



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

**Private and Confidential**

**Second Review of Safeguarding Practice**

**in the**

**Diocese of Galway and Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora**

**undertaken by**

**The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the**

**Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board)**

**Date of Review Report: September 2023**

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## Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board) was established in 2006 to:

- Provide advice, services and assistance in furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the Island of Ireland;
- Monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice; and
- Report on these activities, as is comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

Church authorities who have entered into an agreement with the National Board through signing a Memorandum of Understanding have committed to following *Safeguarding Children - Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. In order to assess compliance with the 2016 Standards, the Bishop of Galway invited the National Board to undertake a review of child safeguarding practice in 2022. The diocese was previously reviewed in January 2013 under the *Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2008*. The report of the first Review can be found on the Galway Diocese website at [www.galwaydiocese.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/Safeguarding-Review\\_2013.pdf](http://www.galwaydiocese.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/Safeguarding-Review_2013.pdf), and on the National Board's website [www.safeguarding.ie/publications](http://www.safeguarding.ie/publications)

The recommendations from this first Review were that:

**Recommendation 1** - Bishop Drennan should review all cases of living priests who are on administrative leave ("out of ministry") to ensure that formal written precepts have been issued and shared with the accused priest, and a copy retained on file.

**Recommendation 2** - Bishop Drennan needs to appoint a suitable person to initiate the preliminary investigation under Canon 1717, in relation to all priests out of ministry (where this has not already happened) and inform the CDF if required so that any subsequent penal process may take place.

**Recommendation 3** - The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should put in place written risk management plans which should be shared with the accused priest; and a record made of all reviews of risk and monitoring visits.

**Recommendation 4** - Bishop Drennan in consultation with his designated people must decide how to proceed in relation to seeking advice on case management issues. Should they decide to retain both their own Diocesan Advisory panel and the National Case Management Reference Group (NCMRG), then they must draft protocols so that there is clarity around panel roles and responsibilities:

**Recommendation 5** - The designated person must ensure that all case management records follow the NBSCCCI template with narrative accounts of all actions taken and meetings held.

**Recommendation 6** - To enhance communication further, the safeguarding committee should consider developing an annual communication plan and placing this on the diocesan website.

**Recommendation 7** - Bishop Drennan needs to ensure that a support person is appointed as soon as possible; that the role is clarified, written down and shared in writing with future complainants. Bishop Drennan must also ensure that all contacts are recorded on the case management records.

**Recommendation 8** - The safeguarding co-ordinator in consultation with Bishop Drennan and the designated person should draft role descriptions for priest advisers and identify appropriate training and support for the priests who hold this role.

**Recommendation 9** - The Safeguarding Director should ensure that the annual report for Bishop Drennan and the people of Galway Diocese, which sets out all steps taken to safeguard children and evaluates the implementation of procedures at parish level, is publicised on the diocesan safeguarding website and widely disseminated throughout the diocese.

The Galway Diocesan Newsletter of Summer 2013 states that:

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC) has just completed an Audit of our Diocese, a copy of which is on our website...There were a number of recommendations in the report and these are being worked on at present, and some have already been implemented.

The diocese also published on their website (safeguarding tab, policies and forms) a “Diocesan Audit Report - One Year On” regarding implementation of the recommendations.

Due to changes in Bishop, safeguarding personnel and the impact of Covid-19 maintaining progress with implementation of a number of the recommendations made in 2013 were not fully achieved until 2023.

The purpose of this second round of Reviews is to assess child-safeguarding practice against the Catholic Church in Ireland’s current standards as detailed in *Safeguarding Children - Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. The Review seeks a level and quality of evidence to provide:

- Public confidence that the Church body is safe for children.
- Affirmation to child safeguarding personnel that they are doing the right things well.
- Confirmation to the Church authority that what they want to be done is in fact being done.
- Independent verification of Self-Audit – or correction and/or improvement of Self-Audit.
- Opportunities for learning.

## Introduction

The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora covers an area of 2,610 square kilometres (1,008 square miles), incorporating parts of counties Mayo, Galway and Clare. It has a population of approximately 153,000 inhabitants of which approximately 70% are Catholic. It is one of six western dioceses of the Archdiocese of Tuam Metropolitan Area. There is a short history of Galway diocese on its website at [www.galwaydiocese.ie/diocese/history/history-of-the-diocese](http://www.galwaydiocese.ie/diocese/history/history-of-the-diocese). Its history is reflected in the full name of the diocese, which is the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora. The three dioceses of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora were united in 1883.

The diocesan website as of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023 lists thirty-seven (37) diocesan priests currently in ministry, three (3) of whom are ministering outside Galway Diocese. These are supplemented by twelve (12) extra-diocesan priests, also listed. Sixteen (16) diocesan priests are living but retired. According to the same source, there are thirty-eight (38) parishes listed within the diocese, divided among five (5) Deaneries. Nine (9) male religious orders and eight (8) female religious orders are also listed as being located within the diocese's administrative area, as well as one (1) Personal Prelature and one (1) Religious Fraternity.

Bishop Martin Drennan resigned on July 29, 2016. Canon Michael McLoughlin was appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the diocese in August 2016, and he served in this capacity until Bishop Brendan Kelly was appointed Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Apostolic Administrator of Kilfenora in December 2017.

In February 2022, Bishop Kelly invited the National Board to conduct the first part of this Review (April 2022) which considered the case management standards.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> 2022, Bishop Michael Duignan was installed as Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh and Apostolic Administrator of Kilfenora uniting the Diocese with the Diocese of Clonfert in Persona Episcopi. Bishop Michael Duignan was in post for the Review fieldwork conducted in March 2023 and September 2023.

The period covered by this Review is from February 2013 to September 2023. All child protection concerns reported to the diocese during this time-period, as well as cases reported earlier and still being managed at the time of the Review were examined.

## Process of Review

The diocese placed a notice on its website informing people of the forthcoming Review, and inviting anyone with views on child safeguarding practice that they wished to share to come forward. This notice was published on March 30, 2022, and it said:

### **Safeguarding Review of the Galway Diocese**

The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora has invited the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) to conduct a review of its child safeguarding practice.

