

Statement by the Augustinian Order, Ireland, 10th February 2015

The Augustinians today, 10th February 2015, published the Review of Safeguarding Practice in the Irish Province of the Order, which was recently completed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children. We invited the National Board to conduct this review and we wish to thank them and acknowledge the vital importance of the work undertaken.

The review acknowledges the work we have done in now having procedures and systems in place, which will ensure the safety of children who interact with us in various ways into the future. The review also makes sixteen recommendations on various aspects of our child safeguarding procedures, the majority of which have already been implemented - and the remainder of which will be fully implemented by the time of the 'follow up' review by the National Board later this year.

The Review established that between 1958 and 1995 thirty-three concerns/allegations of abuse arose in regard to eleven of our members. We are deeply concerned about this and we sincerely apologise to any persons who were abused in any way by any member of our Order. No allegations have been received which relate to abuse having occurred post 1995. As the Report states, all of these concerns/allegations have been reported to the Gardaí and TUSLA.

We fully acknowledge the serious and lasting hurt, which must be endured by those who have been abused; more especially when abused by persons in positions of trust. None of our members have been convicted of abuse, however, we fully acknowledge that abuse involving a small number of our members has occurred in the past - and we are determined to do everything possible to ensure that this will not occur again in the future.

Shortcomings in our past procedures, in responding to and dealing with allegations of abuse, have been raised in this report and we fully accept the comments in this regard. We have recently published a new and updated Safeguarding Policy and we will continue to review and update this policy based on best practice and ensure that our practice complies fully with this policy. As stated above we will have all of the recommendations arising from this review fully implemented later this year.