Historical Clerical Child Abuse (HCCA) – Scoping Study to Inform the Review of Historical Records

Executive summary and Full reports

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Foreword from the Advisory Group

The publication of this Scoping Report represents an important milestone in the work of understanding the nature and prevalence of clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland. For the first time, it presents detailed information on what records on historical clerical child abuse exist and what kinds of information is likely to be in these records. It also presents a review of the legal and policy contexts for these records. In order to make recommendations for future action, it offers a wide-ranging review of investigations into child abuse in NI and other jurisdictions and evaluates the various possible approaches. The resulting evidence-based recommendations provide a clear pathway forward.

Our role as an Advisory Group was to ensure that the research was carried out to the highest standards. We each had relevant expertise to bring to the project, as experienced researchers in history, social work, human rights, and law. We have been involved with the research from summer 2024. We provided written comments via email and oral feedback in meetings with the research team.

As a group we have:

- Reviewed drafts of the surveys for stakeholders;
- Reviewed drafts of the analysis;
- Reviewed drafts of the report and the Executive summary; and
- Carefully considered the recommendations in this report.

We are satisfied that the research was conducted in accordance with international best practice, although we note the limited resources and powers available to the team. Furthermore, we fully endorse the Report's recommendations. In particular, we wish to emphasise our strong support for the core recommendation of a statutory inquiry into historical clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland. A human rights compliant statutory inquiry can provide the appropriate legal and policy framework for all participants to engage fully and to assess the responsibility of the State to acknowledge and address systemic wrongdoing in an expedited manner. It can also raise public awareness of the harms in ways that can lead to positive change. We also stand behind the Report's recommendation for full and proper resourcing of the inquiry. The victims and survivors of non-institutional clerical abuse have waited long enough and should be treated on an equal basis as other survivors of historical clerical child abuse and other human rights violations. They are entitled to an inquiry process that is robust and fully resourced in terms of money, staff, and legal powers. We also fully agree with the recommendation that the inquiry is trauma-informed and that it learns from the experiences of analogous inquiries.

We understand that these recommendations will (in conjunction with those of the other two research teams) inform the recommendations made by the Inter-departmental Working Group to the Ministers. We emphasise that all survivors from both faith settings and schools are entitled to equal respect and consideration.

Signed:

Dr James Gallen
Associate Professor in Law, Dublin City University

Professor David Hayes
Professor of Social Work, Queens University Belfast

Professor Leanne McCormick
Professor of Modern History, Ulster University

Professor Chris Reynolds
Professor of Contemporary European History and Memory Studies

Dr Sinéad Ring
Associate Professor in Law, Maynooth University

Introduction to this document

The research detailed in this document was undertaken in two parts. For ease of use, the reports from both parts are presented in two sections within this document: the structure is outlined below to assist the reader in finding the relevant section.

Between June 2024 and January 2025, the research team explored records held by faith organisations, social services and criminal justice agencies. The findings and recommendations from this are detailed in the Executive summary and the Full report provided in the Section 1 of this document.

This initial research identified an important gap in the original specification in that schools may also hold relevant records relating to the issues under consideration. An additional piece of research was therefore undertaken between January and April 2025 to scope out what relevant records may be held by schools. This schools' scoping research is reported in this document in Section 2. It includes its own Executive summary and full report. The findings from the schools' scoping report further reinforce the original recommendations from the first research and therefore no changes were made to these.

This report has been produced as a confidential document for the Commissioning group to detail what we have learned and suggested methodologies that could be used in Phase 2. It can also be shared with the members of the Inter-departmental Working Group (IDWG). It is not a public facing document beyond these audiences and should be treated as strictly confidential by them. We understand that our recommendations will (in conjunction with those of the other two research teams) inform the recommendations made by the IDWG to the Ministers.

Addendum 24th June 2026: This report has been updated to make it suitable for publication to a wider audience.

SECTION 1: Records held by faith organisations, social services and criminal justice agencies

[this Executive Summary and Full report were provided to the Commissioning group in January 2025]

Recommendations

1. **An appropriate legal structure must put in place before Phase 2, or any review of records relating historical clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland progresses any further.** The most effective structure would be a Statutory inquiry.

2. **We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical abuse.** There should be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each.

3. **The Historical Records project is not the first piece of research undertaken into abuses within faith organisations. We need to learn from previous research.** Core considerations include taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach; managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be; engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in and support of the process where possible; and paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes. **It would be useful for the commissioners involved in ongoing research projects and inquiries around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken.** This could be done in a closed reflective session under Chatham House rules.

4. **In commissioning research, it is important to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and of the likely time commitment involved. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process.**

5. **Phase 2 should have clear Terms of Reference which set the research in its policy context. These should clarify the purpose of the research, the policy decisions or actions it will influence, and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda.**

6. **Steps should be taken to ensure that Phase 2 is closely aligned with any oral history work undertaken with survivors.** Without close collaboration, it will be difficult to understand how individual allegations were addressed in practice, or to understand the extent of allegations of abuse.

7. **Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset.**

Background

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI) was an independent inquiry into the abuse of children (those under the age of 18) in residential institutions (other than schools) in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995. Details of the inquiry, including its terms of reference, can be found at https://www.hiainquiry.org/.

Historical clerical abuse that did not take place in a residential setting fell outside the HIAI terms of reference. This was raised as an issue by the then Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) Committee and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) at various junctures when the HIAI was established and operational. The position of Ministers in relation to abuse perpetrated by the clergy and members of religious bodies outside of an institutional setting has been that:

- The issue of clerical abuse is no less important or emotive than institutional abuse and Ministers were mindful of the equally destructive impact it has had on many individuals; and
- Following the HIAI, it would be for the Executive to consider how to deal with clerical child abuse that did not fall within the Inquiry's terms of reference.

In October 2016, the NI Executive agreed that a single Inter-departmental Working Group (IDWG), with an independent Chair, should be set up to review the evidence relating to Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby Institutions and Workhouses and Historical Clerical Child Abuse (HCCA) in Northern Ireland. A research project into Magdalene Laundries and Mother and baby institutions and Workhouses ran between March 2018 and December 2020. A non-statutory Independent Panel appointed in April 2023 is currently conducting further investigations into the workings of these institutions.

The Historical Clerical Child Abuse (HCCA) programme of work aims to understand the nature and prevalence of historical clerical child abuse and the impact on victims and survivors. The purpose is to support the IDWG to provide evidence-based recommendations to Ministers on any future action required, including any future action required for an effective investigation into HCCA and possible remedies for victims.

Three separate pieces of work were commissioned to contribute to this HCCA programme. The first is the 'Review of Historical Records' which is the subject of this Executive Summary and associated Full Report. It has been commissioned in two phases. Phase 1 is a scoping study to review relevant literature including reports from other similar relevant investigations into child abuse carried out in Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Ireland and other jurisdictions, and to explore what records relating to historical clerical child abuse allegations exist. The purpose of Phase 1 is to provide recommendations for the approach and resources required for data collection in Phase 2.

Two further separate reviews have been commissioned under separate contracts: one to review experience and expectations of victims and survivors of HCCA, and another to review safeguarding policies and procedures to prevent clerical child abuse.

In this Executive Summary, we set out our recommendations arising from Phase 1 and the evidence that has informed their development. Our analysis leads us to conclude that Phase 2, or any other investigation of records related to historical clerical child abuse should not go ahead as originally envisaged. Our key recommendation is therefore that that historical clerical child abuse should be the subject of a statutory inquiry. Other recommendations are also made.

Project Specification for the Review of Historical Records

The IDWG published a Tender Specification entitled 'HCCA Research- Review of Historical Records' on January 31, 2024. Phase 1 was developed in response to that Specification.

The Specification envisaged a research programme consisting of:

- A literature review to consider previous investigations that have taken place into historical clerical child abuse in individual church denominations and at wider national/ international levels.
- An investigation of historical records to consider the historical records on child abuse held by faith groups, criminal justice agencies and social services.

The aim of this programme would be to establish:

(i) An improved understanding of the extent of historical clerical child abuse and the possible systemic nature of that abuse.
(ii) How the churches / religious organisations / faith groups have responded to allegations of abuse.
(iii) How Government agencies, including the criminal justice system, dealt with alleged perpetrators and held them to account.

Although the Specification confined the investigation of historical records to the period after 1945, records of abuse reported since 1922 should be considered in order to maintain the same timeline as the HIAI.

The Specification defined the term 'clerical abuse' as including neglect, exploitation, and physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse perpetrated by a member of the clergy or an individual performing a role related to the ministry of a religious institution/ faith group.

The Specification used the term 'eligible person' to describe perpetrators of clerical abuse and explained that typically, an eligible person will be considered to be:

- **Category A** – "any person who has a designated religious title, was ordained and who provided or provides ministry."
- **Category B** – "any person acting in religious/ ministry role which is directed by a person in Category A."
- **Category C** – "any person who was accountable to a religious person who had decision-making authorities and responsibility for taking action to protect children or young people from harm."

The study is restricted to the abuse of children (those aged under 18 at the time the abuse occurred).

Approach Used in Phase 1

Phase 1 comprises:

1. **Evidence review** of similar work that has been undertaken nationally and internationally to examine methodologies used and key findings. This included relevant reports from Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand.
2. **Review of legal frameworks** relevant to the question of clerical child abuse as they existed in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 2010.

3. **Discussions with more than 40 stakeholders** including senior leaders from a range of faith organisations, criminal justice agencies, social services, PRONI and others.
4. **A detailed online survey of faith organisations** concerning:
    - what types of relevant activities faith organisations were involved with during each time period.
    - what records are held pertaining to allegations of abuse, what condition these are in and where they are located.
    - estimates of the number of allegations, potential perpetrators and potential victims described in records held locally and regionally.

   A total of 500 completed responses were received to the online survey, with some of these providing information about multiple locations.

The period 1922-2010 encompasses many changes in terms of changes within society, faith organisations, and changes to our understanding of abuse and the actions we take to keep children safe. We therefore segmented the overall timeline into four periods. Each represents important changes in legal and safeguarding practice that may have influenced how allegations were responded to. The time periods were used to structure the data collection and analysis undertaken in the Scoping study:

- 1922-1944
- 1945- 1968
- 1969-2001
- 2002-2010.

The consortium who undertook the research comprised:

- Dr Helga Sneddon: Chartered Psychologist and Director of Outcome Imps.
- Professor Máiréad Enright: Professor of Feminist Legal Studies, Law School, University of Birmingham.[1]
- Professor Cherie Armour: Professor in School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast.
- Kat Hinfey: independent management and change consultant.

A project Advisory Group was convened to provide the research team with additional expertise and peer review. This comprised:

- James Gallen: Associate Professor, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
- David Hayes: Professor of Child Protection and Safeguarding, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast
- Leanne McCormick: Professor of Modern History, School of Arts & Humanities, Ulster University
- Chris Reynolds: Professor of Contemporary European History and Memory Studies, School of Arts and Humanities, Nottingham Trent University
- Sinéad Ring: Associate Professor, School of Law and Criminology, Maynooth University.

A Full Report from the Phase 1 Scoping Study is available in the next part of this report. Both the Executive Summary and Full Report have been written as strictly confidential documents for the Commissioning Group and Interdepartmental Working Group. They have been peer reviewed by the Advisory Group.

Addendum 24th June 2026: This report has been updated to make it suitable for publication to a wider audience.

[1] Mairead Enright is now based at the University of Loughborough

Phase 2: Possible Approaches

As noted above, Phase 1 used a robust mixed methods approach of interviews, surveys to local and regional faith settings, and desk research. It has provided useful insights into the complexities of faith organisation activities, the information held in records locally and regionally, and the consent and data protection issues that will need to be addressed when trying to access and retrieve information from faith organisations, social services and criminal justice records.

The stakeholders we spoke with all highlighted both how important this research is and how complex it would be. This research programme is broader in scope than most other research into clerical abuse because it includes all types of abuse, all faith organisations, a lengthy time period (1922 to 2010), and a broad range of perpetrators including those who were not members of religious congregations or directly employed by faith organisations.

Stakeholders highlighted the challenges around defining inclusion criteria for allegations of abuse. Stakeholders were concerned that the use of the current definitions would lead to potentially relevant allegations not being included. For example, Categories A, B and C in the Specification use language and terminology that mean different things in different faith organisations, or that are not applicable to all faith contexts. In addition, the Specification does not make clear exactly what connection an allegation should have to Northern Ireland in order to be included in any investigation.

Stakeholders also recognised that this programme of work has potential to validate survivors' experiences and to support healing, and to enable learning to ensure that similar situations do not happen again in the future. They also recognised that the programme has potential to cause distress. The HCCA Survivors Reference Group highlighted the importance of this research for them; they have seen how other victims' experiences have been addressed by IDWG-commissioned research while they have continued to wait.

There are challenges in establishing the extent of recorded allegations of abuse using records held by religious and faith organisations. Some faith organisations such as the Catholic Church, Catholic Orders and Methodist Church have already made public what they know about allegations of abuse associated with their settings. However, concerns have been raised about omissions in some of the Catholic Church's publications. Other faith organisations hold records which have not yet been summarised and made public. Some faith organisations simply do not know what allegations may be recorded within the materials they hold. Others did not engage with Phase 1, and so we do not know what records they may or may not have. A small number of organisations have said they will not engage in research like this while participation is voluntary.

Although we were able to establish that larger faith organisations held records of allegations of abuse in their Regional Safeguarding offices, and some individual settings described holding records relating to abuse, the research has also clearly highlighted how much we still do not know. In making recommendations for Phase 2, this is of critical importance. It is necessary to balance the resources that would be needed to fill these gaps in understanding against the value and rigour of the findings that can be produced from the records available. There is little value in commissioning research that is unlikely to be able to answer the questions set in a methodologically robust way. Ethical research requires that methods used are good enough to answer the questions with a sufficient level of rigour.

We assessed the potential of various approaches that could be used in Phase 2 and identified advantages and disadvantages for each. Each is briefly outlined below (these approaches are not presented in any order of priority):

- **Summarising information that is already in the public domain in the form of reports produced by the faith organisations.** This could be done without needing further permissions. However, it could only produce partial findings because most faith organisations have not yet published detailed reports. There are also concerns that allegations have been omitted from reports produced in relation to some of the Catholic dioceses. This approach cannot therefore be used on its own. It is likely to be most useful in combination with other approaches.

- **Summarising information that is already in the public domain in the form of media reports.** This approach has important limitations. It will only uncover cases deemed 'newsworthy' and will often exclude cases which were not investigated by police or prosecuted. A link with a faith organisation may not always be reported on in any detail. This method is likely to be most useful in combination with other approaches. It could, however, potentially provide the start to a 'breadcrumb' trail to identify other records held by faith organisations, criminal justice and social services systems.

- **Summarising records held by regional safeguarding teams in faith organisations.**
  - Larger denominations are more likely to have regional safeguarding teams. Smaller independent faith organisations may have very different approaches to safeguarding since they do not have the established governance or oversight structures present in the larger churches. Safeguarding teams' record holdings are more comprehensive from the mid-1990s onwards. On its own, an investigation into records held by regional safeguarding teams will produce limited results in terms of faith groups, time period and geographical area. It may also lead to an over-emphasis on larger denominations.
  - In addition, concerns around confidentiality and data protection are likely to present barriers to direct access to records by researchers. An alternative to direct access by the researchers would be to undertake interviews to discuss anonymised data with faith organisation personnel. This would be time-consuming and resource intensive for both faith organisations and research teams and timelines would need to take this into account in a realistic way. This approach is best used in combination with other methods including interviews with survivors.

- **Examination of faith organisation records.** Although the online survey has identified the location of some records relating to allegations of abuse, it has not provided a full picture of what is held in all faith settings.
  - It would be inadvisable to focus only on records already located using the online survey because: i) a high number of respondents said they did not know whether their organisation held any records of allegations of abuse, and ii) a significant number of faith organisations contacted did not respond to the survey.
  - It may be possible to use the Regional Safeguarding Team records (as discussed above) for the main denominations and then undertake a search of records for other denominations, potentially using a sampling approach. This would be inadequate and biased because to only extract information from Regional Safeguarding offices would involve only being able to examine the more structured, larger denominations. It is important to note, however, that examining the records in individual settings may be the only way to try to get insights into the extent of recorded allegations outside the main denominations, and the processes used to respond to them.

- **Examination of social services and criminal justice records –** These records do not contain any searchable marker allowing researchers to quickly identify those related to clerical child abuse. It would be extremely resource intensive to trawl these records without narrowing the search parameters. Where identifying information such as the names of alleged perpetrators and those reporting abuse can be gleaned from other sources, these could be used as the start of a 'bread-crumb' trail into the social services and criminal justice records.

- **Examination of PRONI records.** As noted above, if names of individuals and other identifying information could be identified from other sources, these could be used as the start of a 'bread-crumb' trail into these records.

- **Public call for individuals to come forward to describe allegations.** This approach has been used in other jurisdictions. A public call for individuals to come forward will take time and be resource intensive, but, as part of a broader methodological approach involving triangulation of data, will likely provide better insights into the processes used in responding to allegations of abuse. Public calls involve a high risk of triggering emotional distress and so the research design requires a strong trauma-informed approach. Expectations will need to be managed. Consideration should be given to gathering individual testimony through both public and confidential, and statutory and non-statutory mechanisms.