If you have any views about safeguarding in the diocese, we invite you to come forward to us (tel. 091 575053 or 087 6141736), or to the NBSCCCI (tel. 01 5053124).

If you wish to report a child safeguarding concern, please contact Kevin Duffy, Diocesan Director of Safeguarding, at 087 6141736, or An Garda Síochána (tel. 1800 555 222), or TUSLA (tel. 091 546366).

One person made contact with the National Board in response to this notice and their issue was addressed.

Due to the unavailability of key safeguarding personnel combined with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (post pandemic recovery) on all ministries with children and young people across the diocese, it was decided to restrict the fieldwork in April 2022 to examining the three Case Management Standards, 2, 3 and 4 only. Arrangements were then made with Bishop Duignan for the National Board to complete the outstanding standards in 2023 and also provide any updates in respect of the standards examined in 2022.

The on-site fieldwork was carried out on April 4 and 5, 2022 (Case Management); March 8 and 9, 2023 (Safeguarding Standards); and September 25 and 26, 2023 (Case Management and Quality Assurance).

The following were either met or written to by the reviewers during this time, or in the days following:

- The Church authority, Bishop Brendan Kelly – April 2022.
- The Church authority, Bishop Michael Duignan – March 2023/September 2023
- The Director of Safeguarding/Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Trainer/Support Person – April 2022/March/September 2023
- The Diocesan Secretary.
- The Diocesan Chancellor – September 2023
- Members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee – September 2023
- Two Priest Advisors.
- The retired DLP/Support Person.
- Two administrative staff with responsibility for Garda Vetting.

- A Detective Inspector in An Garda Siochana Western Regional Headquarters (by letter)
- A social worker with the Child and Family Agency, Tusla in Galway (by letter)
- The Administrative Co-ordinator in the Diocesan Office.
- Three Parish Priests.
- A number of Local Safeguarding Representatives (LSRs).
- A number of Children’s Ministry leaders.
- A number of volunteer Sacristans.
- Two Parish Secretaries.
- Members of two Parish Councils.
- A number of parents of children involved in ministry and/or Church-based activities.

The reviewers involved are very grateful to both Bishop Brendan Kelly and Bishop Michael Duignan and their safeguarding personnel for their warm welcome and very generous hospitality during the fieldwork visits in April 2022, March 2023 and September 2023.

## Standards

Each standard contains a list of indicators, by compliance with which the standard is met. To support implementation of the Standards, the National Board has produced detailed Guidance, which is accessible on its website (<https://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance>). Galway Diocese has adopted in full the guidance of the National Board.

The six western dioceses including Galway produced, in 2017 a very detailed and accessible document, the Safeguarding Children Parish Handbook, in the Foreword of which is stated that:

...it is not designed to be a stand-alone document or sole reference source for safeguarding children. Rather it should be read in conjunction with the NBSCCCI's Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland and its guidance documents, the most up to date version of which will be available on the safeguarding section of our respective diocesan websites and the NBSCCCI website.

This Review Report concentrates on practice, and provides an assessment of practice under each of the seven national Standards.

These Standards are

Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Standard 2: Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant

Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent

Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe

Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

Standard 7: Quality-Assuring Compliance with the Standards



## Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

*Church bodies provide an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. They provide access to good role models whom children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.*

There are ten Indicators to comply with in order for Standard 1 to be met. One of these (1.1) deals with recruitment, and specifically with Garda Vetting.

One reviewer met with the two staff responsible for Garda Vetting in the six dioceses that make up the Western Province, including Galway. They are based in the same building in Galway City as the DLP, and close to the Diocesan Offices in Galway Cathedral.

These staff members facilitate parish-based vetting, as well as and vetting of ancillary staff in the diocesan schools. They have operated a three-year vetting cycle since 2016, so 2022 is the start of the third cycle. All diocesan priests are vetted every three years. They liaise when necessary with the compliance section in the National Vetting Bureau (NVB), particularly when the NVB question whether certain roles being applied for require vetting under the legislation.

The database for the vetting process follows National Board guidance. It was viewed by one reviewer and was of a high standard. Only the two staff in the vetting office have access to the database.

### Garda Vetting Applications processed for Galway Diocese

Year	Parishes	Schools
2017	410	960
2018	337	1061
2019	422	940
2020	115	559
2021	98	713
2022	265	896
2023	151	649

During the years of the pandemic, the numbers being processed for vetting almost halved. In 2017, 1,370 persons were subject to applications for vetting, while in 2020, the figure was 674 persons. Activity increased in 2022 to 1,161.

The sacramental preparation programmes for First Communion and Confirmation require that significant numbers of parents be Garda vetted.

Any vetting request from a parish must be signed off by the Parish Priest. Applications from schools are normally signed off by the relevant Principal. Disclosures received from the NVB are sent back to the PP, or to the Chairperson of the Board of Management in the case of school ancillary staff.

Overall, the Garda Vetting process is run efficiently and effectively, and it has benefitted significantly from having dedicated administrative resources.

The Diocesan Secretary takes responsibility for the management and recording of the diocesan *Requirements for Visiting Clergy and persons in any form of consecrated life wishing to be involved in pastoral ministry in the Diocese*. This is a very detailed administrative process that all priests and religious who want to minister within the diocese have to complete, and it includes a two-page invitation to vetting form. The application form that visiting clergy and religious have to use is six pages in length and the document in which it is contained also has the Safeguarding Statement of the diocese as its final page. This process is an exemplar for other Church bodies, and the filing system used for it, which was seen by a reviewer, is of a high quality. The protocol document can be accessed at <https://www.galwaydiocese.ie/safeguarding/policies>

The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora enjoys a diverse population with a significant number of immigrants. This has resulted in a number of special Catholic groups within the diocese which do not fit into the traditional parish model. These groups include the Polish Community, the Brazilian Community, the Syro-Malabar Community, and the Vetus Ordo Chaplaincy (Old Latin Liturgy). These communities gather for their own liturgies, with the blessing of the bishop. Priests who come into the diocese to celebrate these liturgies must be Garda vetted by the diocese and present letters of good standing from their diocese or religious order. If the group has minors involved in their activities, they must have their own LSRs and comply with diocesan safeguarding policy. New groups that present themselves to the diocese and request permission to celebrate their own liturgies must comply with the same standards. If the new group cannot meet the safeguarding standards of the diocese, they are denied permission to celebrate a public liturgy and cannot invite clergy from outside of the diocese to preside over their gatherings.

