

For any Order where there have been allegations a full review will proceed, as per step 4 - 23. For those Orders where there have been no known allegations a desk top examination of policies and procedures will take place followed by a site visit to interview all relevant personnel within the safeguarding structure. For these orders **step 5 and 13-23** will apply.

### **Step 4.**

The CEO and Ordinary will confirm the dates for the fieldwork for the Review, and names of the fieldwork team.

### **Step 5.**

The Church Authority will be asked to make available all of the case files and related documentation in respect of any safeguarding concerns that have been identified within the diocese. The Church Authority will make available a room with wireless internet access for the reviewers to conduct their review of files, so that any records made by the reviewers can be directly typed and stored onto a secure server which is only accessed by the reviewers. In the absence of internet access the reviewers will type their notes onto a secure encrypted usb stick for later uploading onto the secure server.

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**Step 6.**

The Church Authority will be requested to sign the revised Data Processing Deed prior to the arrival of the team.

**Step 7.**

The Church Authority will arrange a schedule of interviews with all who hold safeguarding roles within its functional area. The designated person and the Church Authority will be available to the reviewers throughout the period of fieldwork.

**Step 8.**

The fieldwork team when they arrive on site will firstly confirm that they have a suitable place to work in and that all the required documentation has been provided to them for their Review. In the event that the fieldwork team forms the opinion that the Church Authority has not provided access to all such documents, the Board shall give notice in writing to the Church Authority of the opinion of the fieldwork team and such notice shall specify the reasons for same. Thereupon, the Church Authority shall respond in detail to the Notice. Each party shall use its best endeavours to resolve any differences of opinion which shall arise and, in the event that resolution is not arrived at, the parties will attempt to resolve the dispute by recourse to the services of a mediator agreed between them or nominated for the purpose at the request of any of them without prejudice to the Board's entitlement to terminate the Review. In the event that resolution has not been arrived at following mediation, either party shall be at liberty to terminate forthwith the Review.

**Step 9.**

On arrival, the fieldwork team should be supplied with a single case file index that lists all the cases that have been created within the diocese. These may be divided into two groups. The first group will contain all allegations that relate to living alleged or known perpetrators. The second will contain any that are deceased.

**Step 10.**

Depending on the volume involved a decision should be made as to whether all or a random sample of the "deceased group" should be reviewed. Care should be taken to include all prominent cases in the sample.

**Step 11.**

Each case file will be reviewed by each fieldworker independently in the first instance. They will create a written summary with chronological information of the case. In certain cases a second reader may be required, this will be discussed and agreed between the fieldworkers.

**Step 12.**

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Following the reading of the case and the creation of a summary, the fieldworkers will analyse and assess the actions taken in the case. They will assess compliance with agreed Church policy that was extant at that time. They will also indicate whether any current risk exists in respect of the information contained within the file and advise the church Authority of necessary safeguarding action to reduce the risk.

**Step 13.**

When all the case files have been read, the fieldwork team will then examine and review any procedures or protocols that exist within the diocese to confirm that they are in compliance with the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document issued by the NBSCCCI in February of 2009.

**Step 14.**

To complete the Review, the fieldwork team will then seek to speak to those directly involved in the safeguarding structure in the diocese. This should include the Advisory Panel, a sample of parish safeguarding representatives, the designated person, the safeguarding committee, victim support and advisors and the Bishop/Provincial. The purpose of these interviews is to form a view of the competence and effectiveness of the safeguarding structure that exists within the Church Authority.

**Step 15.**

The fieldwork team will also seek to speak to representatives of the key statutory agencies to provide them with an opportunity to express their views on the quality of the working relationships that exist between them and the Church Authority.

**Step 16.**

A verbal feedback session on initial key findings will be given to the Church Authority.

**Step 17.**

Upon completion of the field work, the team may request to take materials – other than casework records to review off-site; this alongside all materials gathered by the reviewers, including written notes on cases and meetings, will be analysed and will form the basis of the draft assessment review report.

**Step 18.**

The draft will be forwarded to the Church Authority for factual accuracy checking.

**Step 19.**

Alongside all other reports under review, the report will be presented in draft to the Reference Group for their critique and comment. If further work is required at the direction of the

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Reference group the CEO will ensure this work is completed and advise the Church Authority accordingly.

**Step 20.**

The report will be legally proofed by NBSCCCI lawyer.

**Step 21.**

The report will be forwarded to the National Board for approval

**Step 22**

A final draft report will then be submitted to the Church Authority. The expectation would be that the Report will be published by the Church Authority at an agreed time in the future.

**Step 23.**

All case material written, including summaries, as part of the review, which are for the reviewers use only, will be stored on a secure server.

**Guide for Reviewers**

In terms of small (female religious orders) reference should be made to the following:

1. Has the Order provided alternative care to children in an orphanage, industrial school or children's residential home, but no longer is engaged in running such services;
2. Has the order provided education to children, in both or either boarding schools and day schools, but no longer does so ;
3. Has the order provided medical and/or nursing services to children, but no longer does so;
4. Has the order provided any other services to children, in community services centres, youth clubs etc., and no longer does so;
5. Does the order currently provide any sort of service to children and families that brings them into regular contact with children;
6. Has the order never provided any service to children (e.g. contemplative orders).

In relation to category 1 above;

1. The reviewers will establish whether any service they provided is included in the list of children's residential services produced by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB);
2. If this is the case, reference should be made to this.



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3. If complaints have been referred to the Redress Board or Ryan Commission, this review cannot access these records and that will be stated in the report.
4. If the order has received complaints which have not been processed through Redress or Ryan these cases will be thoroughly examined as detailed above.

**Review of Policy and Procedures**

1. It is recognised that not all Orders will have any ministry with children and therefore their policies and procedures should reflect the work that they do with children.
2. If the Order only works through other organisations, example in Diocesan work or in schools, they are required to follow the policies of those organisations.
3. If there are gaps in the policy document an assessment should be made as to whether the ministry engaged in requires full compliance with all criteria attached to the seven standards
4. Where it is clear that the criteria do not apply a reference should be made at the beginning of the review report that the Order's ministry is not directly with children and therefore adherence to particular criteria do not apply.
5. If the Order is a contemplative Order, there is no expectation that they will have detailed policies and procedures, but reference should be made to their ministry and that they have no contact with children.
6. In all cases, contact will be made with the civil authorities to identify if they have any child safeguarding concerns in relation to the order.