As set out above, it is certainly possible to identify methods which could be used to examine available records of historical clerical abuse. However, in conducting the Phase 1 Scoping Research, we recommend that Phase 2 should not proceed until several key challenges have been addressed. These are explained in the next section.

Phase 2: Key Challenges

The key challenges identified during the Scoping Research in Phase 1 are outlined below. These form the basis for a set of recommendations about what should happen next. Our recommendations are set out in the next section.

The Scoping Research in Phase 1 established that, given the scale and complexity of the records piece, it will not be possible to complete a robust investigation of the extent of recorded allegations of clerical child abuse and the processes used to respond to them within the available time and resources. We have considered the advantages and disadvantages of various research approaches above. Even using a combination of these will fall short of what is needed unless more resources and time are available, and the issues over how to handle and expedite consent processes will persist.

An appropriate legal structure must be put in place before work on records concerning historical clerical abuse progresses any further. The most efficient way to expedite this would be through a Statutory inquiry. This would address stakeholder concerns about data protection and consent. Previous research in Northern Ireland such as the report into Magdalene laundries, mother and baby institutions and workhouses has shown that the issues around data sharing agreements and identifying a lawful basis for access to records have been very time consuming for everyone involved. The stakeholders we interviewed commonly stated that a statutory inquiry would allow for easier access to records and appropriate safeguards for all concerned. Different forms of statutory inquiry are possible, each of which involves different processes and can produce different insights and outputs. Further investigation should be made around what approach will be best suited to use in investigating historical clerical abuse in Northern Ireland.

We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical clerical abuse. There must be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each. The original project specification recognises that abuses which took place outside of residential settings are no less important or emotive than institutional abuse. It would do a great disservice to all those involved to undertake the next phase of the research in a less robust manner than previous research into historical abuse in religious and faith settings. Decisions that are taken now around how to take this research forward should be particularly sensitive to the repercussions of proposing an approach that is less robust than the inquiry-based methods used in the institutional abuse cases. For victims and survivors who may have had their experiences ignored, minimised or denied when they previously disclosed clerical child abuse, this could further compound their trauma and make them feel like they have been left behind by the State.

The HIAI was independent from government and had two main components, investigating 22 institutions.[1] One was the Acknowledgement Forum, whose members listened to the experiences of those who were children in residential institutions (other than schools) in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995. The other component was the Statutory Inquiry. In its 223 days of public hearings between 13 January 2014 and 8 July 2016 it investigated 22 institutions, as well as the circumstances surrounding the sending of child migrants from Northern Ireland to Australia, the activities of Father Brendan Smyth, and issues of finance and governance.

The Mother and Baby Institutions, workhouses and Magdalene Laundries that existed across Northern Ireland from 1922 to 1990 were investigated by a research team based at Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast.[2] The research published in 2021 comprised a literature review, analysis of archived records and oral histories. Thirteen institutions were included in the research. Given the tight research timescale and extensive range and number of sources, it was necessary to sample material in some of the archival collections. Sixty individuals offered oral testimony to the researchers. A 12-week consultation on proposals to establish an inquiry into Mother and Baby Institutions was launched in June 2024. An Independent Panel, established in April 2023. The Independent Panel will report on its findings and recommendations, some of which will be taken up by a planned Public Inquiry. The Panel is currently working on ensuring that individual institutions' records are digitised, catalogued and made available for analysis. The Panel does not have statutory powers of compulsion; this means that they must secure agreement to digitisation, which can be a complex and time-consuming process.

It is difficult to compare the research envisioned for Phase 2 with these previous pieces of research because residential institutions vary from faith settings in many ways. Even so, it is useful to highlight the sheer scale of any project including all faith organisations in Northern Ireland. Although there is no single official list of faith settings, we were able to identify over 3000 settings from a variety of sources. This was not an exhaustive list. There are more than 10 Christian denominations, each of which has multiple settings (e.g., Catholic Church, Catholic Orders, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Brethren, Free Presbyterian, as well as non-Christian faith organisations (e.g., Judaism, Buddhist, Hinduism) and so on. There are also a range of independent churches and gospel halls.

This project is not the first piece of research undertaken in faith organisations and we need to learn from the experiences of previous researchers and investigators in this field. Several investigations have examined the extent, process and experiences of abuse within faith settings in Northern Ireland, Ireland, the UK and further afield. Common themes in these other investigations relate to:

- Taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach to designing the work, collecting the data and developing findings, and sharing the learning from the investigative process. Victims and survivors need to be placed at the centre of the Phase 2 process.
- Managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be (e.g., having clear Terms of Reference clarifying whether a research project is intended to be a precursor to an official inquiry).
- Engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in to and support of the process.
- Paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes.

Many previous investigations have taken the form of statutory inquiries although the specific characteristics, scale and resources required by each inquiry vary. One of the main strengths of the inquiry mechanism is its ability to publicly and politically engage with the State's commitment to acknowledge and address systemic wrongdoing. It also raises public awareness of the harms of child abuse in ways that can lead to positive change by promoting policy, practice and legislative reform. Previous inquiries have required a significant investment of time and resources, reflecting the seriousness and complexity of their work. Some have been criticised because they were impacted by delays or unnecessarily adversarial processes, or were limited in how well they met victims' and survivors' needs. Victims and survivors demand inquiries that produce statements of truth and answers to questions; acknowledgement; accountability; procedural justice; follow-through on agreed actions; and non-recurrence.[3] It is important that we learn from past inquiries in ways that respond to these demands.

If the goal of this research remains to determine the extent of allegations of abuse as well as how these were addressed, going forward it would be useful to consider the approach recently used in O'Toole's scoping research and other Irish research.[4, 5, 6, 7, 8] These aligned the survivors' piece very closely with looking at the information held by faith organisations to make best use of both. This comprises a possible methodology for assessing likely extent as well as survivors' experiences. This has implications for the oral narratives piece of research which is currently underway, and it may be prudent to consider pausing this until decisions are made about what happens next. There will be limited opportunities to approach survivors to tell their stories and share their experiences, so it is important that a trauma-informed approach is used, and people do not have to repeat their stories unnecessarily. Fully informed consent is also critical at the start of the process. This will include talking with victims and survivors about how the information they provide will be used and to what extent they may become identifiable to faith organisations or other statutory organisations as part of accessing records if their interviews are used as part of a 'breadcrumb' trail.

The research into the Magdalene laundries, Mother and baby institutions and workhouses has also demonstrated what a trauma-informed approach should like in practice. This approach took a long time to put in place. Ensuring adequate support for victims and survivors meant that the services commissioned to provide support had to recruit additional staff. The interviewing process was deliberately paced in order to minimise the time between people coming forward, being spoken with and follow-up support being available. Doing anything less than this has the potential to retraumatise and do harm.

Careful selection of methodological approach and sequencing could be beneficial can help to make the best use of resources and time. For example, it may be possible to expedite the process by using a modular approach focusing on different faith organisations concurrently similar to the IICSA or Royal Commission in Australia.[9] A modular inquiry[10] can be designed to address immediate and narrow institutional context and issue specific interim reports on those topics while also producing a broader analysis of historical abuse issues that offer a more holistic and systemic examination of the issues, causes and context. It may also be possible to examine records using a sampling methodology to yield illustrative insights about processes without having to investigate every case to the same extent. For example, many Irish inquiries into historical clerical abuse limited their scope to a specific geographic area such as a Diocese, focused on one type of abuse (e.g. sexual abuse), or focused on one faith organisation (e.g. the Catholic Church rather than a range of faith organisations). Some also examined a representative sample of recorded allegations rather than reviewing all available allegations. Sampling strategies included taking a representative sample of priests against whom allegations of child sexual abuse had been made, looking at allegations in a specified time frame in a specific location where clerical abuse was known to have occurred, focusing on individual know perpetrators, or taking a location as the focus for the sampling (e.g. examining settings where more than 20 allegations of abuse had been made).

Those commissioning research and investigations into historical clerical abuse need to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and how long it will take. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process, while avoiding further delays whenever possible. In particular, the research process should be designed to avoid unnecessary delay. Survivors of non-institutional historical clerical abuse were first informed that research into their experiences would be commissioned in October 2016. For a variety of reasons, it has taken 8 years to progress this research to this stage. It is a sad reality that as time goes on, more victims will die without seeing this process come to fruition. There is likely to be understandable frustration if there is a perception that the work is being further delayed. Research of this kind takes time, but unnecessary delays should be avoided.

Northern Ireland now has considerable experience in investigating historical abuses in religious settings. Learning from past and ongoing investigations were undertaken should be directly integrated into the design of Phase 2. In particular, the TEO teams supporting this programme and the ongoing work into the Magdalene laundries, mother and baby homes and workhouses should work more closely together to learn from each other's experiences. Connections should also be established between the research teams. This would assist with coordination of the research and interfacing with faith organisations. **It would be useful for those commissioning government-funded work around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken. This could be done through a reflective session under Chatham house rules.**

Clear Terms of Reference should be drawn up setting out the purpose of the Phase 2 research, the decisions or actions it will influence and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda. A Steering Group should be convened with people experienced in undertaking inquiries and research of this nature to design the scope and nature of any inquiry and develop a clear Terms of Reference. This could be similar to the Truth and Recovery Programme. Some of the members of our Advisory Group may be well-placed to contribute to this scope. This should also be informed by what survivors and victims want to see come out of the process.

Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset. Phase 1 has shown that records of abuse in schools are likely to be held in schools rather than by faith organisations. Existing research has highlighted that this is a complex area. Faith organisations have adopted different governance arrangements in running schools, and stakeholders' relationships and responsibilities vary.

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, our analysis leads us to conclude that Phase 2 should not go ahead as originally envisaged. Our key recommendation is that that historical clerical child abuse should be the subject of a Statutory inquiry. The full set of recommendations is provided below.

1. **An appropriate legal structure must put in place before Phase 2, or any review of records relating historical clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland progresses any further.** The most effective structure would be a Statutory inquiry.

2. **We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical abuse.** There should be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each.

3. **The Historical Records project is not the first piece of research undertaken into abuses within faith organisations. We need to learn from previous research.** Core considerations include taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach; managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be; engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in and support of the process where possible; and paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes. **It would be useful for the commissioners involved in ongoing research projects and inquiries around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken.** This could be done in a closed reflective session under Chatham House rules.

4. **In commissioning research, it is important to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and of the likely time commitment involved. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process.**

5. **Phase 2 should have clear Terms of Reference which set the research in its policy context. These should clarify the purpose of the research, the policy decisions or actions it will influence, and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda.**

6. **Steps should be taken to ensure that Phase 2 is closely aligned with any oral history work undertaken with survivors.** Without close collaboration, it will be difficult to understand how individual allegations were addressed in practice, or to understand the extent of allegations of abuse.

7. **Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset.**

Full report

Introduction

Purpose of this report

This report has been produced as a summary of the findings of the Phase 1 scoping study.

This report has been produced as a confidential document for the Commissioning group to detail what we have learned and suggested methodologies that could be used in Phase 2. It can also be shared with the members of the Inter-departmental Working Group. It is not a public facing document beyond these audiences and should be treated as strictly confidential by them.

Addendum 24th June 2026: This report has been updated to make it suitable for publication to a wider audience.

Background to the project

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI) was an independent inquiry into the abuse of children (those under the age of 18) in residential institutions (other than schools) in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995. Details of the inquiry, including its terms of reference, can be found at https://www.hiainquiry.org/.

Historical clerical abuse that did not take place in a residential setting fell outside the HIAI terms of reference. This was raised as an issue by the then Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) Committee and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) at various junctures when the HIAI was established and operational. The position of Ministers in relation to abuse perpetrated by the clergy and members of religious bodies outside of an institutional setting has been that:

- The issue of clerical abuse is no less important or emotive than institutional abuse and Ministers were mindful of the equally destructive impact it has had on many individuals; and
- Following the HIAI, it would be for the Executive to consider how to deal with clerical child abuse that did not fall within the Inquiry's terms of reference.

In October 2016, the NI Executive agreed that a single Inter-departmental Working Group (IDWG), with an independent Chair, should be set up to review the evidence relating to Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby Institutions and Workhouses and Historical Clerical Child Abuse (HCCA) in Northern Ireland. A research project into Magdalene Laundries and Mother and baby institutions and Workhouses ran between March 2018 and December 2020. A non-statutory Independent Panel appointed in April 2023 is currently conducting further investigations into the workings of these institutions.

The Historical Clerical Child Abuse (HCCA) programme of work aims to understand the nature and prevalence of historical clerical child abuse and the impact on victims and survivors. The purpose is to support the IDWG to provide evidence-based recommendations to Ministers on any future action required, including any future action required for an effective investigation into HCCA and possible remedies for victims.

Three separate pieces of work were commissioned to contribute to this HCCA programme. The first is the 'Review of Historical Records' which is the subject of this Full Report and associated Executive Summary. It has been commissioned in two phases. Phase 1 is a scoping study to review relevant literature including reports from other similar relevant investigations into child abuse carried out in Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Ireland and other jurisdictions, and to explore what records relating to historical clerical child abuse allegations exist. The purpose of Phase 1 is to provide recommendations for the approach and resources required for data collection in Phase 2.

Two further separate reviews have been commissioned under separate contracts: one to review experience and expectations of victims and survivors of HCCA, and another to review safeguarding policies and procedures to prevent clerical child abuse.

Aims and purpose of the 'Review of Historical Records' project

The following parameters were set around the work in the project specification.

Literature review

The literature review should consider previous investigations that have taken place into historical clerical child abuse in individual church denominations and at wider national/ international level.

This must include, as a minimum, relevant reports published by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in England and Wales, and in the Republic of Ireland, the report of the Ryan Commission in 2009, and other relevant reports in relation to clerical abuse, e.g., the Murphy Report in 2009, the Ferns Report in 2005 and the Cloyne Report in 2011.

Investigation of Historical Records

The review must consider the historical records on child abuse held by faith groups and by criminal justice agencies and social services. It must look at what reports or allegations of clerical child abuse were made, if/ how they were recorded, and the response to these allegations. It must not consider current investigations or any case in which proceedings are extant.

The work should examine the HCCA records held by faith groups and by criminal justice agencies and social services. The aim is to establish:

(iv) An improved understanding of the extent of historical clerical child abuse and the possible systemic nature of that abuse.

(v) How the churches / religious organisations / faith groups have responded to allegations of abuse.

(vi) How the Government agencies, including the criminal justice system, dealt with alleged perpetrators and held them to account.

Records of abuse reported since 1922 are to be considered in order to maintain the same timeline as other HIAI work.

Defining abuse

For the purposes of the programme, the term 'clerical abuse' was defined as including neglect, exploitation, and physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse perpetrated by a member of the clergy or an individual performing a role related to the ministry of a religious institution/ faith group.

Typically, an eligible person will be considered to be:

- **Category A** – any person who has Designated religious title, ordained and who provided or provides ministry
- **Category B** – any person acting in religious/ ministry role which is directed by a person in Category A

- **Category C** – any person who was accountable to a religious person who had decision-making authorities and responsibility for taking action to protect children or young people from harm.

It is being consciously restricted to the abuse of children (those under the age of 18).

Methodology

Phase 1: Scoping study

At the end of May 2024, it was agreed with the commissioning group that a scoping study should be undertaken as Phase 1 of the research. A consortium comprising Dr Helga Sneddon, Professor Mairead Enright and Professor Cherie Armour were contracted to undertake Phase 1 with the assistance of Kat Hinfey. The intended methodology and activities that were undertaken are outlined below.

Phase 1 comprises:

1. **Evidence review** of similar work that has been undertaken nationally and internationally to examine methodologies used and key findings. This included relevant reports from Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand. It reviewed methodologies used, barriers encountered, type of data produced and recommendations made
2. **Review of legal frameworks** relevant to the question of clerical child abuse as they existed in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 2010.
3. **Discussions with more than 40 stakeholders** including senior leaders from a range of faith organisations, criminal justice agencies, social services, PRONI and others. These examined what records are likely to exist, what type of information they might contain and whether the time periods broadly aligned with when there changes in safeguarding or record keeping practices.
4. **A detailed online survey of faith organisations** concerning:
    - What types of relevant activities faith organisations were involved with during each time period.
    - What records are held pertaining to allegations of abuse, what condition these are in and where they are located.
    - Estimates of the number of allegations, potential perpetrators and potential victims described in records held locally and regionally.

    An online survey was issued to more than 1300 faith organisations (direct email invitations to 1037 recipients and more than 230 hard copy letters). A multistrand engagement strategy was used including direct emailing to a list of stakeholders identified from internet searches and the Charity Commission list of organisations detailed as having a religious purpose. Faith organisations were also asked to circulate the information to their settings and the larger denominations such as the Catholic church, Catholic Safeguarding board, Church of Ireland, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists all actively encouraged individual settings to make a response. TEO issued a letter of support at the end of September. A total of 500 completed responses were received to the online survey, with some of these providing information about multiple locations.

The period 1922-2010 encompasses many changes in terms of changes within society, faith organisations, and changes to our understanding of abuse and the actions we take to keep children safe. We therefore segmented the overall timeline into four periods. Each represents important changes in legal and safeguarding practice that may have influenced how allegations were responded to. The time periods were used to structure the data collection and analysis undertaken in the Scoping study:

- 1922-1944
- 1945- 1968

- 1969-2001
- 2002-2010.