Guidance is in place for diocesan clergy who have ministry with children in an external organisation/Church body. This information is collated and held by the Diocesan Secretary.

There were no whistleblowing reports since the last Review in 2013. The diocese has a Complaints Procedure for Safeguarding Concerns that are not Allegations of Abuse. There were no concerns raised that did not constitute allegations of abuse, that met the criteria under this procedure since the last review in 2013.

Also available on the same diocesan website page are the Safeguarding Children Parish Handbook (2019), developed and published by the six dioceses of the Western Province. This excellent 89-page document is made available to all parishes in the dioceses and is used extensively by Parish Priests and their safeguarding personnel. It contains guidance on all seven Standards that is consistent with that of the National Board. Visitors to this website page can also access a leaflet for parents and children about safeguarding, which was developed with significant input by children, the *Code of Behaviour for Adults Working with Children & Young People*, and a very useful leaflet, *Parish Safeguarding Checklist/Guide*. This fold-over leaflet provides a checklist reminder of things to consider when planning a ministry or activity involving children and/or young people.

In their visits to three Galway diocese parishes, the reviewers saw evidence of all of this supportive material on display and in use. They also heard from Parish Priests, Local Safeguarding Representatives (LSRs), sacristans, parish secretaries, ministry and activity leaders and parents of how the Code of Behaviour for adults is understood and applied. They also spoke about how children are facilitated to generate their own 'rules' or codes of behaviour at the beginning stage of their involvement in a ministry of activity.

A practice that the reviewers saw in all three parishes visited was the display of relevant child safeguarding posters and leaflets on moveable notice boards, which can be easily brought to whatever location is in use for a ministry or activity that in which children participate. This allows the leaders to draw the attention of children and adults to the information exhibited. This moveable board complements the static displays on the walls and notice boards in Church premises where these events take place.

Creating a safe environment can be evidenced most clearly by describing what the reviewers found when they visited three parishes and engaged in discussions with priests and lay people who are all involved in this task:

**Parish 1:**

Is in a Galway City suburb, the reviewers met with a local priest, a volunteer leader for a Children's Faith Club, and an LSR. The parish church is located in close proximity to the parish primary school.

There is a Children's Faith Club run after school one day a week during the academic year, in a building beside the parish church. The age range catered for is 6 to 11 years, and the group has a regular average attendance of 25 children. The programme content is a combination of Gospel stories and games. The children are collected from the adjacent school by the adult leaders and escorted to the group. Up to eight (8) adults are involved, all of who are members of the Legion of Mary. The children's parents collect them from the group. The priest ensures that all volunteer leaders are vetted, and receive safeguarding training.

The Faith Club leader who the reviewers met has a child attending the club, and expressed the view that parents trusted that their children would be kept safe while attending the group, and that the children know who to approach if they are upset. There is a review after every session involving the volunteer leaders and the priest, to identify any challenges that may have arisen, and to address these if necessary.

To interest children in altar serving, the priest goes to the school to talk with children and to provide them with a leaflet explaining to their parents what is involved. If any child and their parent(s) are interested, the parents complete the appropriate consents. Communication with parents as a group is via WhatsApp. A hazard/risk assessment was completed for this activity, which was shown to the reviewers. In order to take the children on an outing, the risk assessment and the consent form were updated to secure information on allergies any child may have. Parental consent forms are available in hard copy or and in digital format. The altar servers vest in a separate dedicated space within the church.

The Parish Council has safeguarding as a regular agenda item. The LSR who the reviewers met in this parish has significant related experience in child protection matters. He is in that role for a year, and is awaiting role specific training. He has worked with the curate to complete the parish self-audit.

All Eucharistic Ministers, members of the Pastoral Council, and Religious Sisters involved in parish ministry are Garda vetted and receive safeguarding training.

## **Parish 2,**

Is a rural parish, where the reviewers met with the Parish Priest and two LSRs. One of the LSRs had experience of concerns being reported in her work as a manager in childcare.

Altar servers have been reintroduced. Only vetted parents will be allowed to supervise the servers. Four volunteer sacristans in this parish are Garda Vetted; they cover three Masses per week, on a rota. A risk assessment was completed in advance of altar servers returning. The altar servers recruited are aged 8 to 13 years. Initially, a letter was sent to parents inviting children to serve and explaining the safeguarding requirements. This was followed by an information pack being sent to parents who expressed an interest. The altar servers are an inclusive group and is open to children of all abilities.

All volunteers in this parish have received safeguarding training.

There are plans to commence the Pope John Paul II award scheme, in conjunction with a large local Community College.

There is a Parish Newsletter, and the practice is already established to print copies of the National Board Newsletter for distribution to interested parishioners.

The *celebret* notice is in place in the sacristies of the two churches in this parish, and the PP insists that he receives a copy of the *celebret* in advance, before he gives permission for a visiting priest to minister in the parish.

The SG07 form is signed by outside groups that use parish facilities, and evidence of an insurance indemnity is always sought.

The activity of the Pastoral Council was curtailed during the pandemic restrictions, but it has recommenced meetings. One of the LSRs the reviewers met is on this Council. One matter being considered by the Council is the potential of commencing a Children's Liturgy. The three people at the meeting with the reviewers work together to complete the annual self-audit. They have identified a need for additional training, and a review of vetting in 2023.

**Parish 3:**

Is in a small town. The campus surrounding the parish church has a number of adjoining parish buildings, including the Parish Office and a number of meeting rooms. The reviewers met a large group comprised of the Parish Priest and eight lay people, women and men. Those attending included LSRs, parents, the parish secretary, and volunteer leaders and volunteer sacristans. Some attending had more than one role.

