

MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION'S SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE FOR ITS COMMUNITIES IN IRELAND

Date of Meeting: 22nd March 2023

Safeguarding Committee members present: Sister Angelo Roncalli Corbett, Designated Liaison Person for the Congregation (AC) and Sister Marie Galvin (MG)

Secretary to the Committee: Bridget Cullen (BC)

Apologies: Sister Mary Joseph Jones

Introduction

1. AC welcomed MG who joined the meeting on Zoom. AC explained that she was acting Chair for today's meeting, noting that Sister Eileen McLoughlin had stepped down from the Committee when the new Leadership Team took up office on 2nd February 2022. AC then handed the meeting over to BC to continue.
2. BC stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review the self-audit forms for the audit period of 1st November 2021 to 31st December 2022, completed by the Knock and Cork Communities, as required by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board).
3. Based on their review of the self-audits and the progress made against the actions agreed at last year's meeting, the Committee would decide what actions, if any, should be undertaken going forward to improve safeguarding practices.

Review of Self-Audit Forms

4. **Knock Community Self-Audit:** BC noted that there had been no changes in the community's circumstances, with regard to safeguarding, since the previous audit. None of the Sisters had ministries involving children, nor ministries with external organisations involving children, and no groups with children had visited the community during the audit period.
5. The Committee agreed that this should be the last audit of the Knock Community, as the community was due to close in the coming weeks.
6. **Cork Community Self-Audit:** The Committee reviewed the completed self-audit form and the action plan, which had been put in place by the Committee at last year's meeting.
7. **Cork Community Action Plan for the Audit Year 1st November 2021 to 31st December 2022:** The Committee noted the following against the actions:
 - **Action at A:** The Sister in Charge had confirmed that no groups with children and young people had visited Cork Convent during this audit period. The children from the Bessborough Centre crèche had not visited the Sisters.
 - **Action B (i) & (ii):** The Committee noted that it had not been possible to hold the planned Safeguarding Information Session for key personnel and Sisters, because of the on-going threat of Covid-19, particularly after the outbreak of Covid in the convent in September 2021. The Committee

agreed that Action B would be included again in this year's action plan in the hope that the training session could take place at some point during the course of this year. AC would discuss the situation with the Sister in Charge. (Action: AC)

8. The Committee agreed that the actions for the Cork Community would remain unchanged for the audit year, 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

Committee Membership

9. BC stated that the Committee needed a new Chair to replace Sister Eileen McLoughlin and possibly also a new member, as it was unclear as to whether Sister Mary Joseph wished to remain on the Committee. The group agreed that the Committee should have representation from the Sisters in Cork. AC and BC would take the matter up with Sister Julie Rose. (Action: AC & BC)

Cemeteries in Cork and Roscrea

10. MG explained that the responsibility for ensuring that the Mother and Baby memorial groups completed the National Board's Form 1.5A Template 1 rested with the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Irish Trust.
11. BC pointed out that the Congregation no longer owned the land in Bessborough where the Commemoration Group held their event, so it was no longer necessary or appropriate to have the group complete the form. AC would check what was happening with the Roscrea Memorial Gathering. (Action: AC)
12. MG stated that it was her understanding that the groups had not held events in recent years because of Covid.

National Board Update

13. **Revision of the current *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards*:** BC explained that the National Board was carrying out the review as a result of changes in legislation, canon law, and the National Board's own experience of practice since the development of the *Policy and Standards*. Work was still ongoing on the revised policy, with further consultations on the draft scheduled for June, July and August, and the consideration of further amendments in September 2023. Given the timetable, it would appear that it would be early 2024 at least before the revised Policy and Standards were introduced.
14. **Adult Safeguarding:** The National Board were also in the process of developing a "one Church approach" to vulnerable adults/adults at risk, following a request from the Irish Bishops' Conference and AMRI. The National Board had carried out a one-year Adult Safeguarding project, which was completed in September and a report was sent to the Bishops' Conference and AMRI in October. The National Board were now awaiting further instruction from the two bodies.
15. BC stressed that the rollout of the Adult Safeguarding programme would have implications for the Congregation and the work of the Safeguarding Committee, given that practically all of the Sisters in Ireland would be considered adults at risk because of their age.

Close

- 16.** BC confirmed that she would send Sister Julie Rose a report of today's review meeting, with a draft letter for Teresa Devlin, the National Board's CEO, confirming that the self-audits had been carried out.