The consortium who undertook the research comprised:
- Dr Helga Sneddon: Chartered Psychologist and Director of Outcome Imps.
- Professor Máiréad Enright: Professor of Feminist Legal Studies, Law School, University of Birmingham.
- Professor Cherie Armour: Professor in School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast.
- Kat Hinfey: independent management and change consultant.

A project Advisory Group was convened to provide the research team with additional expertise and peer review. This comprised:
- James Gallen: Associate Professor, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
- David Hayes: Professor of Child Protection and Safeguarding, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast
- Leanne McCormick: Professor of Modern History, School of Arts & Humanities, Ulster University
- Chris Reynolds: Professor of Contemporary European History and Memory Studies, School of Arts and Humanities, Nottingham Trent University
- Sinéad Ring: Associate Professor, School of Law and Criminology, Maynooth University.

An Executive Summary from the Phase 1 Scoping Study is available separately. Both the Executive Summary and Full Report have been written as strictly confidential documents for the Commissioning Group and Interdepartmental Working Group. They have been peer reviewed by the Advisory Group.

Phase 2: Collecting data on actual incidence and characteristics of cases
This report comprises the findings and recommendations from Phase 1. As noted above, it was intended to inform the development of an appropriate methodology for Phase 2. This was to be costed and delivered as a separate stage to Phase 1.

At the time of the original specification, the commissioning group advised that there was a budget of approximately **£42,000** available with prior approval for undertaking Phase 2 and TEO would need to seek approval for any additional budget. The commissioning group wanted to receive the Stage 2 report by Spring 2025.

Segmenting the timeline from 1922-2010

Allegations of historical child abuse may be met with the response that we should not judge the past by current standards. Elsewhere, inquiries into historical child abuse have emphasised, not only what organisations knew or did about child abuse, but what they should have known or should have done, given the legislative standards of the time.

The time period from 1922 to 2010 encompasses many changes in terms of changes within society, faith organisations, and our understanding of and the actions we take to keep children safe. As noted above, we have segmented the overall timeline into a number of periods. Each represents important changes in legal and safeguarding practice that may have influenced how allegations were responded to. The time periods are:

- 1922-1944
- 1945- 1968
- 1969-2001
- 2002-2010.

The history of the relevant law in Northern Ireland is complex. Very little detailed academic research has been done on the law as it stood before 1995. The legal context is more fully described in Appendix 2.

At its simplest, the key point to make is that most of the child sexual offences recognised by Northern Ireland's law today had antecedents in statute or common law before the foundation of the state in 1922. Certainly, the police and others familiar with the criminal justice system would have had broad working knowledge of long-established offences, and members of the public would have had some awareness of these offences, including from reporting in the press. During the twentieth century, Northern Ireland's law on child abuse and child protection was repeatedly subject to public discussion and reform, and this should have heightened public awareness of the criminalisation of child sexual exploitation. There will have been a similar historical awareness of physical and emotional abuse and neglect. However, before 1995, child protection authorities had limited legal power to tackle this where the perpetrator was not an immediate family member.

Discussions with key stakeholders

The key themes which emerged from discussions with stakeholders are outlined below.

Scope of the work

All stakeholders that we spoke to raised how large and complex a piece of work the project as outlined in the specification is going to be, and how much time it will take.

It was seen as positive that a range of faith organisations were to be included rather than only focusing on one organisation. At the same time, people recognised the scale of this in terms of how many faith organisations there are in Northern Ireland and how varied they are. There is no central register in Northern Ireland of religious organisations. Some are listed on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland which currently includes 1256 organisations as having a religious purpose.[11] Many, particularly smaller faith organisations do not have charitable status and are not listed on the Charity Commission. Larger denominations also vary in terms of whether their individual settings are separately listed in the Charity Commission list. For example, Presbyterian churches will have congregations listed separately as each operates as a charity in its own right, whereas denominations such as the Church of Ireland will only have one listing for the Head Office and individual settings will not be listed. The point of contact listed on the Charity Commission list is also likely to be the person with Treasurer responsibility, rather than the faith organisation leader or person with safeguarding responsibility. Contact details for some are also incomplete or incorrect.

Stakeholders highlighted how much individual faith organisations have changed since 1922 in terms of scale, function and their approach to safeguarding. They supported segmenting the timeline into specific time periods, and agreed that the years chosen to differentiate the time periods were sensible demarcation points.

Some of the changes that have occurred since 1922 relate to local level changes in terms of individual churches; others relate to systemic changes implemented throughout the whole denomination or organisation.

For example, on a local congregation or parish level, some settings experienced changes over time in terms of congregation size, merging with other congregations, beginning work in new sites, and also ceasing to operate. These may have led to changes in geographical boundaries for churches and faith organisations, as well as how records were stored and when they may have been disposed of.

Stakeholders highlighted the great variation between faith organisations in terms of governance and decision-making structures. For example, some faith organisations now have a centralised safeguarding team with records about allegations of abuse held in regional offices (mostly since the mid 90's). Others such as the independent churches do not have this centralised structure and therefore will be more likely to hold records locally in the individual settings. Although the Evangelical Alliance exists and includes many independent faith organisations amongst its membership, its role is to inform and support members around good safeguarding practice. It has no governance or record-keeping function in relation to how allegations of abuse are responded to. Presbyterian congregations are very locally governed, so whilst they hold some records at regional level in the safeguarding office, a lot of information is likely to be held locally by the Kirk sessions and committee meetings in each congregation.

There is variation in the types of activities they are different faith organisations tend to be involved with. For example, some faith organisations may run a lot of missionary trips overseas, whereas another may never undertake overseas work. This may also vary between settings within the same denomination.

The type of activities that faith organisations have been involved with has also changed over time. For example, the Catholic church and Orders have over time become less involved in the direct administration of schools, whereas in the earlier part of the 20th century this was a larger element of their work.

These variations in activities and changes over time have important implications for being explicit about what type of faith-related activity should be and should not be within the parameters of the project. This is outlined in more detail below.

Definitions and identifying which allegations will be relevant

During discussions with stakeholders, the following concerns were frequently raised about the definitions, the focus and the language used.

Issues were raised about how 'perpetrators' were defined in the Categories A, B and C, how easy it would be to apply these definitions and their potential usefulness. The categories as outlined in the specification are:

- **Category A** – any person who has Designated religious title, ordained and who provided or provides ministry.
- **Category B** – any person acting in religious/ ministry role which is directed by a person in Category A.
- **Category C** – any person who was accountable to a religious person who had decision-making authorities and responsibility for taking action to protect children or young people from harm.

Different faith organisations use the same terminology to describe quite different roles in terms of function and remit. For example, 'ordained' means different things in different faith organisations. In the Church of Ireland, ministers are ordained by bishops according to authorized forms of service with prayer and the laying on of hands. In the Presbyterian church, the presbytery ordains ministers, and the church session ordains deacons and elders. This is less of a problem if all 3 categories are considered as a collective group, but problematic if disaggregation by category is important as you are not comparing 'like with like' in terms of responsibility across different faith organisations.

Although the specification describes the programme of work being commissioned to "help understand the nature and prevalence of *historical clerical child abuse* (HCCA) and the impact on victim/ survivors of HCCA", the remit described in the Categories is actually much broader than 'clerical abuse'. Category C was seen as having the potential to include a wide variety of individuals. Stakeholders suggested that this should be further clarified. This is further outlined below in the examples provided by the stakeholders.

Early in the scoping process, some of the stakeholders highlighted that the term 'clerical' in the title of the project was misleading. They identified a risk that it could lead to some faith organisations believing that the research did not relate to them, but only to the major denominations who use words such as 'cleric' in respect to their employed religious leaders. To respond to this concern, from July 2024 onwards, we instead referred to the project as 'Historical Child Abuse within faith organisations' and this change was well-received.

Challenges were raised in terms of defining criteria for which allegations of abuse should be included in the project as relating to Northern Ireland and which should be excluded. The current specification was seen to be much more complex that previous Inquiries where the geographical location of the specific institution or building and, for example, who entered it as a child, visitor or employee could be used to differentiate between relevant and non-relevant allegations.

Stakeholder concerns included what element of the alleged incident could be used to anchor the allegation as being connected with Northern Ireland for the Records project. For example, would the criteria relate to:

- the location where the abuse was alleged to have actually happened?
- the location of where the perpetrator was employed or lived?
- the location of where the victim of the abuse lived?

Stakeholders shared anonymised examples and insights from their own experiences of previous allegations and the various types of faith activities that their organisations were involved with. These are reasonable scenarios to consider in terms of exploring how the practical application of the current parameters suggested for the work and to identify potential 'grey areas' at this stage. The scenarios are also similar to some incidents documented in the Irish inquiries as ways in which abuse (particularly sexual abuse) occurred in Ireland.

Stakeholders suggested the following examples and discussed how they might be challenging in terms of being able to apply the definitions as currently worded. These issues are important for both questions that are to be addressed by the Historical Records research (i.e., what is the extent of the abuse, and how was it handled), but even more so for measuring extent since changes in definition will result in important differences in what gets counted and what does not in the final figures. For example:

- if someone from outside Northern Ireland abuses a victim in Northern Ireland
- if a church led group goes to Scotland for a youth exchange and someone based in Scotland abuses a child from Northern Ireland
- if abuse happens involving an external organisation who has hired church premises to use, for example, to run a youth club or sports activity. These activities will sometimes involve personnel or volunteers from the faith organisation. Sometimes the faith organisation will advertise the activity 'from the pulpit' but not be involved in running it. Sometimes the faith organisation's involvement comprises nothing more than hiring out the rooms.
- if a victim was abused in both the North and the South of Ireland, would all the incidents be taken into account with respect to prevalence, or only those which occurred in the North?
- how would allegations relating to missionary work be handled, for example, if someone was employed by a faith organisation in Northern Ireland, but then abused someone in another country whilst undertaking missionary work?
- how can 'emotional abuse' be defined further within faith settings. For example, if someone put in a complaint that a sermon had been too 'hell fire' or threatening in terms of 'eternal damnation' and it had upset a child, would that be taken to be causing emotional distress rather than emotional abuse? Some stakeholders were concerned that there may not be enough detail in the record to explain what exactly the complaint was, and this may be particularly ambiguous in cases of emotional abuse (which must be persistent)
- if a cleaner or groundsman abused someone whilst they are on church premises/ in a convent etc. This was raised as an issue by several of the churches because categories of staff such as cleaners and groundsman are not eligible for enhanced checks within Northern Ireland. This was seen as problematic in light of the amount of unsupervised contact some of these staff members can have with children, and in light of the recommendations from the Bichard Inquiry following the Soham murders[12]
- if a perpetrator had also abused children in some of the institutions examined in the HIAI, would those allegations be excluded from this study?
- if perpetrator was employed as a school principal, but also acted, for example, in a senior position such as elder within a church., would all allegations of abuse made against them be included?

There were also challenges raised in terms of jurisdiction. These included:

- Several dioceses span the border in terms of their area of operation. The records that are held will relate to the whole diocese and it may be difficult to determine which allegations relate to the North of the border and which to the South. It was also seen as important that any victims and allegations relating to the South within a Diocese were not seen as any less important than those in the North. This was seen as a particular issue if the perpetrator had abused victims in both jurisdictions (these types of cases have already been documented as having occurred in the Irish Inquiries)
- Some international organisations are active in Northern Ireland but do not have their head office in the country. For example, many of the Catholic Orders and congregations have head offices in other countries. Some of these were concerned about how any potential challenges over General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and transfer of data outside the European Union would be handled in the data collection phase of the project. There are

also potential problems in being to disaggregate relevant Northern Ireland figures from other figures which tend to be held and reported globally

- Some faith organisations have their head offices in Northern Ireland but do not deliver activities here, for example, those involved primarily in missionary work. This again raises the question of what makes the allegation relevant to Northern Ireland. For example, if a perpetrator is employed in Northern Ireland, or a someone from Northern Ireland joins a missionary trip from here to another country and abuses a child there, would these allegations be within scope for the project?

Data sharing agreements and Memorandums of Understanding

Stakeholders, particularly those who have been involved in previous Inquiries, highlighted the importance of having robust Data sharing agreements and Memorandums of Understanding in place. Similar issues of concern were also raised by the stakeholders from social services and criminal justice system.

If the research is undertaken on a non-statutory basis, rather than as an Inquiry, consent processes will require individual's consent to access their files, and considerable redaction of information if direct access is required. Alternatively, it may be possible to collect anonymised data from faith organisation staff or statutory staff through interview or questionnaire instead of seeking direct access to records. It is crucial to consider the potential negative effect that approaching individuals in order to request their consent to access their personal information will have from a trauma-informed perspective, and also the time that this is likely to take. An appropriate trauma-informed engagement and support process will need to be put in place.

Questions were also raised about the extent to which data that had been collected for one purpose could be released to the research team to be used for a different purpose.

The consistent feedback was that retrieving any records that contained identifying information will be problematic and would likely need to be sourced through an Inquiry rather than non-statutory research. Anonymised prevalence figures may be less problematic, although the resource and time that would be required for organisations to source and collate this information should not be under-estimated.

The research team will also need to be able to describe how the risk that individuals (victim-survivors or perpetrators) will be identifiable in the reports, and the level of disaggregation that will be used, before data collection commences. This will influence engagement and also level of anonymity that needs to be maintained in the data collection process. Previous research has availed of legal advice around this to ensure that any reporting does not conflict with an individual's right to privacy, risk of defamation or prejudice any future criminal or civil proceedings. This will also need to be an important core element of how this research is taken forward.

What records do stakeholders think are likely to exist?

Some religious organisations, particularly those who had been involved in previous Inquiries or who had undertaken their own audits, said in the early discussions they already have a good knowledge of what information was likely to be available at various parts of the system. Others said they are familiar with what is held regionally in the safeguarding offices but unclear about what might be available at an individual parish or congregation level.

Many of the larger denominations in Northern Ireland moved to centralised record keeping about allegations of child abuse from the mid-90's onwards when Safeguarding Officers began to be appointed. The type of information held on a regional or a local level is summarised below in terms of what was highlighted during the discussions with stakeholders.

Catholic church

The Catholic church senior clerics and safeguarding officers anticipate that there is likely to be very little information held at parish level. Records are held regionally by the bishops and in the safeguarding offices, and if there is any information held locally at parish level, it is likely to be a duplicate of what is held regionally.

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church Ireland (National Board) have undertaken 2 audits of the dioceses in Northern Ireland around 2013 and again around 2022. The reports from these are publicly available and cover both churches and Catholic orders.[13] These reports provide an overview of the characteristics of each diocese including number of priests, and the extent to which it has been assessed as meeting the standards of good safeguarding practice as set out in the 2008 document. Some reports provide data tables of numbers of allegations made, although information is limited, and not all reports provide this. It is important to note that as part of the data collection processes for these reports, the names of perpetrators were not recorded and data relating to any individual was assigned a coding letter. Consequently, there is no way of identifying whether a priest is included in more than one audit. The same priest could be noted as Priest A in the first audit in 2013 and Priest G in the second audit in 2022. There will not be a duplication of allegations across the two reports however as only allegations made since the previous report were included in the second audit reports. It should also be noted that these reports were not without controversy. For example, there was a very public disagreement over the accuracy of one of the reports between Bishop Treanor (Bishop of Down and Connor) and Ian Elliott (who had been CEO of the National Safeguarding Board), with allegations that the report had not included all the details relating to an abuse case where the priest had been convicted.[14]

Catholic Orders

Each Catholic Order has its own governance structures separate from those of the Catholic church. Although they may be operating within a Catholic diocese, they operate as a separate entity with their own governance structures. Consequently, each Catholic Order's governance and record keeping sits separately from Catholic Church Diocesan records. This means that if there was an allegation of abuse, the Catholic Order would hold their own records, and these would not necessarily be shared with the Bishop of the Diocese.

Many of the Orders have changed considerable since 1922, with diminishing numbers. Some of the Orders were described as having only a handful of members now with many of them aged in their 80s. The importance of organisational memory is important here in terms of individuals being able to recall what type of activities may have been undertaken during such a lengthy time period. Faith organisations do not tend to have convenient historical accounts that describe what activities have been done when and by whom since 1922. For example, one of the Orders that we spoke to initially phoned us to clarify that if their work had already been investigated extensively as part of the previous Inquiries, that they would not be included in this research. It was only as part of the conversation that they recalled that they had a vague memory that there may have been a small youth group organised in Belfast for a period of time in the 1970s but they were not sure. After making further investigations, they came back to say that is only one surviving member of the Order who was involved in that work and they are now over 90 years old. The Order subsequently completed our online survey to provide details of that work. Had we spoken with a different person, she may not have had that organisational memory as it was a small relatively element of their work.

Similar to the Catholic Church, the following Catholic Orders have also been examined by the National Safeguarding Board and reports published (relevant reports may relate to the Augustinians, Benedictines of Glenstal, Benedictine Community of Nuns of Kylemore Abbey, Carmelites Discalced, Carmelite Order, De La Salle Brothers of Ireland, Marist Fathers, Missionaries of Africa, Presentation Brothers, Presentation Sisters South West Province, Redemptorists and Society of the Divine Word). The description of allegations in these reports does not differentiate between those relating to the North and those relating to the South of Ireland as figures are presented on a whole island basis.

Church of Ireland

The Church of Ireland operates on an all-island basis. The Church of Ireland has around 343,000 members: 219,000 in Northern Ireland and 124,000 in the Republic of Ireland. Records are held in individual parishes, at diocesan level and centrally. Several dioceses span the border.