All volunteers supporting and engaging in activities that involve children are Garda vetted including the parish choir.

Altar servers have been reintroduced and now number approximately 20 children, girls and boys. Recruitment is from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class in the two primary schools in the parish. As part of the risk assessment undertaken in preparation for the return of altar servers, it was felt the sacristy was too small as a changing area, so it was decided that the children would change in the main body of the church. Any child serving must arrive 15 minutes before the ceremony and the supervising adult safeguarding person must be in place 20 minutes before. Children serve in teams of 4 to 6. Some of those attending the meeting with the reviewers had their own children as altar servers, and expressed satisfaction with the safeguarding processes that are in place.

In this parish, there is a second children's ministry. Two of the lay people at the meeting with the reviewers are leaders of the parish *Creideamh agus Spraoi* (Faith and Fun) children's liturgy, which takes place during regular Sunday Mass. This started again in November 2022. Children aged from 4 to 7 years attend in one of the parish rooms during Mass to participate in an age appropriate children's liturgy and artwork. Their parents drop them to the parish room and sign their children in. After the session, which is timed to finish just after communion in the Sunday Mass, the volunteers walk the children back into the church to sit at the side of the altar. The priest then shows the congregation the children's artwork. During the session, the parents must remain in the church in case they need to be contacted.

There are eight volunteer leaders supporting this group, all of who have attended safeguarding training; and there are normally four leaders attending the group each Sunday, with an average of 6 to 10 children.

This parish has a strong Pastoral Council that works closely with the PP in planning and providing for parish activities and ministries. The Parish Safeguarding Committee shares some members with the Pastoral Council, so communications about safeguarding are good.

At the time of the reviewers' visit to this parish, the parish self-audit return for 2022 had been completed and submitted to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office by the PP and two LSRs

This parish is widening its pool of volunteers in the autumn and planning to expand services for the 12 to 17 years group, to include the Papal Cross Award and the Pope John Paul II Award schemes.

Outside groups such as AA, SVP and the ICA use the parish rooms, and all relevant paperwork and insurance cover is in place, although none of these have under 18-year olds participating.

The *celebret* notice, which requires priests to demonstrate that they are in good standing, is displayed, and the sign-in book for clergy is held in the sacristy. The reviewers had a short separate meeting with the Parish Secretary in which she described her role in supporting parish activities, in coordinating Garda vetting, and in overseeing the distribution of relevant written safeguarding materials. This parish has applied Garda vetting selectively to only those adults who have regular contact with children

There is a Parish Newsletter, a parish website, and a parish Facebook page, and the Parish Secretary plays a key role in having these updated and monitored.

There is an interesting practice in all parishes that five minutes before any ceremony involving children, the priest comes on the altar to advise the congregation that there is to be no recording of the ceremony. In advance of Confirmation ceremonies in the parish, the bishop sends out a booklet in which he explains the restrictions on digital and photographic recording of these ceremonies and the reason for these. This is done in all diocesan parishes.

The reviewers want to note that all priests and lay people they met during parish visits spoke positively about the support and assistance that they received from the Director of Safeguarding.

The reviewers were satisfied that safeguarding arrangements and practice for the various activities provided for children and young people in each of the parishes visited were compliant with the requirements of standard 1.

Everyone is to be commended for the time and commitment they give to promote and provide a safe environment for children and young people to be safe and happy when involved in children's ministry activities.

The reviewers met with three members of the diocesan Child Safeguarding Committee, including the Chairperson, a long serving member, and the Director of Safeguarding/DLP during the fieldwork visit in March 2023. Unfortunately, it was not possible to meet the full committee or to attend a committee business meeting during this visit. However, the discussion held with the three members was useful and informative. Members have served for a long time since they joined the committee, and they believe that there is a need to refresh the membership, while not losing the knowledge and practice wisdom held by the existing members. There is a strong representation of people with a background in education, and the members met agreed that a wider representation of experience and knowledge from other disciplines is now required on the committee. Bishop Duignan attends all committee meetings.

In expanding membership, recruitment from the third level student resources in the city was discussed. The committee has recognised the need for increasing the number of volunteers as the numbers of active clergy in the diocese declines. The discussion with committee members highlighted the need for the committee to build links with the diocesan administration, youth ministry and Parish Pastoral Councils of the diocese.

A need to enhance the use of all forms of media to promote the safeguarding children message was discussed.

During the fieldwork visit in September 2023 a reviewer was able to attend a Children's Safeguarding Committee business meeting. This will be discussed under Standard 7 below.

The reviewers are satisfied, based on the evidence seen that this **Standard is met**.

## Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

*Church Bodies have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child’s safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.*

In the diocese’s Child Safeguarding Statement, updated in February 2023, it is stated in the final paragraph of this four-page document that:

The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora is committed to safeguarding children, through the implementation of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016.

The diocese has in place a Director of Safeguarding who also acts as DLP. This person works part-time (3 days per week), is clearly identified as the one to approach with a concern about the safety and welfare of children. They are experienced, having been involved in diocesan safeguarding for the past twelve years. The reviewers also met with the retired diocesan DLP, who had been in that role from 2010 until late 2019. Since her retirement, she has not been replaced, so the Director of Safeguarding is the sole DLP for the diocese.

The reviewers met with two priests who act as support priests / priest advisors to three men who are out of ministry.

Since the first Review in January 2013, the diocese has received seven allegations against five individual priests. All were living when the allegations were received, although one subsequently died.

**Table 1 – Allegations of child sexual abuse reported to the Diocese of Galway since February 2013.**

Cleric	Number of allegations	Gardai notified	Tusla notified	The National Board notified	Appropriate and timely canonical action taken
Fr. A.	1	Nine months	Nine months	Not notified	Canonical process was not initiated.
Fr. B.	1	Within One Day	Within One Day	Notified when Tusla had finished their assessment and diocese sought advice from National Board regarding canonical process	Delay in canonical action taken.



