

PUBLICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL AUDITS OF SAFEGUARDING IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ST ANDREWS AND EDINBURGH AND THE DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY

In January 2019, the Independent Review Group established by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland to ensure the full implementation of the McLellan Commission on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in the Church announced that professional audits of two randomly chosen dioceses would be carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and Children in Scotland (CiS). This process would be repeated each year until all 8 Dioceses had undergone rigorous investigation. The purpose of these audits is to monitor progress on the McLellan Commission recommendations as well as seeking to ensure a robust system of safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults in the Church that can be measured against the best international standards.

No exercise such as this has been carried out by any other organisation in Scotland although 42 have been carried out in the Church of England and SCIE also audited the Catholic diocese of Birmingham. A proven methodology, the “Learning Together” approach, has been used in this process. The different legal, social care and safeguarding systems between Scotland and England slowed the process, but now that the methodology has been adapted, two further dioceses will be audited in 2020, these will be the Diocese of Motherwell and the Diocese of Aberdeen.

The final audit conclusions for each diocese, unamended, are attached to this release. There is also an appendix detailing the skills and background of the members of the Independent Review Group.

Helen Liddell, Chair of the IRG said.

“It takes courage to expose yourself to the kind of rigorous audit published today, and to be the first is even more difficult, so I am grateful for the cooperation of the Dioceses and the support of the Bishops Conference of Scotland (BCOS). This is a learning exercise, and, although we can never take away the pain of those who have suffered abuse, hopefully survivors of abuse will be reassured by the rigorous exploration of how each diocese handles safeguarding and by the willingness to learn lessons and change procedures that have, in some cases, developed over decades.

All of us who have been involved in this have learned a lot, and there are many we have to be grateful to, none more so than those survivors who came forward with their own experiences to help guide the conclusions. The IRG will meet with each diocese within six months of this publication to review progress in considering the issues raised in the audit and action taken.

We owe a debt of gratitude also to those in the dioceses, both clergy and laity, who sometimes had to face up to examining some actions in the past that they had no part in but had to live with the consequences, sometimes with deep pain.

As this first stage concludes, the IRG acknowledges the sheer determination of all who have participated in this to make sure those who are vulnerable are as safe as possible. Never again will we assume that the vulnerable are safe. Never again will there be a hiding place for the abusers of those we love.”

Ends

CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW GROUP

Helen Liddell (Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke) Chair, is a former Member of Parliament and Secretary of State for Scotland. She is a member of the House of Lords.

Bartolomeo Biagini is an educational consultant. He was formerly a lead HM inspector of education with responsibility for inclusion across all sectors of education and was involved in child protection inspections. He also held senior leadership posts within education authorities in Scotland, including a depute director post as head of learning communities within South Lanarkshire Council.

Gordon Jeyes OBE was the UK's first Director of Children's Services and was the first Chief Executive of Ireland's Child and Family Agency (Tusla).He is currently engaged in governance assurance reviews and chairs the National Children's Hospital (Ireland) Community Benefit group as well as serving on the Legal Aid Board in Ireland.

Lisa Markham is a safeguarding practitioner with wide experience including work in criminal justice settings and within the Church in the Diocese of Hallam, Sheffield.

Roisin McGoldrick is a former member of the McLellan Commission. She is a registered social worker and is currently employed as a teaching fellow in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Strathclyde University.

Lesleyann Russell is Compliance and Risk Manager for BBC Children in Need, specialising in safeguarding in the third sector and media production.

Donald Urquhart is the National Safeguarding Adviser to the Scottish Episcopal Church with considerable experience of public protection and safeguarding in both Scotland and England. He is a retired police officer and has worked as both a lead officer and an independent chair of child protection committees in Scotland.

Notes for editors

1. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Bishops Conference of Scotland and the IRG governing the conduct of external audits of Diocesan Safeguarding practice is also being published on the BCOS website together with a document setting out the Group's remit.

2. For further information contact Richard Riley on 07817 540144 or rileyofnorthiam@aol.com