The Church of Ireland centrally holds information about safeguarding allegations, particularly from the mid 90's onwards. The Regional safeguarding officers were less clear what records would be held locally by individual parishes and they were keen to see the results from our scoping to inform their own developmental work in this area.

Evangelical Church Alliance

The Evangelical Church Alliance is a membership organisation of congregations and individuals, rather than a governance structure similar to the other church denominations. The Evangelical Church Alliance works to serve and represent churches, organisations and individuals across Northern Ireland, encouraging churches to work together in evangelism and social action. The Alliance includes membership of congregations from other denominations, independent faith organisations. There are also individual members.

The Evangelical Church Alliance does not have safeguarding oversight role with respect to members, and therefore holds no records of allegations.

Methodist Church

The Methodist Church in Ireland is a Connexion of around 200 churches spread across the whole island of Ireland, across both jurisdictions North and South. The Methodist Church has around 128 congregations in Northern Ireland.

In 2023, the Methodist church undertook and published an audit of all allegations of abuse relating to individuals employed or volunteering within the church.[15] The earliest allegation was from the 1950s. This involved a comprehensive review of records, as well as asking people to include details of any allegations that may not have been documented in the records.

Local parishes hold their own records about allegations of abuse. The senior team thought to be unlikely that any records of allegations exist locally that have not been included in the published audit.

Presbyterian Church

Today the Presbyterian Church has over 540 congregations in 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland, with just under 230,000 members. Most of the congregations are in Northern Ireland. There are over 400 ministers in active services, including men and women. A History of Congregations has been written which compiles a historical account of each Presbyterian congregation in Ireland. This is available online to members of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.[16]

The Presbyterian Church has a less centrally hierarchical structure than the other churches, with individual congregations holding records in the Kirk sessions and Kirk councils. Each congregation is registered as a separate charity (so each will appear as separate entry on Charities commission database).

Some records are held at a regional Safeguarding office. The Safeguarding team is currently working through categorising those records, but it is a very slow process. Each congregation's Kirk session will keep records, but is the safeguarding team were unclear exactly what records still exist at local level. Record keeping and retention are likely to be patchy due to historical development of the church. There has been a lot of change in churches over time (such as merging of congregations) and in church boundaries. Boundaries at Presbyter level have also changed over time.

The Presbyterian historical society also holds some records. There are also two other councils in Presbyterian Church that hold their own records and have remit relevant to this work - Council for Mission (this focuses on organising missionary work), and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (this is where most youth work happens).

The Education Authority did a review of abuse linked to Dr Lyndsey Brown, Vice-principal of Bangor Grammar school and leader of Scripture Union camps in the Presbyterian church. There is a copy available online from an 'unofficial' source, but it would be good to obtain this from official sources.

Retention and disposal of records

Discussions with stakeholders highlighted that there will be variance in terms of how long records are likely to be held for. Most stakeholders highlighted that, over the course of such a lengthy time period, records may have been disposed of when there was a change in system structures (e.g., churches merging, Trusts being created etc.).

The general view is that there is likely to be very little documentation relating in the earlier part of the time period. This is likely to be due to differences in societal expectations about what should be recorded when an allegation is made, as well as the potential disposal and movement of documents over the last 100 years. Stakeholders also said that some records will also have been disposed of in line with what they thought was required under Good Management and Good Records disposal schedule GDPR.

It was common feedback that there is likely to be more documentation available, and better quality of information recorded, from the mid-90's onwards.

Statutory administrative datasets and records

Sourcing relevant information

There are common challenges in lack of appropriate searchable markers in administrative data sets. These are similar to those documented in research in other jurisdictions such as the Irish inquiries.

Social services

With respect to social services, key findings about available records are outlined below.

The social services SOSCARE administrative database is organised by child. There is no searchable marker in the administrative systems relating to perpetrator role.

In terms of identifying relevant case files there are similar issues. Case files are organised by child, and not by details of the perpetrator. In some Trusts (such as the Western Trust), there were several years where case files were organised by family rather than by child. Whilst this provided benefits in identifying patterns across risk within families and also intergenerationally, it adds an additional layer of complexity to retrieving information relating to an individual child.

Our own experience of analysing social services case files in the late 1990s is that they tend to be large and detailed files containing a lot of narrative information which it is very resource intensive to extract details from.

Some stakeholders remembered seeing some perpetrator files during their time in front-line practice. It is not clear how widespread the creation of these was. It is likely that there will not be very many perpetrator case files, and they are likely to only relate to perpetrators who had a larger number of allegations made against them. A search strategy would need to be developed to find any perpetrator files, and this may include requiring the perpetrator's name.

In terms of storage and disposal of records, this is a very complex area historically. The length of time records have been maintained varies depending on the type of children's case and the time at which it arose. Records in social services should be destroyed after the appropriate period has elapsed in line with Section P of the Good Management and Good Records disposal schedule from Department of Health (gmgr-disposal-schedule.pdf health-ni.gov.uk - Section P). For example, Looked After Children's records are required to be kept for 75 years. The HIAI found, however, that this was not always followed, with reference being made in records to a case from Down County Welfare [pre re-organisation in 1972] where permission was given to destroy a 'children in care' case when the person was 21 years of age. Files from cases from the community where the children have not been 'Looked After' will have been kept for a much shorter time.

Although records from residential institutions are now protected from destructions by legislation, many of the records under the scope of our research do not fall under that legislation.[17]

There has also been various restructuring within the Northern Ireland Social Care system, as outlined below, which will have impacted on the retention of records and where any remaining records will have been stored.

In relation to the structural arrangements, during the major reorganisation of the Health and Personal Social Services in 1973, the functions of welfare authorities were transferred initially to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Ministry delegated many of these to the 4 Health and Social Services Boards. In 1973, each Board established administrative Districts, (District Social Services Offices). There was further re-organisation of the Health and Social Services into general Units of Management in the early 1990s prior to moving into Trusts. There are currently 5 Health and Social Care Trusts.

Although there was some overlap of organisations from the time of Welfare Authorities through the Health & Social Services Boards through to Trusts, there was also some divergence. Stakeholders have said that each re-structuring will have led to movement of cases and files. In many cases there were new offices. With a change of staff, there was likely also a loss of corporate memory about where files may have been kept within units of management/ Trusts.

As well as influencing what records still exist, restructuring also has implications for finding specific files within the system. Many files will have been archived over time. While the system today provides a list of all hard copy files stored in any box, stakeholders said that historically these boxes had more generic titles. This has made it difficult in previous research such as the HIAI to find particular cases. For example, one of the stakeholders described a specific children's home on the edge of Belfast. Responsibility for same went from Belfast Welfare Authority to the Northern Health & Social Services Board whereas most other units went to Eastern Health & Social Services Board. In this case, there seems to have been some confusion about the files with the successor organisation to the Northern Health & Social Services Board subsequently unable to find any of the files from that time for that unit.

Stakeholders in the Trusts said that very few records are likely to exist from the earlier decades of the time period. When asked what the earliest records held are, in the SHSCT the earliest records are adoption records from 1935. The South Eastern Trust hold files, in the main, from the late 1960's, depending on what service the applicant was involved with. For example, children whose names were on the Child Protection register, but who were not Looked After children, had their files held for 5 years after the child attained their 18th birthday, whereas Children in Need who were not Looked After Children had their files destroyed 5 years after case closure. Within the earliest archived boxes (held in Oasis storage) for South Eastern Trust, the dates of birth of service users ranged from 30.3.1954 to the late 1990's, but the majority had dates of birth that were in the 1970's or 1980's. Since 1998 all files should be available, and changed to electronic filing from 2008 onwards.

Justice

With respect to judicial records, the area of record keeping has similarly complexities to that described for the Health and Social Care Trusts. Justice has been a devolved matter in Northern Ireland since 2010 and the record-keeping process was similar before that.

The records are held by each of the Operational Justice Agencies. There is a mixture of electronic and hard copy files, with a move in the mid-2000s to introduce the Causeway system to help with digital transfer and make it easier to track the progress of a case across the system.

The Department for Public Prosecutions was established in 1972. At that stage, cases were recorded on index cards throughout the 1970s. The Office of the Public Prosecution Service was established in June 1995, and then moved to electronic datasets pre-2006.

Records are housed by name of alleged perpetrator, rather than by details of the alleged victim or incident. Similar to social services, Public Prosecution Service records have no searchable marker for role of perpetrator or whether the allegation was linked to a faith organisation. It should be possible to search by type of offence. In terms of what offence is likely to be recorded, if an allegation relates to multiple offences, the lead offence is most likely to be physical or sexual, rather than the other forms of abuse.

In terms of potential search strategies, stakeholders highlighted that considerable resource would be required to do a 'trawl' of cases looking for whether any were linked with faith organisations. This also raised the issue of definition, and specifically how the categories currently detailed in the specification could be used in practice since some of the key details required are unlikely to be recorded in the Public Prosecution records.

It is important to note the volume of cases that go through the Public Prosecutions service each year and the resources that would be required to do a search of records to identify potential records of interest. With respect to the volume of cases that are dealt with by the Public Prosecution service, there are over 16,000 cases a year involving sexual offences. One suggestion explored was whether it would be possible to ask prosecutors to identify cases which have involved someone from a faith organisation and use this as a starting point. However, given the volume of cases which prosecutors deal with on a daily basis, stakeholders did not think it would be a useful strategy to identify cases to ask prosecutors if they recalled any cases involving faith organisations.

Stakeholders felt it would be better if certain identifying characteristics for a specific perpetrator and allegation could be secured (possibly from oral narratives or faith organisations), and then that used as a starting point to search the judicial system for more information. The type of information that would be required is outlined below.

Detailed information would be required to be able to source whether any records exist (and be subject to appropriate consent processes as outlined in the next section). With the full name and date of birth of claimant, and full name and date of birth of the alleged perpetrator, it may be possible to extract Public Prosecution service records, but information is likely to be limited. Stakeholders thought use of these records may be most feasible and most likely to be useful if there is a cluster of cases identified around a perpetrator or particular area.

Stakeholders thought the most useful records might be held by the Public Prosecution service or the PSNI. Records relating to the court processes would only be likely to be useful for a small number of cases to illustrate the process of how allegations were responded to. Researchers would need details of the case identified as outlined above before the information could be accessed. If the research was being undertaken on a non-statutory basis, stakeholders suggested that we would also need the permission of the perpetrator and possibly the victim to access their confidential records as in the next section. Or alternatively they could redact identifying details which may prove resource-intensive depending on the number of records.

PSNI advised that any early paper records will not be searchable unless the date that the allegation was raised is known. Computer-based record-keeping systems came in around 2007 or 2008 and before that systems were paper-based. Records will be organised by year and detail will likely vary according to the discretion of the Duty Officer. Link with a faith organisation is likely to only be noted if an incident occurred in church grounds. The PSNI team will check what other information is likely to be of most relevance to the Historical Records research and advise accordingly. They suggested submitting a Freedom of Information Request to get prevalence figures and a draft of this was submitted for comment in October but no feedback was received on this.

Obtaining access to records and necessary consent processes

In terms of accessing information, all stakeholders heavily stressed the importance of consent and confidentiality, and the need to not underestimate the amount of time or resource involved in accessing records. This was stressed by stakeholders in faith organisations, social services and justice. Stakeholders strongly and consistently recommended that having a statutory basis to the research, such as an Inquiry would make this process much more straightforward.

In Health and Social Care Trusts, it is possible to submit an application through the Information governance officers to access specific social services records. There is a separate application process for each Trust, and some work would need to be done to establish which Trust to apply to because of the changes in geographical boundaries that have occurred over time with the changes from Boards to Trust areas. The application must specify and clearly justify exactly what information is required in advance from within the dataset or case file. Everything else is then redacted from the record. This would make it a resource-intensive and time-consuming process for Trust staff to retrieve and redact the necessary information before supplying a record to the researchers, particularly if a large volume of records is requested, or records are required quickly.

Written consent is also likely to be required from the individual whose case file or information the researchers are trying to access. If this was sought, the process of approaching an individual to seek their consent (particularly if they were not coming forward themselves to take part in something like the oral narratives piece) would need to be carefully managed and trauma-informed. Previous research has also commented that victims and survivors can sometimes feel frustrated when researchers can get access to information held about their case that they themselves have not been able to access. The Madalene Laundries researchers found when they spoke with survivor-victims, having full access, without redaction, to personal records and access extending to full disclosure of the operational policies and practices within the institutions were priorities for the victims and survivors. There was a mixed response, however, regarding sharing personal records to a future inquiry, emphasising the importance of safeguarding the right to confidentiality.[18]

With respect to judicial records, similar processes are required to access as social service records, and there will be similar resource implications because of the time it will require to source and redact information.

Public archives

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is the official archive for Northern Ireland. They are currently compiling a list of the types of records that they have which may be useful for the research and outlining what support they may be able to provide to the data collection phase. The team at PRONI welcomed us coming and speaking with them at such an early stage in the research.

The team at PRONI provided some initial thinking about what they hold which may be of relevance to the work. They cautioned that a major aspect of our proposed discovery process would be with 'other' bodies (namely religious institutions / orders, none of which are held by PRONI) and that the key asset which PRONI holds remains protected and inaccessible (namely the *Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry*, PRONI reference: INQ/3). In that regard, the research team would need to talk to TEO which retains overall responsibility for the current HIA Redress Board and deals with all associated legacy matters.

In terms of what PRONI holds, relevant sources include:

1. **Crown and Peace archive**, which details the caseload of the various Magistrates, Crown, County, Coroners, Civil, Appeals, High Courts, from Partition until the (fairly) recent times (bearing in mind that PRONI should not ordinarily receive records transferred from public authorities until 20 years old).

Cases would be obviously catalogued by name of accused, and would vary from the main sexual assault, unlawful carnal knowledge, abuse cases, to the appeals of those cases, through to perhaps civil cases (possibly brought by those frustrated by lack of prosecution). Crown Books also detail the cases, catalogued by year of case.

PRONI reference:

1. **HA/1 (**Magistrates 'Petty Sessions' court)
2. **ANT/1-2** (Antrim Criminal / Civil Court respectively)
3. **ARM/1-2** (Armagh Criminal / Civil Court respectively)
4. **BELF/1-2** (Belfast Criminal / Civil Court respectively)
5. **DOW/1-2** (Down Criminal / Civil Court respectively)
6. **FER/1-2 (**Fermanagh Criminal / Civil Court respectively)
7. **LOND/1-2** (L'Derry Criminal / Civil Court respectively)
8. **TYR/1-2** (Tyrone Criminal / Civil Court respectively)

9. **KB/5 & 19** (Kings Bench, High Court writs – where civil cases are taken against named parties (individuals, institutions, departments, etc.))
10. **APP** (Court of Appeals)

2. **Committee of Inquiry into Children's' Homes and Hostels,** also known as the **'Hughes' or 'Kincora' Inquiry (c.1984-6),** which covers such institutions as the De La Salle Boys home of Rubane House, Kircubbin (dealt with in significant detail by Sir Anthony Hart in his 2017 HIAI report).

PRONI reference: **INQ/1**

3. **Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry** (**c.2015-17**), which remains closed to all approaches except through agreement of the inheriting legacy body, under TEO.

PRONI refence: **INQ/3**

4. **Ministry / Department of Health and Social Services Policy and case files**, where the Department and wider healthcare estate engaged with policy, protocol, incident re. child abuse.

PRONI reference: **HSS/11 & 13**.

Other information already in the public domain

The remit for the Historical Records project includes reviewing historical records from faith organisations, criminal justice agencies and social services. As outlined earlier in this report, discussions with stakeholders highlighted that being able to provide name of perpetrator and other details about a case may provide a useful entry point into searching for other records, rather than having to do a full 'trawl' of records which would be very resource intensive.

It is possible, therefore, that if a perpetrator's name can be identified from another source, such as from reports in the media following a conviction, these details could be used to narrow the search for relevant records.

It is important to note that this will not dispense with the need for appropriate consent processes. Even if someone has been found guilty of a crime, it does not remove their right to privacy, but it does mean that you can use information that is in the public domain as a result of that conviction. To access confidential information relating to them, the appropriate consent processes and data protection requirements would still need to be followed. In non-statutory research this may necessitate seeking consent from the perpetrator and victim in order to access any records relating to them.

We therefore undertook some scoping to explore what information is already available in the public domain. This comprised online searching using various combinations of terms such as 'cleric* abuse*, faith, paedophil*, priest, religio*, pervert, minister and 'North* Ireland''. The term 'abus*' was also searched in conjunction with the names of the larger denominations in Northern Ireland. Links in articles were followed to access connected information using a snowball approach.

The aim of this scoping was not to do undertake a comprehensive search per se, but to rapidly review sufficient media articles to assess whether these are likely to contain relevant information and may therefore be useful to interrogate further in Phase 2.

This initial searching returned one major online repository of information relating to clerical abuse in the Catholic church (BishopAccountability.org), and a list of media reports, of which the first 30 deemed to be most relevant were selected for full exploration of type of content.