Fr. C.	1	Within one day	Within one day	Within one day Within one month	Delay in canonical action taken
	2	Within 2 days	Within 2 days		
Fr. D.	1	Within one day	Within one day	Within one day	Delay in canonical action taken.
Fr. E.	1	Within 6 days	Within 6 days	Within 6 days	N/A
	Physical and emotional abuse -				
	2	Within 12 days	Within 12 days	Within 12 days	Timely canonical action taken
	Alleged sexual abuse <i>Above allegations made by same complainant</i>				

**Fr A:**

An earlier allegation against this respondent was examined in the first Review. The respondent was removed from public ministry. The case was not prosecuted by the DPP. The respondent was not returned to ministry.

When a second allegation was received by the diocese, it was only notified to the Gardai and Tusla after nine months when information became known to the DLP. The case was not notified to the National Board. At the time of the second report of abuse, the respondent was incapacitated due to ill health. A canonical process was not initiated.

**Fr B:**

There were timely notifications to the statutory authorities. The National Board did not receive a notification at time of report of alleged abuse. They were subsequently consulted about the case and advice provided was actioned by the diocese. There was delay in appropriate canonical action being taken which now has been appropriately actioned.

**Fr C:**

Both reports of alleged abuse (two different complainants) had timely notifications to the statutory authorities and National Board. There was delay in appropriate canonical action being taken which now has been appropriately actioned.

**Fr D:**

A written complaint was received from a third party. Subsequently, the complainant came forward and made a statement to the DLP alleging sexual abuse. On the date this statement was made, the Gardai, Tusla and the National Board were notified. The complainant stated that he would not make a statement to the Gardai. When the respondent was informed by the diocese of the complaint, he admitted what was alleged and was immediately removed from ministry. There was delay in appropriate canonical action being taken which now has been appropriately actioned.

**Fr E:**

An initial complaint of physical abuse was made and timely notifications were made to the Gardai, Tusla and the National Board. No specific details were included in the allegations. Both statutory agencies decided that no further action was required. It was subsequently reported by way of solicitor's letter an allegation of sexual abuse by the same complainant. Timely notifications were made to the Gardai, Tusla and the National Board. Appropriate canonical action was taken.

The reviewers wrote to the relevant Garda and Tusla offices to establish what their views are of the cooperation they receive from the Safeguarding Office in Galway Diocese. Both agencies provided written confirmation of there being a good working relationship between them and the safeguarding office of Galway Diocese.

There was evidence on case files of the DLP's consultation with the National Board about notifications and ongoing case management, as well as records showing that actions agreed had been progressed. The diocese make referrals for advice about cases to the National Case Management Committee. There was evidence on case files that recommendations made by the National Case Management Committee had been actioned.

In addition to the five priests discussed, another three case management files were examined relating to living priests of the diocese who are out of ministry due to matters that pre-date the Review period and were considered as part of the previous Review in 2013. These will be discussed under Standard 4 below.

Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP during the final fieldwork visit of this Review (September 2023) provided evidence to the reviewer of actions taken to address areas where this standard had not been met. This prompt action is to be commended.

A monthly meeting takes place involving Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP to keep under review progress of all aspects of case management and actions required.

A canonical review of current cases was completed and gaps identified were addressed. This included: updates to CDF/DDF; completion of Preliminary Canonical Inquiries; Votums made by the bishop; and signed precepts/safeguarding agreements completed, which include restrictions, monitoring arrangements of respondents, an identified priest advisor, and date for review.

The reviewer was able to verify the aforementioned by examination of documentation provided, and discussion with Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP.

Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP agreed that all case management records (including canonical records) need to be up to date/contemporaneous and accessible on the casefile using the case file index and structure of the Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016, Standard 2, 2.2 B.

**This Standard was not met** due to delayed notifications about Case A to the statutory authorities, and also in this case an notification was not made to the National Board; a delay in notification about Case B to the National Board; and timely canonical action was not taken in four cases. The Reviewer is satisfied that work has been completed by the diocese as outlined above and gaps in practice have been addressed.

**Recommendation 1:**

Bishop Duignan and the Director of Safeguarding/DLP as part of their scheduled meetings to keep under review timely notifications to the statutory authorities and National Board, and that appropriate and timely canonical actions are being taken.

### **Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant**

*Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.*

In preparing for this Review, the National Board asked Galway Diocese if it could identify any complainants who might be willing to speak with a reviewer in the course of the Review. The DLP reviewed all of the cases being managed by the diocese. Taking into account the criteria that the person should be (1) a person who is in active contact with the Safeguarding Office, and (2) someone who is in a good enough emotional space to be able to participate in an interview – the DLP formed the opinion that there was no one suitable, except one complainant who, when approached by the DLP was willing to take part. However, given the stage of legal proceedings at the time of the Review fieldwork, the reviewers thought it prudent not to interview them.

The reviewers have based their observations on the care and support of complainants on their interviews with Bishop Kelly, Bishop Duignan, the DLP and the retired DLP, and on what is recorded in the case management files.

Recommendation 7 of the first Review Report to the then Bishop of Galway concerned the appointment of a Support Person for complainants. A female support person was appointed but has since left that role. The opinion provided by the current DLP, as they are the person who is in initial contact with a complainant, is that they provide the support required, and as appropriate, refer complainants on to external services, such as Towards Healing or specialist counselling or therapy. Their view is that this model of response avoids having to transfer a complainant who has already made their disclosure to the DLP to another person for ongoing support. The DLP advised that there is an arrangement with another diocese to avail of their female support person when required. The DLP confirmed that he would complete training for support persons provided by the National Board.

The DLP met the complainant who alleged abuse by Fr. A to listen to his account; the complainant was already in receipt of counselling. The then bishop wrote to the complainant on a number of occasions and offered to meet with them and offer pastoral care; and the complainant subsequently had a meeting with the bishop.

In the case of Fr. B, the DLP met with the complainant on a number of occasions and offered support of Towards Healing.

The two Diocesan DLPs have been in regular contact with the first complainant in the case of Fr. C and this contact is recorded in the narrative. Counselling through Towards Healing was offered and taken up by the complainant. It is clear from the case records that good care and support was offered by the DLPs to this complainant. The second complainant was offered support from Towards Healing.

In the case of Fr. D., the then Bishop and DLP met the complainant, and he and his family were offered counselling, and a Support Person, but neither offer was taken up. The records indicate good work on the part of the diocese to reach out to and care for this person, who was abused by a priest of Galway Diocese.

It is recorded that the complainant in the case of Fr. E. was receiving counselling at the time that they first came forward. They have since been offered counselling by Towards Healing but did not take up that offer. They have also declined to meet with the DLP. Their more recent contact with the diocese was through a solicitor's letter.

Complainants in the cases of the other three priests who featured in the 2013 Review Report are no longer in contact with the diocese.

The diocese had a dedicated Day of Prayer for survivors and victims of sexual abuse, and a Candle of Atonement Mass was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023. It is planned that a similar Atonement Mass will be held in 2024.

The reviewers are satisfied that complainants have been offered good pastoral support by past and present DLPs of Galway Diocese. In addition, complainants were offered and in some cases availed of counselling through Towards Healing. The reviewers also note that successive Bishops of Galway offered meetings to complainants to provide pastoral care and accountability; this approach is commended.

**This Standard is met.**

#### **Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent**

*The Church Authority has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents is provided.*

In preparing for this Review, the National Board asked Galway Diocese if it could identify any respondent priests who might be willing to complete a questionnaire about their experience of the diocese following being informed that a complaint about them had been received. Respondents were identified by the DLP, but no one engaged with the process.

The reviewers did meet with two Priest Advisors. One of them supports an individual priest, and had acted in a similar role in the past in relation to a different priest. The second man currently supports two priests. Both are very committed to their role and consider it as part of their priestly ministry, and each has at least 12-years' experience of this task. They were requested by the bishop at the time to provide support to respondent priests and both readily agreed. In each case, the respondent had requested the support of the priest who was assigned to him. It is clear from talking with them that they are aware of the individual needs and sensitivities of each of the men that they support.

The reviewers suggest that the two Priest Advisors are assisted to take part in refresher role-specific training for their role, and both indicated that they would welcome this.

The care and management of priests who are accused of having abused a child or young person is an extremely challenging task, as whether the abuse is confirmed or not, a very significant change in a priest's situation is triggered, with all of the emotional responses that this causes for him and those near to him.

The cases of eight diocesan priests were examined by the reviewers, and five of these have already been mentioned under Standards 2 and 3 above. The same sequence of lettering will be used to avoid identifying any of these men, and will continue to Fr. F, Fr. G and Fr. H, who are living priests in relation to whom allegations had been received prior to the first Review.

Recommendation 3 of the 2013 Review Report stated that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should put in place written risk management plans, which should be shared with the accused priest; and a record made of all reviews of risk and monitoring visits.

Fr A:

This case was part of the previous Review. At the time of the second report of alleged abuse, Fr. A was out of ministry. There was no formal safeguarding agreement in place, but he was subject to restrictions and monitoring visits were completed by the DLP until Fr. A's death. There was good communication between the DLP and Fr. A's carers.

Fr B:

During the duration of the Gardai and Tusla investigations Fr. B remained in ministry. He was provided with a priest advisor of his choice. The DLP kept Tusla informed of Fr. B's status during the period of investigation. A formal safeguarding agreement was not completed, but Fr. B was subject to monitoring visits until the completion of investigations. The Tusla assessment concluded an 'unfounded' outcome, and the DPP recommended no prosecution. A preliminary canonical investigation was completed which concluded there was no evidence to substantiate the allegation. Fr B is in full ministry and a priest of good standing.

Fr. C:

Fr. C was removed from ministry and provided with a Priest Advisor when the first allegation against him was received. A formal safeguarding agreement was not completed, but Fr. C was subject to restrictions and received monitoring visits from the DLP. A criminal investigation was completed and following this Fr C remained out of full time ministry. Following the second allegation Fr. C continued to remain out of full time ministry. A formal safeguarding agreement was agreed and he is subject to monitoring visits which are completed by the DLP. Appropriate canonical action has now been taken.

Fr D:

Fr. D admitted to the alleged abuse, and he was removed from ministry. A safeguarding agreement was accepted and kept up to date, with a recent annual review completed. Monitoring visits continue to be completed by the DLP. There was delay in progressing the canonical process, but appropriate canonical action has now been taken

Fr. E:

Fr. E. denied the allegations made. The complainant did not make a formal complaint to the Gardai. Fr. E is subject to a safeguarding agreement, which is up to date. Monitoring visits are completed by the DLP. A timely canonical process is ongoing.

Fr. F:

This case was part of the previous Review. An up to date precept/safeguarding agreement agreed by CDF is in place and has been kept under annual review. The diocese has kept CDF updated about changes in Fr. F's circumstances. A priest undertakes the monitoring role and records of visits have been completed up to 2023.

Fr. G:

This case was part of the previous Review. There no was evidence of canonical action taken and no formal safeguarding agreement. A risk assessment had been completed, and Fr. G was deemed a low risk of reoffending. There was a record of restrictions on file (no public ministry) and monitoring visits had been completed by the DLP up to Fr. G's death.

Fr. H:

This case was part of the previous Review. A current safeguarding agreement is in place and subject to annual review. Face to face monitoring visits could not take place during Covid-19 due to restrictions. The DLP and diocesan welfare officer maintained telephone contact with Fr. H and his carers. Face to face monitoring visits have resumed. A preliminary canonical investigation was not completed previously, but canonical action has now been taken, and a Votum sent by the bishop to DDF.

All case files had an index, a chronology of involvement and a summary. The reviewers highlighted that all records should be contemporaneous and include factual detail to fully evidence work completed. The files are securely stored with restricted access.

The first two recommendations made to the then Bishop of Galway in the 2013 Review Report related to canon law processes. The first related to the issuing of formal written precepts, and the second advised that preliminary canonical investigations under canon 1717 would be conducted in all relevant cases by a suitably qualified person, and that, if required, the CDF would be informed of the outcome. From examination of case files, these recommendations were not achieved by previous bishops.

Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP during the final fieldwork visit of this Review (September 2023) provided evidence to the reviewer of actions taken to address areas where this standard had not been met.

A monthly meeting takes place involving Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP to keep under review progress with all aspects of current cases and actions required.

A canonical review of current cases was completed and gaps identified have been addressed. This included: updates to CDF/DDF; completion of Preliminary Canonical Inquiries; Votums made by the bishop; and signed precepts/safeguarding agreements completed which include restrictions, monitoring arrangements of respondent priests, an identified priest advisor and date for review.

The reviewer was able to verify the aforementioned by examination of documentation provided and discussion with the bishop, Chancellor and DLP.

Bishop Duignan, the Chancellor and DLP agreed that all case management records need (including canonical records) to be up to date/contemporaneous and accessible on the casefile using the case file index and structure of the Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016, Standard 2 2.2 B.



Although there are informal arrangements for meetings between Bishop Duignan and the Director of Safeguarding to discuss all areas of safeguarding work, the reviewer suggested to Bishop Duignan to put in place scheduled meetings throughout the year with the Director of Safeguarding/DLP, one of which should include an annual appraisal and to discuss training needs. Bishop Duignan agreed to put this arrangement in place.

Bishop Duignan advised that he had considered appointing an appropriately qualified person in child protection to provide professional supervision to the DLP, as and when required. The reviewers support this given the complexities of case management. Bishop Duignan agreed to put this in place.

It was also suggested that the DLP should put in place scheduled meetings with a priest advisor and support person when they have involvement with a respondent/complainant. Bishop Duignan and the DLP agreed to put this arrangement in place.

The reviewer was satisfied based on evidence provided during the final fieldwork visit that action had been taken to address fully gaps in practice regarding appropriate canonical action, formal precepts/agreements and monitoring arrangements. This prompt action by Bishop Duignan, the DLP and Chancellor is to be commended.

**This Standard is met.**

## **Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe**

*Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.*

Galway Diocese has two Trainers, one of who is the DLP / Safeguarding Director. The second Trainer was unable to meet with the reviewers.

The reviewers were provided with records of safeguarding training in the diocese, from 2016 through 2019. A Training Plan, headed *Safeguarding Training in the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, 2019 to 2022*, and a one-year Training Plan for January to December 2023, were also provided.

The last full year of training was 2019, and the records show, among other training events, that induction training was provided to the diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage group, attended by forty people; and full day training was provided to representatives of the Indian community in Galway, in which twenty people participated.

There is a recognition that some ground was lost during the pandemic lockdowns. Some training continued through use of the Zoom platform during lockdown, and this is commended.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Conference on April 1, 2023 happened after the Review fieldwork was completed. The focus of this event at a Galway hotel was Safeguarding Children Training. The Trainer the reviewers had interviewed kindly sent some information to them following the conference. This stated that 90 people attended the conference, including priests, sacristans, and youth leaders from across twenty-five parishes, the Lourdes Pilgrimage Group and the Latin Mass Group.

What was highlighted as a positive was the number of new people who apparently are willing to get involved in their parishes. There were a number of parishes that were unable to send representatives on the day, and arrangements have been made to carry out training in these parishes over the next number of months. This training will be done by Deanery to make it easier for those who missed the conference to attend, and in the evenings, to better facilitate people who are working. Since the Conference, two parishes have had refresher safeguarding-children training delivered on the 16.5.2023 and 23.6.2023, with twenty-four participants in total. Also, a refresher session was delivered to the Lourdes group on the 20.6.2023 with 22 participants.

The diocesan trainers also provide children's safeguarding training to religious orders and groups within the diocese.

The Reviewers are satisfied that this **Standard is met**.

## **Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message**

*Church bodies appropriately communicate the Church's child safeguarding message.*

The diocese has an accessible website with a dedicated Safeguarding Children section. This contains a link to the National Board's own website.

The diocesan website is easily navigated and contains an amount of relevant information, including the diocesan Child Safeguarding Policy Statement (in Irish as well as English), which can also be downloaded in the form of an A4 size poster for use in Church buildings. A bar code has been developed to add to the Child Safeguarding Policy Statement poster which provides access to the Statement in different languages e.g. Irish, French, Spanish.

The website also importantly has information for anyone who has a concern about a particular safeguarding matter on who to contact and how. There are various leaflets and pro-forma forms, and other safeguarding documentation available on the website, as well as information on Garda Vetting.

All Safeguarding information is available in English and Irish.

The diocese has published annual Newsletters from 2013 through 2019, copies of which are available on their website at <https://www.galwaydiocese.ie/index.php/safeguarding/publications> and these were produced to coincide with the annual Safeguarding Children Conference held by the diocese. That conference was held again in April 2023, and has been a very successful event in bringing all safeguarding personnel, clerical and lay, together around a particular theme. At this conference the ninety attendees completed safeguarding training. The next Newsletter is to be completed and issued to coincide with Safeguarding Sunday.

Contributors to the annual Safeguarding Children Conference over the years have included academic staff from University College Galway, staff of the National Board, the National Schools Safeguarding Advisor, the GDPR Advisor for the Western Province, the Youth Officer for Galway Diocese, safeguarding personnel from other dioceses, and members of the Safeguarding Children Committee of the diocese. The Bishop of Galway always addresses the annual conference.

The diocese has published a Diocesan Safeguarding Communications Plan 2021 to 2024, and this is available on the website. This two-page document is set out to indicate what is to be done in relation to three identified target groups, listed in the first of six columns. These are, all Church personnel, both staff and volunteers; children, parents, guardians / carers; and diocesan priests. The plan sets out how communications to each cohort are to be undertaken, by whom, and when; and when a review of whether objectives were reached is to be conducted.

A number of the parishes in the diocese have their own websites, some of which contain safeguarding children information and have a link to safeguarding information on the diocesan website.

The diocesan Safeguarding Director/DLP contributed an article, *New Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards*, to the Horizon Diocesan Magazine when these were first being rolled out.