BishopAccountability.org is an online database of Catholic priests convicted of child abuse (https://www.bishop-accountability.org/Ireland/). Operated as a Massachusetts non-profit corporation, it aims to post all publicly available documents that are relevant to the Catholic abuse. The database focuses solely on Catholic clergy and therefore provides no insights into other faith organisations. It provides a digital collection of documents, survivors witnesses, investigative reports and media coverage. Databases are maintained of persons accused in US, Argentina, Chile and Ireland. In the page detailing its archiving and research process (https://www.bishop-accountability.org/who-we-are/#method), it notes that its *"standards of inclusion are broad. We offer documents representing every conceivable perspective on the crisis, and we intend to include every relevant diocesan and Vatican document. We endorse no particular analysis of the root causes of the crisis, and we advocate no particular remedies. BishopAccountability.org makes no claim regarding the accuracy of any document we post, and we have tried to include the full range of viewpoints, so as to provide a fully documented landscape of the crisis. We post documents in their entirety, and we do not edit the content in any way."*

We reviewed the information housed in the BishopAccountability.org database relating to Ireland. It details 93 priests who were convicted of sexually abusing children: 17 of these are listed in Northern Irish dioceses. The Irish database has been published despite warnings that such lists are contentious especially in Ireland with the Christian Brothers taking legal action to prevent the disclosure of names in the Ryan Report. The naming of priests in Ireland is restricted as they will only be named in the Irish press if the priest has been convicted in a criminal court. The Irish database is a small sample of approximately six percent listing details of 93 clergy in comparison with the findings of audits presented by the National Board for Safeguarding Children citing more than 1300 clergy had been reported to Dioceses and Religious Orders since 1975.

The type of information available on the Archbishop.org 'Ireland' database includes name of perpetrator, name of Diocese/Order, brief background information, and sources (often press articles or professional publications). The lists name the perpetrator, role of Priest or Brother, date of sentencing, number of charges, dates of crimes, dates/location of conviction, number and gender of victims involved. In most cases it is possible to see the duration of time spent between the crimes and date of conviction. In some cases, details are provided of compensation paid (and by who).

The Archbishop.org database has limited scope in terms of only focusing on Catholic clergy. As noted above, preliminary scoping was also done to see what information was available online relating to other faith organisations. We screened over 100 articles for relevance and reviewed the first 30 of these were examined to explore the type of information they contained. These included various sources from the internet, Wikipedia, as well as articles in the tabloid press e.g., Sunday World and other news outlets such as BBC NI.

The type of information usually available in these online articles included date of publication, name and age of preparator, details of dioceses and faith groups, details of crime (date, location, number, age and gender of victims). Most contained details of charges and conviction. Some offered details of compensations and the existence of compromise agreements. Some articles look at the specifics of escalation in a particular case (such as who knew what and when) and some focus on allegations of cover up, concerns around process and transparency. This initial scoping of the media also primarily returned articles involving Catholic clergy. Often there were multiple reports relating to the same perpetrator.

From a methodological perspective, the use of media reports as a potential source of data is not without potential biases or problems, and they may be particularly limited in shedding light on extent of abuse. The information they contain is not necessarily accurate or unbiased. They may omit important details. The link of a perpetrator with a faith organisation may not always be explicitly described or known. For example, if a perpetrator was employed as a school principal, but also had a role within the church, an article which only reports where they are employed would have given no indication of the link with the faith organisation.

There may also be a publishing bias which makes it more likely for reports from certain denominations to be picked up by the press. It should also be noted that online searches such as the one we did will invariably return more recent articles rather than older articles. Other more comprehensive and robust search strategies would need to be used to ensure the inclusion of older publications that are not housed online, and these may well contain different types of information.

Our initial scoping into media reports suggests that these may offer a *potential starting point* to investigate more thoroughly, but the veracity of any information will need to be verified since these are not databases from official agencies, and they may contain inaccuracies and omissions. Even so, they may offer a useful starting point or entry route into identifying potentially relevant records from the justice database, social services or faith organisations in terms of looking for information about allegations made against perpetrators. This will require the development of a more comprehensive and robust search strategy to ensure credibility and validity of approach.

Gaps identified in church, social services and justice records

Faith organisations have played various roles in connection with schools since 1922. Discussions with stakeholders highlighted that faith organisations can be involved with schools in a diverse range of ways. For example, involvement could include:

- The faith organisation being the sole or lead organisation responsible for the administration or running of the school
- Faith organisation staff acting as a member of the Board of Governors
- Having religious personnel employed as teaching staff by the school
- Employees of the faith organisation contributing to teaching or pastoral care whilst still employed by the faith organisation
- Schools reporting that their ethos is influenced by religious ideas, such as having a Christian ethos.

Schools linked to faith organisations have changed in function and governance over time. Many faith schools have merged over time, been renamed or ceased operations. There have also been considerable changes in the last 100 years in terms of governance and faith organisations such as the Catholic Church becoming less involved directly in school administration. Even with these changes, many faith organisations still continue to be regularly involved in school life such as having representatives on School Boards or providing pastoral care to pupils. Some staff at schools may also play an active role in a faith organisation even though it is not directly linked to their role at the school.

It was raised in the discussions with faith organisations that schools are likely to hold their own records rather than these being held by faith organisations. For example, Catholic bishops do not hold records relating to the Catholic Orders. Catholic Orders may hold records relating to schools which they run, but it is more likely that the schools themselves hold them. Schools have changed function, merged or ceased to exist over time. The Catholic church highlighted that abuse that happened in residential or church-run schools is not likely to be recorded in church records. These schools would have held their own records. Catholic Order schools also retained their own records.

The specification for the Historical Records project detailed the scope as examining records held by churches and faith groups, and by criminal justice agencies and social services. It was not within the scope to examine records held by schools. This feedback from stakeholders therefore highlights that there is a gap in the records to be examined.

Although it was not part of the existing scope, for the sake of completeness we did some limited exploration to assess how many schools in Northern Ireland currently or may historically have had links with a faith organisation. We were not able to source a list of schools which have links with faith organisations, or any source which documents the changes that all the schools in Northern Ireland have gone through since 1922.

The Department of Education lists all schools currently operational in Northern Ireland (n=1135). This is categorised by school type into controlled schools, maintained schools (catholic-managed schools), Irish-medium schools, other maintained schools, voluntary (grammar) and integrated schools and institutions of further and higher education.

Some information on the various types of schools is provided below:[19]

- **Controlled schools** are managed and funded by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors. Primary and post-primary school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of transferors - mainly the Protestant churches - along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority.
- **Catholic Maintained schools** are managed by Boards of Governors nominated by trustees - mainly Roman Catholic - along with parents, teachers and Education Authority representatives. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) is responsible for the effective management of the Catholic Maintained sector and is the employing authority for teachers in Catholic Maintained schools. The Catholic schools trustee service is funded by Department of Education (DE) to provide support and advice to trustees on area planning.
- **Voluntary schools** are self-governing schools, generally of long standing, originally established to provide an academic education at post primary level on a fee-paying basis. Now funded by the Department of Education (DE) and managed by Boards of Governors. The Boards of Governors are constituted in accordance with each school's scheme of management - usually representatives of foundation governors, parents, teachers and in most cases, DE or Education Authority representatives. The Board of Governors is the employing authority and is responsible for the employment of all staff in its school.
- **Integrated schools** invite Protestant and Catholic to come together with other traditions to improve their understanding of one another, their own cultures, religions, and values. They are open to all pupils regardless of background or ability. The Department of Education (DE) and the Education Authority (EA) have a duty to encourage, facilitate and support integrated education. With funding from DE, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) promotes the strategic development of Integrated schools and provides advice and guidance to all Integrated schools, both Controlled Integrated and Grant Maintained Integrated.

  1. **Controlled Integrated**

  Nursery, primary and post primary Integrated schools which are managed and funded by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors. The majority of Controlled Integrated schools have acquired Integrated status through the process of ‘Transformation’. The Board of Governors consists of representatives from both the Protestant and Catholic traditions along with representatives of parents, teachers and the EA.

  2. **Grant Maintained Integrated**

Self-governing schools which have Integrated status and were opened by groups of parents. They are funded directly by the Department of Education and managed by Boards of Governors. The Board of Governors are constituted in accordance with each school's scheme of management and include representatives of foundation governors, parents, teachers and DE. The Board of Governors is the employing authority and responsible for employing staff.

- **Irish Medium schools** provide education in an Irish speaking school or unit. Department of Education (DE) has a duty to encourage and facilitate in the development of Irish-Medium education. Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) was established by DE and its remit is to promote, facilitate and encourage Irish-Medium education and Irish-Medium schools. There are Controlled and Maintained Irish-Medium schools and units. The majority of Irish-Medium schools are Maintained schools.
- **Independent schools** are schools at which full-time education is provided for pupils aged from four to 16 and is not grant aided. These schools set their own curriculum and admissions policies and are funded by fees paid by parents and income from investments. Each independent school must be registered with Department of Education and is inspected regularly by ETI.

A search of school types was undertaken of the DE database on 24th July 2024. This only lists schools which currently exist. The number of schools shown by each type are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of schools currently registered in Northern Ireland by management type

Management type of school	Number of schools
Controlled	519
Roman Catholic Maintained	436
Voluntary	61
Grant Maintained Integrated	38
Controlled Integrated	33
Other Maintained	30
Other	18
Grand Total	**1135**

There is no searchable marker within this database to identify schools which are, or have been, connected with faith organisations. We did some scoping within the categories to see how much work would likely be involved in identifying schools with an obvious faith connection.

Further exploration of the 'Other category' showed that some include religious terminology in their names, and some did not. For example, there are 7 schools which describe themselves on their websites as having links with the Free Presbyterians and which include 'Independent Christian' in their school name (e.g. Ballymoney Independent Christian School and Bangor Independent Christian School). Harmony Christian school is described on their website as being connected with the New Testament Pentecostal Church. In contrast, other schools make no mention of faith-related terminology in their title but details of a link with a faith organisation is detailed on their website. For example, the 'OneSchool Global UK Knockloughrim Campus' describes itself on its website as having links with the Brethren.

The 'Voluntary' category of 61 schools includes some schools which according to their websites either still have or historically are known to have had faith organisation involvement. These include

Abbey Christian Brothers Grammar school, Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School, Christian Brother's Grammar school, Methodist College and so on.

It would appear from this initial scoping that website searches and/ or individual contact for each school would likely be needed in order to clarify links of each with faith organisations. In the online survey undertaken as part of the scoping study we asked faith organisations whether they had any links with schools and in some cases, settings have provided the names of schools. This could provide a useful starting point, although will not include all settings because some respondents said, particularly with regard to the earlier time periods, that they simply did not know.

If schools are to be included in the research (since they were not included in the previous HIAI work), it will be necessary to clearly specify what exactly defines a school as having a connection with a faith organisation. For example, if the Board of Governors is the employing agent for the school staff, some of the teaching staff have to be trained in ministry by a faith organisation. The eligibility criteria for the inclusion of a school will need to specify this unambiguously so it can be applied equally to all potential institutions. Similar to the definition issues outlined earlier, there would need to be similar clarity required around what the criteria would be for looking at allegations of abuse in any school context.

These issues are very important to consider from a methodological point of view. The key issue relates to whether the starting point for looking at records should be determined by reviewing all the records held by a school or relating to a school in order to identify any allegations of abuse, or whether the starting point is to take an alleged incident of abuse or perpetrator that has been identified elsewhere and then review what information the school may hold relating to this allegation or perpetrator.

Over the last 16 months, Mary O'Toole and her team in Ireland have been undertaking a non-statutory scoping inquiry into sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by religious orders in Ireland. The report from as published in September 2024. It provides useful insights into how research has been undertaken into schools and proposed methodologies for further Inquiry in the Irish context, although since it was limited solely to schools run by the religious orders, it did not encounter some of the complexities around inclusion criteria outlined above. It does, however, provide useful insight into what resources are needed to undertake scoping research in a methodologically robust way, albeit with a much narrower scope that the current Historical records piece.

Insights provided by the online scoping survey

Who responded to the survey?

By 8th January 2025, 638 responses had been received from faith organisations: 78% (n=500) complete and 22% (n=138) incomplete. Several responses covered more than one parish.

The findings from the complete responses are outlined below. Responses categorised as 'incomplete' within the SurveyMonkey software are those still in progress where the respondent has begun to complete the survey but not yet formally submitted their response. Incomplete responses cannot be used in the analysis.

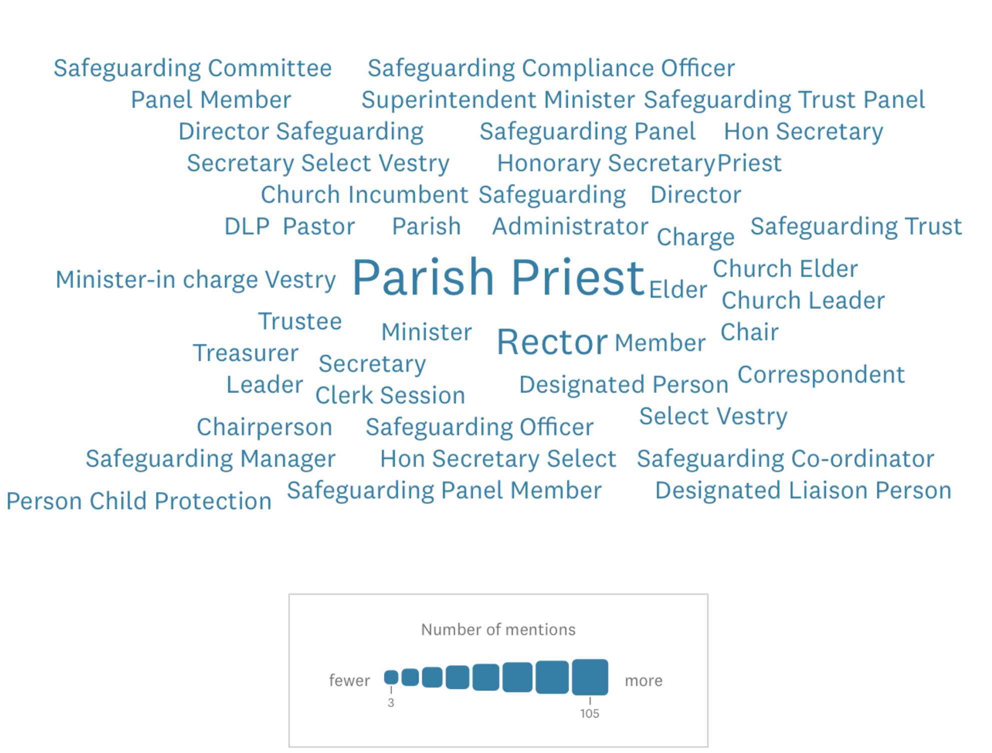
The largest proportion of responses described themselves as Church of Ireland (39%, n=194), followed by the Catholic church (30%, n=148) (Table 2).

Table 2: Type of faith organisation which responded to the online survey

Type of faith organisation	Percentage of responses (respondents could select more than one type, e.g. some of the Catholic orders also selected Catholic church)
Church of Ireland	39% (n=194)
Catholic Church	30% (n=148)
Presbyterian	8% (n=42)
Catholic Orders/ congregations	7% (n=34)
Methodist	6% (n=29)
Other	6% (n=29)
Independent	3% (n=16)
Baptist	2% (n=11)
Evangelical Alliance	0% (n=1)
Muslim	0% (n=1)
Free Presbyterian	0% (n=0)
Hindu	0% (n=0)

Most respondents described themselves as being ministers, clergy or involved in some aspect of safeguarding (Figure 1). Many of those involved in safeguarding roles were volunteers rather than paid members of staff.

Figure 1: Wordcloud showing how respondents commonly described their role



Respondents were able to use a free-text box to describe the geographical area that their response related to. Most (86%, n=429) related to a townland or parish, with several of these including multiple settings within this. For example, a priest may have submitted one response for 4 settings because they all had the same answers about no information being held at a local level. 9% related to Northern Ireland wide response (n=47): these mostly related to organisations stating that they never had any activities in Northern Ireland during the time period under investigation. 3% (n=17) related to Diocesan level or some regional office level. Seven respondents (n=7) described their 'other' such as their activities being outside of Northern Ireland (e.g. charitable trusts).

How have faith organisations activities in Ireland changed over time between 1922 and 2010?

Nearly a fifth of the organisations (19%, n=95) said the boundaries of the geographical area they were describing had changed since 1922. A variety of changes were described. For example, changes included multiple parishes being created out of one parish, parishes being merged, small movements in parish boundaries and also changes at a regional or diocesan level. Changes in governance structures on a geographical level were also described, for example, structures evolving from autonomous convents to Diocesan units and finally to provincial structures, or churches being assigned to other Presbyteries for financial or administrative reasons. 65% (n=321) said there had been no changes, and 16% (n=81) said they did not know.

92% of the respondents (n=459) said that their faith setting was active in Northern Ireland during the period of 1922-2010. 8% (n=41) said their organisation was not active and they were therefore exited from the questionnaire.

Faith organisation activities during 1922-1944

82% of faith organisations said they were active in the geographical area between 1922-1944 (n=378). 15% (n=69) were not active and 3% (n=12) did not know.

The most common types of activities faith organisations were involved in were Church or faith meetings and services (94%, n=369) (Table 3). Most respondents were not sure about other types of activities.