From the reviewers' visits to three parishes, it is clear that the materials developed through the Safeguarding Committee are being well used at local level.

Some Local Safeguarding Representatives are also members of Parish Pastoral Councils, which provides an opportunity to promote children's safeguarding arrangements. It is planned that all Parish Pastoral Councils will have a Local Safeguarding Representative as a member of a Council.

The reviewers met with the Administrative Co-ordinator in the Diocesan Office. In their discussion with this staff member it became clear that they have well developed skills in communications and that these could be used to good effect in supporting communication of the safeguarding children message across the diocese.

**This Standard is met.**

## **Standard 7: Quality-Assuring Compliance with the Standards**

*The Church body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually. The Church body only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.*

While Bishop Duignan has overall responsibility, the operational application of this standard rests with the Children's Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Director.

The Child Safeguarding Statement of the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora was updated in February 2023 and is available on the diocesan website. This is compliant with the Children First Act 2015.

There are currently forty-six mandated persons in the diocese. The mandated person list is kept up to date by the Director of Safeguarding.

There is an appropriately constituted Diocesan Children's Safeguarding Committee. New members have been appointed for a four-year term of office. They have backgrounds in law, education and youth work. There are a minimum of four meetings a year which are scheduled for the year ahead.

A reviewer had an opportunity to attend the Diocesan Children's Safeguarding Committee meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023. There was a set agenda which included minutes from the previous meeting and matters arising. All members actively engaged in the meeting, including new members. There was discussion about the role and function of the Committee, and the bishop shared a draft Constitution, and invited members to provide feedback regarding any changes/additions. A final version will be presented for endorsement at the next Committee meeting in November 2023.

There was discussion about the opportunity to integrate Galway and Clonfert dioceses safeguarding structures and arrangements/resources, as both dioceses share the same bishop. This could be included as an objective of the Three-Year Strategic Plan, 2023 to 2026 with actions to be taken forward by representatives from both dioceses as part of a task and finish group. Committee members were open to integration and collaborative working between the two dioceses. The bishop suggested an event prior to Christmas as an opportunity for members from both Committees to meet.

The 2022 parish self-audits have been returned and are currently being used to inform the working draft of the Diocese Three-Year Children's Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026. The Strategic Plan, the Children's Safeguarding Training Plan, 2023 and the Children's Safeguarding Communication Plan, 2021 to 2024 were shared and discussed at the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Meeting held on September 25, 2023. It was agreed that members would share final feedback on the draft strategy to the Director of Safeguarding as the final version will be presented for endorsement at the next committee meeting in November 2023.

A web-based self-audit form has been developed to enable ease of access, completion (with mandatory fields) and submission of completed form. This will be tested with a sample of parish representatives for their feedback before a final version is issued.

The DLP completes visits to meet local safeguarding personnel, which provide an opportunity to discuss self-audits and safeguarding arrangements, and to exchange information. These visits are completed on a rolling basis and it is hoped that Bishop Duignan will take part in a selection of such visits into the future.

The Diocesan Children's Safeguarding Committee annual reports examined are concise. The annual report should be used to promote and communicate the full range of Committee business/achievements during the previous year.

The reviewers had access to DLP annual case management activity reports and highlighted that more detail should be included as set out in National Board Guidance on Standard 7, pages 30, 31 and 32. The DLP and Bishop agreed to this.

Bishop Duignan, the DLP and Diocesan Chancellor, with expertise in canon law, meet monthly to review progress with all aspects of case management and agree actions to be progressed. The diocesan chancellor completed a detailed review of adherence to canon law requirements in current cases in June/July 2023. A reviewer was provided with the review report and following examination of case files was satisfied that gaps identified by the Chancellor have been addressed. The quality of this review completed by the chancellor is to be commended.

There currently is no deputy DLP in the diocese. The deputy DLP role and responsibilities could be shared with the Clonfert Diocese to maximise best use of staff resources. This is timely given the proposal to review safeguarding structures/resources and potential integration with the Clonfert diocese as both dioceses have the same bishop.

To enhance integration of safeguarding into all aspects of diocese business including team work/support the diocese safeguarding office could be incorporated/moved into the diocese Curia office. This would also provide Bishop Duignan ease of access, as when and required, to case management files which are currently held securely in the diocese safeguarding office.

Based on the evidence examined, this **Standard is met**

## Conclusion

The reviewers were assured regarding the Diocese of Galway's commitment and dedication to have arrangements in place to safeguard children and young people to comply with the *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. This is based on evidence from documentation examined, discussions and feedback from clergy, staff and volunteers engaged with during the Review.

Everyone spoken with during the Review fieldwork visits had a clear understanding about their safeguarding role and responsibilities and there was a willingness to learn to enhance safeguarding practice. There is a caring and cooperative approach of everyone involved, regardless of their role, to keep children and young people happy and safe while participating in activities provided by the diocese.

During the Review process, areas of improvement were identified in Standards 2 and 4. Bishop Duignan together with his team prior to the completion of the Review fieldwork were able to complete actions to address areas in Standards 2 and 4 where requirements had not been met. A reviewer was able to verify the aforementioned by examination of documentation provided, and discussion with Bishop Duignan, the chancellor and DLP.

The diocese has recently produced the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora Universal Synod Synthesis document, the thrust of which can provide an overarching contest for developments in child safeguarding in the diocese. The fact that this diocese shares its bishop with the adjoining Diocese of Clonfert will allow for the sharing of scarce resources and personnel to meet the needs of both dioceses.

The reviewers are confident that the commitment, energy and compassionate leadership already displayed by Bishop Duignan will ensure that safeguarding children is a priority, and opportunities for integrated and collaborative working in all areas of children's safeguarding will be driven forward, involving all safeguarding personnel, across both the Galway and Clonfert dioceses.

## Recommendation

### Recommendation 1 - Standard 2:

Bishop Duignan and the Director of Safeguarding/DLP as part of their scheduled meetings to keep under review that timely notification to the statutory authorities and National Board are being made, and that appropriate and timely canonical actions are being taken.