Table 3: Types of activities which faith organisations were involved with between 1922 and 1944

Type of activity	**Yes**	**No**	**We don't know**	**Total**
Church or faith meetings and services	94% (n=369)	2% (n=9)	3% (n=13)	n=391
Youth trips or exchanges	12% (n=46)	24% (n=94)	64% (n=251)	n=391
Cross-community initiatives	6% (n=22)	30% (n=118)	64% (n=224)	n=391
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	4% (n=16)	39% (n=151)	57% (n=224)	n=391
Hosting any youth groups run by an external body in the area	3% (n=11)	29% (n=113)	68% (n=267)	n=391
Administration of any schools (day or boarding)	39% (n=151)	35% (n=136)	27% (n=104)	n=391
Teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools (day or boarding)	24% (n=93)	34% (n=131)	43% (n=167)	n=391
Administration of a hospital	2% (n=8)	79% (n=307)	19% (n=76)	n=391
Involvement with any residential institutions for children	3% (n=13) 8 of these said they were included in the previous inquiry	72% (n=283)	24% (n=95)	n=391
Other activities involving children and young people	21% (n=83)	20% (n=77)	59% (n=231)	n=391

Youth groups run by external bodies included Boys brigade, guides, scouts, and local youth clubs. It is likely that these will hold their own records relating to any allegations of abuse.

169 respondents provided more information relating to the connection with the administration of any schools. Many of the faith organisations listed the names of individual schools (often multiple schools). Some noted that this was not an exhaustive list and was often based on individual parishioners' memory rather than specific records. Others noted the historical event which had led to the change, for example, *"[The] church school' school room until bombed in 1941."* Another response highlights the close connections between faith organisations and schools in Northern Ireland, with the respondent noting that *"the Church of Ireland was responsible for over 150 schools. These were transferred to government control over a period of time from 1920s – 1950s."* They did not list the name of the individual schools.

We also received direct queries about whether this question around administration of any schools meant individuals serving on Board of Governors or having some other role, so there is likely some overlap between this and the next question. Another said *"None of the schools within the Parish … were directly administered by the Parish. Priests of the Parish … were likely to have served on school Boards of Governors but, like every other governor, they were autonomous and independent of the parish."*

With respect to teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools, 92 respondents provided more information. This includes identification of schools (often multiple schools within a single response), as well as descriptions of the role. Examples included:

"Clergy were given the right to inspect Religious Education, be members of the Board of Governors, and take Christian worship through school assemblies."

"It is likely that clergy would have been involved pastorally with Catholic schools in their respective parishes. The parish did not appoint clergy to teach in schools."

"Priests and clerics from Parishes were likely to have served on school Board of Governors and the Diocese may have had the status of Trustees for a number of schools. In addition, there may have been situations where clergy and religious were directly appointed as Teachers in schools and/or head teachers."

Some also highlighted the challenge in providing more information about teaching or pastoral involvement with any schools without undertaking archival searches:

"It is not possible to clarify definitely the above without an extensive search of the Order's archive for this time period."

Eight respondents noted that their faith organisation was involved in the administration of a hospital, 9 respondents provided more information, with most naming specific hospitals as well as describing the role and two noting that involvement of the faith organisation in the local hospital was unlikely.

With respect to residential institutions, 12 respondents provided more information including the name of the residential institution. 8 of those who said they were included in the previous Inquiry.

With respect to any other activities, 88 people provided additional information. The most common activities described were Sunday school, altar services, Girl guides, scouts, boys brigade, choir, church lads brigade, church outlines, Brownies, and possible involvement with local GAA club.

Existence of records relating to 1922 and 1944

Only a small number of respondents (4%, n=14) knew of records existing for the time period 1922-1944. More than half (58%, n=226) said no records existed and 39% (n=151) did not know.

In terms of where records are held relating to 1922-1944, the most likely place was in hard copy in a diocesan or central office (26%, n=45) or at a local site (23%, n=40) (Table 4).

Table 4: Location of records were held relating to 1922 and 1944

Locations of records	Responses
Not applicable - there are no records held anywhere	0% (n=0)
In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7	24% (n=41)
In hard copy in a diocesan or central church or faith organisation office	26% (n=46)

Stored electronically by your faith organisation	3% (n=5)
Stored by another organisation	1% (n=2)
Archived in PRONI	5% (n=8)
Other	53% (n=93)
Total Respondents: n=172	

137 provided additional information and often this was to say they did not know. 54 respondents suggested potential locations that could be checked (these suggestions should not be taken as indicative that records pertaining to allegations of abuse definitely exist in these locations).

Are there records relating to allegations of abuse relating to 1922-44 held at the local location?
Only 3% (n=5) said yes. Most did not know (59%, n=102). 39% (n=67) said no.

Twenty-one people provided more information, with the most common response being that an answer cannot be provided to whether there are allegations without trawling through all the information. For example, comments included:

"Select Vestry minutes for these years would need to be scrutinised page by page to see if any such allegations. There is no folk memory of anything like this."

"Without reading through all previous session minute books, we don't know."

"Handwritten records exist, currently off-site, but we do not know if there are any allegations of abuse held within these."

Any records that exist relating to 1922-44 are likely to be hard copy (48%, n=49) rather than electronic (9%, n=7). Most respondents did not know what condition the records are likely to be in (85%, n=88). 9% (n=9) said they would be in good condition (easily legible), 6% (n=6) would be a mix of poor and more legible, and 1% would mostly be poor condition (n=1).

Volume of records
The volume of records does not seem to be large in any specific location relating to allegations of abuse. None of the settings said that they held more than 1 filing cabinet (Table 5).

Table 5: Volume of records relating to 1922-1944

Quantity of information	**Number of respondents (total n=104)**
No information	84% (n=87)
Less than 1 box file of information	11% (n=11)
1-3 box files of information	2% (n=2)
1 filing cabinet drawer (4 box files)	2% (n=2)
2-4 filing cabinet drawers	1% (n=1)
2 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)

Number of allegations relating to 1922-1944

Number of perpetrators between 1922-1944
28% (n=29) said they could not estimate approximately how many people had allegations made against them relating to the abuse of children under the age of 18. 70% said there were none (n=73). Two respondents (2%) said that there were between 1 and 10 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse.

Number of alleged victims between 1922-1944

29% (n=30) said they could not estimate approximately how alleged victims there were. 69% said there were none (n=72). Two respondents (2%) said that there were between 1 and 10 alleged victims.

How many allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation?

28% (n=29) said they could not provide an estimate. Three respondents (3%) said between 1-10 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation.

How many allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings?

No allegations were noted as resulting in the initiation of investigation. 28% said they could not estimate this (n=28). The other 73% (n=76) said there were none.

8% said there may be abuses disclosed to the faith organisation that are not documented in their records (n=8). Most said they did not know (1%, n=1).   Clarifications included that it was impossible for people to know this for sure, rather than for them to be aware of any specific information to suggest that abuses had not been recorded. For example, comments included:

> *"I think painful experience and hindsight has shown that statistically some abuse may have happened, but I have no written evidence to confirm it did or what course if any was followed."*

> *"There is always the possibility that an allegation was not recorded in a session minute book."*

Type of information that is likely to exist in records

For this time period, most people did not know what type of information was likely to exist. More than 80% of respondents answered 'Don't know' to each of the types of information. The likeliest type of information to exist are shown below in Table 6.

Table 6: Type of information relating to allegations of abuse in 1922-1944

Type of information relating to allegations of abuse	Very likely to exist	Possibly exist	Not at all likely to exist	We don't know	Total
Correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf	3% (n=3)	4% (n=4)	11% (n=11)	83% (n=86)	n=104
Records of the faith organisation's internal courts or dispute resolution processes	3% (n=3)	3% (n=3)	10% (n=10)	85% (n=88)	n=104
Minutes of relevant meetings and hearings	2% (n=2)	5% (n=5)	11% (n=11)	83% (n=86)	n=104
Correspondence with the faith organisation's local, regional or national authorities	2% (n=2)	4% (n=4)	10% (n=10)	85% (n=88)	n=104
Correspondence with the faith organisation's legal advisors	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	12% (n=12)	86% (n=89)	n=104
Correspondence with the faith organisation's insurers	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	11% (n=11)	87% (n=90)	n=104
Accused individuals' personnel files	1% (n=1)	3% (n=3)	13% (n=13)	84% (n=87)	n=104
Correspondence with police	1%	2%	11%	87%	n=104

	(n=1)	(n=2)	(n=11)	(n=90)	
Correspondence with welfare organisations or social services	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	12% (n=12)	86% (n=89)	n=104
Correspondence with court officials	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	11% (n=11)	87% (n=90)	n=104
Correspondence with government departments	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	11% (n=11)	87% (n=90)	n=104
Correspondence with the faith organisation's authorities abroad	1% (n=1)	3% (n=3)	12% (n=12)	85% (n=88)	n=104

22 people provided more information. Most often this was that no records were found, or they were not aware of any records. Others described the process they would have expected to have been followed if an allegation had been made:

"I haven't discovered any material in parish records covering this particular period apart from the registers as I've indicated above which are kept by every Catholic parish, the absence I appreciate doesn't mean such things never existed. I'm aware that as clergy come and go in a parish they often discard material before they move or others may have so on arrival with the mindset that as anything that happened before they arrived is now history. Absence at local level doesn't preclude the possibility that issues arose and were dealt with a higher chain of command and that something may exist in their records."

"If a matter had been reported to the local Presbytery, or if a commission had been instructed to investigate any allegations, there should be records in the Presbytery minute books."

"The only evidence of allegations would be if discussed in Select Vestry Meeting and Minuted."

"Only Baptismal, Marriage & Burial records are available."

Are records kept of specific details relating to the perpetrator, victim and incident?

Once again, most respondents did not know whether any of these details were likely to be recorded (90%, n=92): name and date of birth of the alleged victim, name and date of birth of the perpetrator, or whether the person accused of perpetrating the abuse was living or deceased (Table 7).

Table 7: *Likelihood of certain types of information being recorded in 1922-1944*

Type of information recorded	Yes, in every case	Sometimes but not always	Not likely to have been recorded	We don't know	Total
The name of the person who said they were abused	2% (n=2)	2% (n=2)	7% (n=7)	89% (n=93)	n=104
The date of birth of the person who said they were abused	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	8% (n=8)	89% (n=93)	n=104
The name of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	3% (n=3)	2% (n=2)	6% (n=6)	89% (n=93)	n=104
The date of birth of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	2% (n=2)	3% (n=3)	6% (n=6)	89% (n=93)	n=104

Whether the person accused of perpetrating abuse is living or deceased	4% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	7% (n=7)	89% (n=93)	n=104
Role of the alleged perpetrator (e.g., whether they were paid staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event)	4% (n=4)	1% (n=1)	4% (n=4)	91% (n=95)	n=104

Most (92%, n=94) did not know how easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse) (Table 8).

Table 8: How easy would it be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records relating to 1922-1944

	Yes – the type of abuse is likely to be clearly categorised in the record	**Yes – the information may be detailed in a written description rather than clearly categorised**	**No – this is unlikely to be recorded for this time period**	**We don't know**	**Total number of responses**
How easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g., whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse)	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	7% (n=7)	90% (n=94)	n=104

Most respondents (≥94%, n≥98) did not know whether it was likely that records would include descriptions of whether allegations were notified to other parties such as senior faith leaders, other leads within the faith organisations, safeguarding offices within the faith organisation, social services, police, schools or anyone else.

Most respondents did not know whether it was likely that the records could describe the outcome of each allegation (≥ 95%, n ≥ 99) such as whether an internal investigation took place, decision made by any internal investigation, allegation withdrawn, apology made to victim, financial payment to victim with or without civil proceedings, disciplinary actions for the accused, actions to mitigate risk such as the treatment or training for the accused, civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, policy or practice changes within the faith organisation (Table 9).

Table 9: Likelihood of the outcome of an allegation being recorded in 1922-1944

Likelihood of the outcome being described in the records	Not likely to be recorded very often	May be recorded for some records but not for all	Likely to be recorded for most cases	We don't know	Total
Whether an internal investigation took place	3% (n=3)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	95% (n=99)	n=104
Decision made by any internal investigation (e.g. whether allegation was upheld)	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	96% (n=100)	n=104
Allegation withdrawn	4% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	96% (n=100)	n=104
Apology made to the victim	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	96% (n=100)	n=104
Financial payment to the alleged victim with or without civil proceedings	4% (n=4)	1% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	95% (n=99)	n=104
Disciplinary actions for accused	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	95% (n=99)	n=104
Actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused	3% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	1% (n=1)	96% (n=100)	n=104
Civil proceedings	4% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	96% (n=100)	n=104
Criminal proceedings	3% (n=3)	1% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	96% (n=100)	n=104
Policy or practice changes within the faith organisation	4% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	96% (n=100)	n=104

Faith organisation activities during 1945-1968

89% (n=408) of faith organisations said they were active in the geographical area between 1945-1968. 10% (n=46) were not active and 1% (n=5) did not know.

The most common types of activities faith organisations were involved in were Church of faith meetings and services (94%, n=390). Most respondents were not sure about other types of activities (Table 10).

Table 10: *Type of faith organisation activities during 1945-1968*

Type of activity	Yes	No	We don't know	Total
Church or faith meetings and services	94% (n=390)	3% (n=11)	3% (n=12)	n=413
Youth trips or exchanges	24% (n=101)	20% (n=81)	56% (n=231)	n=413
Cross-community initiatives	7% (n=28)	33% (n=136)	60% (n=249)	n=413
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	4% (n=17)	43% (n=179)	53% (n=217)	n=413
Hosting any youth groups run by an external body in the area	9% (n=36)	32% (n=131)	60% (n=246)	n=413
Administration of any schools (day or boarding)	34% (n=139)	45% (n=184)	22% (n=90)	n=413
Teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools (day or boarding)	28% (n=116)	38% (n=157)	34% (n=140)	n=413
Administration of a hospital	2% (n=9)	81% (n=335)	17% (n=69)	n=413
Involvement with any residential institutions for children	3% (n=14) 10 of these said they were not included in the previous inquiry	77% (n=317)	20% (n=82)	n=413
Other activities involving children and young people	27% (n=110)	20% (n=82)	54% (n=221)	n=413

Youth groups run by external bodies included Retreat centre, Youth Guild, Boys brigade, guides, scouts, Christian endeavour, Girls Life Brigade, local GAA club and local youth clubs. Any records relating to allegations of abuse may be held by these rather than by the faith organisation.

161 respondents provided more information relating to the connection with the administration of any schools. Many of the faith organisations listed the names of individual schools (often multiple schools). Some noted that this was not an exhaustive list and was often based on individual parishioners' memory rather than specific records.

With respect to teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools, 119 respondents provided more information. This includes identification of schools (often multiple schools within a single response), as well as descriptions of the role.

With respect to involvement in the administration of a hospital, 14 respondents provided more information, with some naming specific hospitals as well as describing the role. Roles included chaplaincy, pastoral visiting, founding or owning of hospitals, and faith organisation staff being employed at the hospital.

With respect to residential institutions, 15 respondents provided more information including the name of the residential institution and clarification of the type of involvement.

With respect to any other activities, 118 people provided additional information. The most common activities described were Sunday school, altar servers, bible study, confirmation classes, choir, children's meetings, Lifebuoys, Badminton club, British Red Cross, Girls Auxiliary and Boys Auxiliary, voluntary work organised by others, day trips, periodic Sunday school conferences and youth clubs.

Existence of records relating to 1945-68

Only a small number of respondents (6%, n=25) knew of records existing for the time period 1945-68. More than half (58%, n=240) said no records existed and 36% (n=148) did not know.

In terms of where records are held relating to 1945-68, the most likely place was in hard copy in a diocesan or central office (30%, n=52) or at a local site (21%, n=36) (Table 11).

Table 11: *Where records relating to 1945-68 are likely to be held*

Where are records likely to be held	**Number of responses (total n=174)**
In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7	21% (n=36)
In hard copy in a diocesan or central church or faith organisation office	30% (n=52)
Stored electronically by your faith organisation	4% (n=7)
Stored by another organisation	1% (n=1)
Archived in PRONI	5% (n=9)
Other	52% (n=90)

137 provided additional information and often this was to say they did not know. Some respondents suggested potential locations (these suggestions should not be taken as indicative that records pertaining to allegations of abuse definitely exist in these locations).

Are there records relating to allegations of abuse relating to 1945-68 held at the local location?

Only 8% (n=14) said yes. Most did not know 57% (n=99). 35% (n=61) said no.

39 people provided more information with the most common response being that an answer cannot be provided to whether there are allegations without trawling through all the information, or that they did not have access to the info (only the Bishop and DLPs could have access). A small number of people said there was info relating to allegations and provided the following additional explanation:

"Brief info minutes of 30-5-45."

"There are a small number of records relating to allegations of this time period."

"This relates to allegations in the ROI."

"In relation to allegations of abuse, there are paper records held at regional centre which are in good condition comprising one file of 12-14 pages. The allegation referred to 3 people: Emotional/ physical abuse against [member of faith organisation staff] who was deceased and Inappropriate sexual behaviour against [2 members of faith organisation staff] one of whom was deceased. There was one complainant. The one allegation that was made was brought to the attention of the Regional Office. The one allegation of physical/ emotional abuse made against one [member of faith organisation staff] was reported to [senior faith organisation staff]. As [the staff]] was deceased, no further action was taken. The report against the two [staff] (one deceased) was reported to the [senior faith organisation staff]. [It was] confirmed that [they] notified the [statutory authorities]. It is highly unlikely that abuses may have been disclosed to our organisation but not documented in our records. There is a file held in regional office (not locally by us) that contains communications between our [senior staff] and the Complainant, [and other parties]. The role of the alleged perpetrator is likely to be recorded in the records (e.g. whether they were paid staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event). The type of abuse be easily categorised from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse). The allegation was reported and the outcome are as noted above."

"No confirmed records of abuse – there is one record that may be relevant, but this relates to an organisation that may not have been part of the church."

Any records that exist relating to 1945-68 are likely to be hard copy 51% (n=58) rather than electronic 7% (n=6). Most respondents did not know what condition the records are likely to be in 79% (n=89). 13% (n=15) said they would be in good condition (easily legible), 7% (n=8) would be a mix of poor and more legible, and 1% would mostly be poor condition (n=1).

Volume of records

The volume of records does not seem to be large in any specific location relating to allegations of abuse. Most settings who said they held records, had less than 1 box file of information (12%, n=13). Three settings (3%) had 1-3 box files worth. Two settings had one 4 box files worth (2%, n=2). Three settings said they had 2-4 filing cabinet drawers worth. Two settings said they had 6-10 filing cabinets worth of information (Table 12).

Table 12: *Quantity of information held relating to 1945-68.*

Quantity of information	Number of respondents
No information	80% (n=90)
Less than 1 box file of information	12% (n=13)
1-3 box files of information	3% (n=3)
1 filing cabinet drawer (4 box files)	2% (n=2)
2-4 filing cabinet drawers	3% (n=3)
3-5 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)
6-10 filing cabinets	2% (n=2)
TOTAL	100 (n=113)

Number of allegations relating to 1945-68

Number of perpetrators between 1945-68

26% (n=29) said they could not estimate approximately how many people had allegations made against them relating to the abuse of children under the age of 18. 65% (n=74) said there were none. Seven respondents (6%, n=7) said that there were between 1 and 10 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse. Two respondents (2%) said there between 11-20 accused perpetrators. One respondent said there were between 21-30 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse.

Even though they were asked not to provide details of specific allegations, some did in the open-ended comments:

"1 - historic abuse - may not have occurred at [named] church. Youth leader moved his youth group to [named location]. Complaint made 2020. withdrawn or not followed up. Had not been reported to PSNI. Perpetrator died."

"Some of these relate to allegations of abuse which occurred in the Republic of Ireland and to [staff] belonging to [organisations] based in the Republic of Ireland."

"One individual."

Number of alleged victims between 1945-68

26% (n=29) said they could not estimate approximately how many alleged victims there were. 65% said there were none (65%, n=74). 8 respondents (7%, n=8) said that there were between 1 and 10 alleged victims. One respondent said there were between 11-20 alleged victims (1%). One respondent said there were between 21-30 alleged victims (1%).

How many allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation?

26% (n=29) said they could not provide an estimate. 7% (n=8) said between 1-10 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. One person said between 11-20 were notified (1%) and one respondent said between 21-20 (1%) were notified so someone more senior within the faith organisation.

How many allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings?

6 respondents noted that the allegation resulted in the initiation of investigation (n=4 for 1-10 allegations, n=2 for 11-20 allegations). 26% (n=29) said they could not estimate this. The other 69% (n=78) said there were none. Although respondents were asked not to detail specific allegations, some provided more information:

"No record held by PSNI. Perpetrator died 1976. Complaint received 2020 but could not be followed up."

"Declined to report the matter to police."

"The individual was deceased."

9% (n=10) said there may be abuses disclosed to the faith organisation that are not documented in their records. Most said they did not know 88% (n=99). Clarifications are similar to those provided for the earlier time period such as it was impossible for people to know this for sure, rather than for them to be aware of any specific information to suggest that abuses had not been recorded. One person noted that:

"There are rumours of potential abuse in the 1950s but no one has any precise records of who was involved."

Type of information that is likely to exist in records

For this time period, most people did not know what type of information was likely to exist. More than 80% of respondents answered 'Don't know' to each of the types of information. The likeliest type of information to exist are shown below.

Type of information relating to allegations of abuse	Very likely to exist	Possible exist	Not at all likely to exist	We don't know	Total
Correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf	7% (n=8)	4% (n=4)	5% (n=6)	84% (n=95)	n=113
Correspondence with the faith organisation's legal advisors	4% (n=4)	4% (n=5)	6% (n=7)	86% (n=94)	n=113
Correspondence with the faith organisation's insurers	2% (n=2)	3% (n=3)	8% (n=9)	88% (n=99)	n=113
Minutes of relevant meetings and hearings	8% (n=9)	4% (n=5)	5% (n=6)	82% (n=93)	n=113
Accused individuals' personnel files	4% (n=5)	4% (n=5)	8% (n=9)	83% (n=94)	n=113
Records of the faith organisation's internal courts or dispute resolution processes	3% (n=3)	6% (n=7)	7% (n=8)	84% (n=95)	n=113
Correspondence with police	4% (n=4)	4% (n=4)	8% (n=9)	85% (n=96)	n=113
Correspondence with welfare organisations or social services	4% (n=5)	4% (n=4)	7% (n=8)	85% (n=96)	n=113
Correspondence with court officials	2% (n=2)	3% (n=3)	10% (n=11)	86% (n=97)	n=113
Correspondence with government departments	3% (n=3)	3% (n=3)	8% (n=9)	87% (n=98)	n=113
Correspondence with the faith organisation's local, regional or national authorities	4% (n=5)	4% (n=4)	7% (n=8)	85% (n=96)	n=113
Correspondence with the faith organisation's authorities abroad	1% (n=1)	4% (n=5)	10% (n=11)	85% (n=96)	n=113

23 people provided more information. Most often this was that no records were found, or they were not aware of any records.

Are records kept of specific details relating to the perpetrator, victim and incident?

Once again, most respondents did not know whether any of these details were likely to be recorded ($\geq$85%, n$\geq$96): name and date of birth of the alleged victim, name and date of birth of the perpetrator, or whether the person accused of perpetrating the abuse was living or deceased, or the role of the alleged perpetrator (Table 13).

Additional comments made regarding this mostly included that no records are held locally. Some specific comments regarding allegations included:

"Cremated – details known."

"Initials used to identify victims, described as being young rather than date of birth. Name of perpetrator only likely to be recorded if they are clergy."

"Some complainants do not give their name or personal information, and some give their name but do not name the respondent."

"This related to one case."

"The above estimates include a variety of possible allegations including allegations which were anonymous and/or the accused was not identified. It also includes allegations received by third parties and possibly relating to offences which occurred in other [areas], or relating to personnel within [other faith organisations]. It also includes reports which have no specified time period. It is likely that many of the reports estimated above may be also reported by other [parties]. Some of these reports would not reach the legal threshold for reporting to authorities."

Table 13: *Type of information likely to have been recorded relating to 1945-68*

Type of information recorded	Yes – in every case	Sometimes but not always	Not likely to have been recorded	We don't know	Total
The name of the person who said they had been abused	6% (n=7)	4% (n=4)	3% (n=3)	87% (n=98)	n=113
The date of birth of the person who said they had been abused	3% (n=3)	5% (n=6)	4% (n=5)	88% (n=99)	n=113
The name of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	7% (n=8)	4% (n=5)	2% (n=2)	87% (n=98)	n=113
The date of birth of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	4% (n=5)	4% (n=5)	4% (n=4)	88% (n=99)	n=113
Whether the person accused of perpetrating abuse is living or deceased	8% (n=9)	3% (n=3)	2% (n=2)	88% (n=99)	n=113
Role of the alleged perpetrator (e.g., whether they were paid staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event)	9% (n=10)	1% (n=1)	5% (n=6)	85% (n=96)	n=113

Most 84% (n=95) did not know how easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse) (Table 14).

One respondent clarified that rather than the type of abuse being clearly described, records:

"Sometimes referred to things like 'unholy act'".

Table 14: How easy would it be to categorise the type of abuse from the information in the record

	Yes – the type of abuse is likely to be clearly categorised in the record	**Yes – the information may be detailed in a written description rather than clearly categorised**	**No – this is unlikely to be recorded for this time period**	**We don't know**	**Total number of responses**
How easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse).	7% (n=8)	4% (n=5)	4% (n=5)	84% (n=95)	n=113

Most respondents (≥84%, n≥95) did not know whether it was likely that records would include descriptions of whether allegations were notified to other parties such as senior faith leaders, other leads within the faith organisations, safeguarding offices within the faith organisation, social services, police, schools or anyone else.

Most respondents did not know whether it was likely that the records could describe the outcome of each allegation (≥ 89%, n ≥ 101) such as whether an internal investigation took place, decision made by any internal investigation, allegation withdrawn, apology made to victim, financial payment to victim with or without civil proceedings, disciplinary actions for the accused, actions to mitigate risk such as the treatment or training for the accused, civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, policy or practice changes within the faith organisation (Table 15).

Table 15: Likelihood of the outcome of the allegation being described in the records relating to 1945-68

Likelihood of the outcome being described in the records	**Not likely to be recorded very often**	**May be recorded for some records but not for all**	**Likely to be recorded for most cases**	**We don't know**	**Total**
Whether an internal investigation took place	1% (n=1)	2% (n=2)	8% (n=9)	89% (n=101)	n=113
Decision made by any internal investigation (e.g. whether allegation was upheld)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	7% (n=8)	91% (n=103)	n=113

Allegation withdrawn	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	6% (n=7)	91% (n=103)	n=113
Apology made to the victim	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	5% (n=6)	92% (n=104)	n=113
Financial payment to the alleged victim with or without civil proceedings	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	6% (n=7)	91% (n=103)	n=113
Disciplinary actions for accused	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	7% (n=8)	91% (n=103)	n=113
Actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	6% (n=7)	92% (n=104)	n=113
Civil proceedings	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	6% (n=7)	92% (n=104)	n=113
Criminal proceedings	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	7% (n=8)	91% (n=103)	n=113
Policy or practice changes within the faith organisation	4% (n=4)	1% (n=1)	4% (n=4)	92% (n=104)	n=113

One respondent clarified:

"No financial payments made. No criminal proceedings. All [staff] deceased at time of receipt of allegations."

Faith organisation activities during 1969-2001

98% of faith organisations said they were active in the geographical area between 1969-2001 (n=448). 2% (n=9) were not active and 0% (n=2) did not know.

The most common types of activities faith organisations were involved in were Church or faith meetings and services (97%). Respondents were more confident about whether other types of activities had taken place compared to the earlier time periods (Table 16).

Table 16: Type of faith organisation activities during 1969-2001

Type of activity	Yes	No	We don't know	Total
Church or faith meetings and services	97% (n=435)	2% (n=11)	1% (n=4)	n=450
Youth trips or exchanges	44% (n=199)	21% (n=94)	35% (n=157)	n=450
Cross-community initiatives	26% (n=116)	31% (n=141)	43% (n=193)	n=450
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	17% (n=75)	43% (n=195)	40% (n=180)	n=450
Hosting any youth groups run by an external body in the area	20% (n=91)	41% (n=183)	39% (n=176)	n=450
Administration of any schools (day or boarding)	38% (n=169)	50% (n=224)	13% (n=57)	n=450

Teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools (day or boarding)	39% (n=175)	40% (n=179)	21% (n=96)	n=450
Administration of a hospital	3% (n=13)	85% (n=383)	12% (n=54)	n=450
Involvement with any residential institutions for children	3% (n=14) 9 of these said they were included in the previous inquiry	82% (n=368)	15% (n=68)	n=450
Other activities involving children and young people	46% (n=209)	22% (n=100)	31% (n=141)	n=450

Youth groups run by external bodies included Boys brigade, guides, scouts, and local youth clubs, Retreat Centre, Lo Debar Trust Russian Children hosted by church families, Rangers, Table tennis club, Scripture union, CSSM, exchange programmes, Young community volunteers from Quaker organisations in Britain and the Americas, Christian Endeavour, ulster Delaware project, Youth with a mission (YWAM), Youth for Christ (YFC), Badminton club, teams assisting with beach clubs during summer months, Campaigners groups run by local (people associated with our church but run along the guidelines of the wider Campaigner organisation), activities hosted by our uniformed organisations or with neighbouring congregations, groups staying over in our church halls, youth centre with MCI, sublease Dundrum centre to ROIT a local youth charity, summer CSSM camps, Joint community initiatives including Kids Clubs and Holiday Bible clubs, DCFI (local organisations which ran after-school programmes for children from the estate), SPRED, and nCEF Good News Club, Beavers Happy Tots (external private nursery unit renting premises), possibly sport like GAA, Street Reach Initiatives (Exodus, Coleraine), Search Derry Youth Group, Patrician Youth Centre, and magazine distribution in October 2001 which was helped by a youth/ adult team from Operation Mobilisation ship Logos Hope.

Examples of responses include:

"We hosted a group of men throughout our congregation as part of the Walk of 1000 men (1 week duration). We also hosted a team from America during this period. We also hosted Scout and Guide groups and we consider them as an external organisation that has membership of a cross-community nature."

Another described that their youth club may have hosted German students. Another described a visit by a children's African choir:

"I recall that in and around 1988/89 a children's African choir was on tour around Northern Ireland. The children - with their leaders, were invited around churches to sing. Churches donated to their work. On that evening, the children and their leaders were taken to church members' homes where they stayed for the night. I recall that the event was very successful."

One person highlighted the challenge of knowing what should be included:

"What does hosting mean? For example, our premises would have been available to youth groups and summer schemes."

188 respondents provided more information relating to the connection with the administration of any schools. Similar to the earlier time periods, many of the faith organisations listed the names of individual schools (often multiple schools). Some noted that this was not an exhaustive list and was often based on individual parishioners' memory rather than specific records. One respondent did not list the names of individual schools but noted that:

"The Church of Ireland (COI) had an advisory involvement with a number of national schools in Donegal and some schools in the diocese of Derry. I don't have the names of these schools. Information will be held in COI HQs."

With respect to teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools, 173 respondents provided more information. This includes identification of schools (often multiple schools within a single response), as well as descriptions of the role. For example, one respondent noted:
"Chaplaincy as previously outlined. It is possible that the parish provided chaplains to Scouts and Girl Guides – but no records exist."

With respect to involvement in the administration of a hospital, 16 respondents provided more information, with some naming specific hospitals as well as describing the role.

With respect to residential institutions, 16 respondents provided more information including the name of the residential institution.

With respect to any other activities, 211 people provided additional information. The most common activities described were Sunday school, youth centre, Mums and tots, confirmation classes, altar servers, choir, youth club, confirmation groups that went on residential trips, badminton club, discos, Good News club in association with Child Evangelism Fellowship, bowling clubs, Legion of Mary, Youth camps for ages 8-18, church teams for individuals 16+, events for young people, outreach youth work, football with kids on Sunday nights, beach clubs for children during summer period, creche, parent and toddler group, providing funds and material goods to disadvantaged families, Duke of Edinburgh's award, residentials (mostly weekends) in recognised/ certified youth service or denominational centres, Holiday bible club, Ormeau churches together, The Open Doors Learning Centre Barrack Street from 1998 (an outreach to pupils who found mainstream Secondary schooling very challenging), Edmund Rice Summer Camps for children began 2000, camps and missions, Spred, a lot of work with other denominations and organisations, such as Youthlink, Youth for Christ and Corrymeela. These could have been organised in a combination of local-level or corporately at National Level. Drop-in Centre, St Johns GAC, Friday night drop-in, GIFT Programme Children's Liturgy, SEARCH Group, briginis, Sunday school excursions, Young Harvesters, children and young people will have been received individually by monks of the community for confession or a chat, and often been alone with them for these meetings, bell-ringing, most likely in sport, GAA, Activities sporting, educational, religious. Programme for unemployed boys and girls (ACE scheme), off-shore rescue service, nursery, Parents and Kids together programme (1997), youth group for Jewish children, running of Blue Lamp Discos in church hall, Children's Liturgy at Mass Search Youth group, drama group, brownies, scouts, guides, musical band, boys brigade, girls brigade, Brindini (Junior girl scouts), homework clubs.

One noted: *"Apart from normal pastoral ministry with young people, this period of time saw the development of a number of Diocesan Youth centres. Possibly as part of a government initiative to support inner city communities at a time of civil unrest."*

Existence of records relating to 1969-2001

Only a small number of respondents (8%, n=35) knew of records existing for the time period 1969-2001. More than half (62%, n=280) said no records existed and 30% (n=135) did not know.

Some respondents clarified:
"There was a (proven) case, but the records are not held here. I would imagine they are held by the [regional] Safeguarding Office."

"There are a number of allegations of inappropriate behaviour or relationships, but none cross the threshold for criminal prosecution so I opted to answer 'no'."

"This was a matter for the [senior cleric]. I suspect there are some records."

"We have one record of a bullying incidence between two under 18's – March 2001."

"Allegations were made against a [staff member] (these are held in the [named] offices)."

"The first allegation of child sexual abuse in NI held by the Safeguarding department relates to 1970. We do not know if there are other records from before that."

In terms of where records are held relating to 1969-2001, the most likely place was in hard copy in a diocesan or central office (30%, n=51) or at a local site (31%, n=54) (Table 17).

Table 17: Where records are likely to be held relating to 1969-2002

Where are records likely to be held	Number of responses
In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7	31% (n=54)
In hard copy in a diocesan or central church or faith organisation office	30% (n=51)
Stored electronically by your faith organisation	6% (n=11)
Stored by another organisation	1% (n=2)
Archived in PRONI	3% (n=5)
Other	42% (n=72)
Total Respondents: n=172	

117 provided additional information and often this was to say they did not know. 44 respondents suggested potential locations. These included similar locations to the previous time periods (these suggestions should not be taken as indicative that records pertaining to allegations of abuse definitely exist in these locations).

Are there records relating to allegations of abuse relating to 1969-2001 held at the local location?
Only 13% (n=23) said yes. Some did not know 45% (n=78). 41% (n=71) said no.

33 people provided more information with the most common response being that an answer cannot be provided to whether there are allegations without trawling through all the information. Although they were asked not to describe specific allegations the following were noted:

"There are 2 references in Minutes of Board of Governor's meetings regarding two separate and isolated cases."

"1 allegation (1998)."

"These are the safeguarding committee's notes about a disclosure of an historical allegation made to a member of the congregation. The allegation had already been made to the police."

"I am aware of an external report made to our [cleric] regarding abuse by another [cleric]. I am also aware of Paramilitaries dealing with a parishioner following serious sexual allegations against children. This resulted in his death."

"A teacher in [name of school] was convicted of abuse."

"Written allegations in letter form, and correspondence from the [senior faith organisation staff], and records relating to compensation to victims are held securely in the [named location]."

Any records that exist relating to 1969-2001 are likely to be hard copy 54% (n=54) rather than electronic 16% (n=12). Most respondents did not know what condition the records are likely to be in 73% (n=73). 22% (n=22) said they would be in good condition (easily legible), 5% (n=5) would be a mix of poor and more legible, and 0% would mostly be poor condition (n=0).

Volume of records

More records were thought to exist than in previous time periods. 75% of respondents said there was no information (n=75) (Table 18).

Table 18: Quantity of information held relating to 1969-2001

Quantity of information	Number of respondents (Total n=100)
No information	75% (n=75)
Less than 1 box file of information	13% (n=13)
1-3 box files of information	4% (n=4)
1 filing cabinet drawer (4 box files)	3% (n=3)
2-4 filing cabinet drawers	1% (n=1)
2 filing cabinets	2% (n=2)
3-5 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)
6-10 filing cabinets	1% (n=1)
11-20 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)
21-30 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)
40-50 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)
More than 50 filing cabinets	1% (n=1)

Number of allegations relating to 1969-2001

Number of perpetrators between 1969-2001

29% (n=28) said they could not estimate approximately how many people had allegations made against them relating to the abuse of children under the age of 18. 53% (n=53) said there were none. Fourteen respondents 14% (n=14) said that there were between 1 and 10 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse. Two (2%, n=2) said there were 11-20 alleged perpetrators. Two (2%, n=2) said there were between 31-40 people who had accusations made against them (Table 19).

Table 19: Estimated number of individuals alleged to have perpetrated abuse between 1969-2001

Estimated number of alleged perpetrators	Number of respondents to the survey (total n=100)
0	53% (n=53)
1-10	14% (n=14)
11-20	2% (n=2)
21-30	0% (n=0)
31-40	2% (n=2)
41-50	0% (n=0))
51-60	0% (n=0)
61-70	0% (n=0)

We can't provide an estimate	29% (n=29)

Although respondents were asked not to detail specific allegations, some provided more information:

"With reference to incidents and disclosures of abuse it is, of course, the cases that disclosures of non-recent abuse can be made years after the time of the incident and there may be future disclosures of abuse made. Therefore, an accurate figure of the incident and there may be future disclosures of abuse made. Therefore, an accurate figure as to how many cases there are cannot be given. Similarly, whilst safeguarding in [our faith organisation] is centralised (in [named location] with regional staff in Belfast), and case files have been reviewed and collated, it is also possible that cases of abuse were dealt with locally and no records were made, kept or otherwise not shared locally or centrally. This would be particularly pertinent to cases pre policy and training and in cases where [locations] closed. However, we are committed to using our historical records to provide as much useful information as possible to research, formal inquiries and individual requests."

"There were two only."

"Some of the allegations of abuse occurred in the Republic of Ireland and some related to [staff] belonging to [faith organisations] based in the Republic of Ireland."

"We do not keep records of such allegations in individual [local] offices which are often visited by numerous and varying Staff members, members of the public and also ever-changing [staff]. Rather these reports are kept in the central [faith organisation] offices where they can be safely and securely stored."

"Only 1."

"I am aware of at least 3 [staff members] of the parish against whom allegations were made relating to their time outside the jurisdiction of the parish of [named location]. In two cases they were convicted by a court of law."

"2."

Number of alleged victims between 1969-2001

29% (n=29) said they could not estimate approximately how alleged victims there were. 56% said there were none 56% (n=54). 9 respondents (9%, n=9) said that there were between 1 and 10 alleged victims. Two respondents said there were between 11-20 (9%, n=2). One respondent said there were between 41-50 victims (1%, n=1). One respondent said there were between 51-60 victims (1%, n=1). Two respondents said there were between 61-70 victims (2%, n=2) (Table 20).

Table 20: *Estimated number of individuals who were alleged to have experienced abuse between 1969-2001*

Estimated number of alleged victims	Number of respondents to the survey (total n=100)
0	56% (n=56)
1-10	9% (n=9)
11-20	2% (n=2)
21-30	0% (n=0)
31-40	0% (n=0)
41-50	1% (n=1)
51-60	1% (n=1)

61-70	2% (n=2)
We can't provide an estimate	29% (n=29)

Although respondents were asked not to include details of specific allegations, they included the following information:

"The minutes of the Board of Governors' meetings refer to incidents but don't include details of potential allegations they were dealing with."

"We are unsure – there were 7 people who made allegations."

"1."

"2."

How many allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation?

30% (n=30) said they could not provide an estimate. 12% (n=12) said between 1-10 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. 2% (n=2) said between 11-20 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. One 1% (n=1) said between 31-40 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. 1% (n=1) said between 51-60 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. 1% (n=1) said between 71-80 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. Although they were asked not to provide details of specific cases, some provided more information:

"Unable to say from school records whether information was passed to [senior staff]. The [faith organisation] archives have no records of abuse for this school."

"Apart from anecdotal evidence or media report, we have no records, either hard or electronic, of any allegations whatsoever, these are stored in the central [faith organisation] offices mentioned above."

"I am aware of at least 3 cases where allegations were notified to the [senior staff] at that time. The offences took place outside the parish of [named location]."

"2."

How many allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings?

17 respondents noted that the allegations were noted as resulting in the initiation of investigation. 29% (n=29) said they could not estimate this. The other 54% (n=54) said there were none. 13 respondents said between 1-10 allegations resulted in investigations (13%). One respondent said between 21-30 allegations resulted in investigations (1%). One respondent said between 31-40 allegations resulted in investigations (1%). Two respondents said between 41-50 allegations resulted in investigations (2%). Although there were asked not to provide details of specific cases, some provided the following information:

"There is one case only."

8% (n=8) said there may be abuses disclosed to the faith organisation that are not documented in their records. Most said they did not know 85% (n=85). Clarifications included that it was impossible for people to know this for sure, rather than for them to be aware of any specific information to suggest that abuses had not been recorded.

Type of information that is likely to exist in records

For this time period, most people did not know what type of information was likely to exist. More than 76% of respondents answered 'Don't know' to each of the types of information (n=76). The likeliest type of information to exist are shown below (Table 21).

Table 21: Type of information likely to exist in records relating to 1969-2001

Type of information that is likely to exist in records	Very likely to exist	Possibly exist	Not at all likely to exist	We don't know	Total
Correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf	13% (n=13)	4% (n=4)	7% (n=7)	76% (n=76)	n=100
Correspondence with the faith organisation's legal advisors	10% (n=10)	7% (n=7)	6% (n=6)	77% (n=77)	n=100
Correspondence with the faith organisation's insurers	6% (n=6)	8% (n=8)	8% (n=8)	78% (n=78)	n=100
Minutes of relevant meetings and hearings	13% (n=13)	8% (n=8)	5% (n=5)	74% (n=74)	n=100
Accused individuals' personnel files	8% (n=8)	5% (n=5)	11% (n=11)	76% (n=76)	n=100
Records of the faith organisation's internal courts or dispute resolution processes	5% (n=5)	5% (n=5)	8% (n=8)	82% (n=82)	n=100
Correspondence with police	9% (n=9)	6% (n=6)	7% (n=7)	78% (n=78)	n=100
Correspondence with welfare organisations or social services	6% (n=6)	5% (n=5)	10% (n=10)	79% (n=79)	n=100
Correspondence with court officials	2% (n=2)	4% (n=4)	14% (n=14)	80% (n=80)	n=100
Correspondence with government departments	2% (n=2)	4% (n=4)	14% (n=14)	80% (n=80)	n=100
Correspondence with the faith organisation's local, regional or national authorities	7% (n=7)	6% (n=6)	9% (n=9)	78% (n=78)	n=100
Correspondence with the faith organisation's authorities abroad	4% (n=4)	5% (n=5)	12% (n=12)	79% (n=79)	n=100

18 people provided more information. This was generally that no records were found, or they were not aware of any records. One respondent noted:

"If it is an allegation against a [cleric staff member] more information is likely to exist – likely to be little if is against a volunteer or other employee. Generally more info starting to be kept at this stage but may be inconsistent."

Are records kept of specific details relating to the perpetrator, victim and incident?

Once again, most respondents did not know whether any of these details were likely to be recorded ≥ 77% (n=77): name and date of birth of the alleged victim, name and date of birth of the perpetrator, or whether the person accused of perpetrating the abuse was living or deceased (Table 22). Some people provided additional information:

"More likely to be recorded when clergy."

"Sometimes allegations do not contain the name of the person who said they were abused or the name of the person accused. While a date of birth is not given records contain the age of the person when the abuse took place and year of birth of clergy is also available but not date of birth."

"In some cases, the [senior staff member] is not provided with the complainant's name or personal details. At times the complainant does not name the Respondent. If either name is provided the details are recorded and kept in the file."

"The confidential note holds the initials of the victim who has made the allegation to the police."

"The above estimates include a variety of possible allegations including allegations which were anonymous and/or the accused was not identified. It also includes allegations received by third parties and possibly relating to offences which occurred in other [locations], or relating to personnel within [other faith organisations]. It also includes reports which have no specified time period. It is likely that many of the reports estimated above may be also reported by other [faith organisations]. Some of these reports would not reach the legal threshold for reporting to authorities."

Table 22: *Type of information likely to be recorded relating to 1969-2001*

Type of information recorded	Yes – in every case	Sometimes but not always	Not likely to have been recorded	We don't know	Total
The name of the person who said they had been abused	13% (n=13)	6% (n=6)	3% (n=3)	78% (n=78)	n=100
The date of birth of the person who said they had been abused	4% (n=4)	11% (n=11)	6% (n=6)	79% (n=79)	n=100
The name of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	14% (n=14)	7% (n=7)	2% (n=2)	77% (n=77)	n=100
The date of birth of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	6% (n=6)	9% (n=9)	6% (n=6)	79% (n=79)	n=100
Whether the person accused of perpetrating abuse is living or deceased	10% (n=10)	7% (n=7)	5% (n=5)	78% (n=78)	n=100
Role of the alleged perpetrator (e.g., whether they were paid	16% (n=16)	4% (n=4)	1% (n=1)	79% (n=79)	n=100

staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event)					

One respondent noted with respect to role: *“Allegations have been made against [specific types of faith organisation staff] only.”*

Most 77% (n=77) did not know how easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse) (Table 23). One respondent provided the following clarifications:

“The nature of the allegations are not clear from the records.”

Table 23: How easy would it be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records relating to 1969-2002

	Yes – the type of abuse is likely to be clearly categorised in the record	**Yes – the information may be detailed in a written description rather than clearly categorised**	**No – this is unlikely to be recorded for this time period**	**We don’t know**	**Total number of responses**
How easy it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse).	15% (n=15)	6% (n=6)	2% (n=2)	77% (n=77)	n=100

Most respondents ($\geq$ 77%, n $\geq$ 77) did not know whether it was likely that records would include descriptions of whether allegations were notified to other parties such as senior faith leaders, other leads within the faith organisations, safeguarding offices within the faith organisation, social services, police, schools or anyone else (Table 24). Some respondents provided the following additional information:

“Notifications were made but only when disclosures were made in more recent years and not for the time period when the abuse occurred.”

“If the person accursed was involved in other organisations, records may contain details of how this information was shared to manage risk.”

Table 24: Likelihood that records described whether the allegation was notified to someone else

	Not likely to be recorded very often	**May be recorded for some cases but not for all**	**Likely to recorded for most cases**	**We don't know**	**Total**
Senior leader in the faith organisation such as Bishop	0% (n=0)	4% (n=4)	19% (n=19)	77% (n=77)	n=100
Other leaders within the faith organisation such as vestry, Kirk committee, or other management committee	3% (n=3)	2% (n=2)	10% (n=10)	85% (n=85)	n=100
Safeguarding office within the faith organisation	1% (n=1)	3% (n=3)	17% (n=17)	79% (n=79)	n=100
Social Services	2% (n=2)	4% (n=4)	9% (n=9)	85% (n=85)	n=100
Police	0% (n=0)	4% (n=4)	14% (n=14)	82% (n=82)	n=100
School	8% (n=8)	2% (n=2)	6% (n=6)	84% (n=84)	n=100
Someone else (please specify below)	5% (n=5)	1% (n=1)	4% (n=4)	90% (n=90)	n=100

Most respondents did not know whether it was likely that the records could describe the outcome of each allegation (≥ 82%, n ≥ 82) such as whether an internal investigation took place, decision made by any internal investigation, allegation withdrawn, apology made to victim, financial payment to victim with or without civil proceedings, disciplinary actions for the accused, actions to mitigate risk such as the treatment or training for the accused, civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, policy or practice changes within the faith organisation (Table 25).

Some respondents provided the following clarifications:

"Records will contain information relating to civil or criminal proceedings where this happened."

"No civil or criminal proceedings took place in this period. No financial payments awarded."

"Policy or practice changes would not be noted in individual case records."

Table 25: Likelihood that the outcome of each allegation would be described in the records relating to 1969-2001

	Not likely to be recorded very often	**May be recorded for some cases but not for all**	**Likely to recorded for most cases**	**We don't know**	**Total**
Whether an internal investigation took place	0% (n=0)	6% (n=6)	12% (n=12)	82% (n=82)	n=100
Decision made by any internal investigation	1% (n=1)	6% (n=6)	9% (n=9)	84% (n=84)	n=100

(e.g. whether allegation was upheld)					
Allegation withdrawn	3% (n=3)	4% (n=4)	8% (n=8)	85% (n=85)	n=100
Apology made to the victim	3% (n=3)	4% (n=4)	8% (n=8)	85% (n=85)	n=100
Financial payment to the alleged victim with or without civil proceedings	5% (n=5)	3% (n=3)	7% (n=7)	85% (n=85)	n=100
Disciplinary actions for accused	4% (n=4)	3% (n=3)	10% (n=10)	83% (n=83)	n=100
Actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused	3% (n=3)	2% (n=2)	10% (n=10)	85% (n=85)	n=100
Civil proceedings	3% (n=3)	2% (n=2)	9% (n=9)	86% (n=86)	n=100
Criminal proceedings	2% (n=2)	3% (n=3)	11% (n=11)	84% (n=84)	n=100
Policy or practice changes within the faith organisation	6% (n=6)	2% (n=2)	7% (n=7)	85% (n=85)	n=100

Faith organisation activities during 2002-2010

98% (n=383) of faith organisations said they were active in the geographical area between 2002-2010. 2% (n=6) were not active and 1% (n=2) did not know.

The most common types of activities faith organisations were involved in were Church of faith meetings and services (97%, n=371). Most respondents were not sure about other types of activities (Table 26).

Table 26: Types of faith organisation activities between 2002-2010

Type of activity	Yes	No	We don't know	Total
Church or faith meetings and services	97% (n=371)	3% (n=10)	1% (n=3)	n=384
Youth trips or exchanges	49% (n=189)	24% (n=94)	26% (n=101)	n=384
Cross-community initiatives	31% (n=120)	37% (n=143)	32% (n=121)	n=384
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	21% (n=82)	50% (n=191)	29% (n=111)	n=384
Hosting any youth groups run by an external body in the area	22% (n=83)	50% (n=193)	28% (n=108)	n=384
Administration of any schools (day or boarding)	36% (n=139)	54% (n=206)	10% (n=39)	n=384
Teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools (day or boarding)	45% (n=174)	39% (n=151)	15% (n=59)	n=384
Administration of a hospital	2% (n=6)	89% (n=341)	10% (n=37)	n=384
Involvement with any residential institutions for children	2% (n=7)	86% (n=331)	12% (n=46)	n=384

	4 of these said they were included in the previous inquiry			
Other activities involving children and young people	45% (n=173)	32% (n=122)	23% (n=89)	n=384

Youth groups run by external bodies included Boys brigade, Girls Brigade, guides, scouts, and local youth clubs. Other groups mentioned include Lo Debar Trust Russian children were hosted by church families, Young Farmers Club, USA Rosedrive Friends 2002 Britan yearly meeting. Ulster Delaware Project. CSSM. Youth with a Mission (YWAM), Youth for Christ (YFC), StreetReach, Crosslinks kids part, Glenavy youth project, ballet school, youth groups doing summer outreach stay in the church halls, African children's choir, CSSM summer camps, Catholic Scouting Ireland, SPRED scouts, Moyraverty Arts and Drama society (MADS). Briginis and Irish Dancing. CEF Good News Club. Baptist Youth Evangelism (BYE) team helped us run the 5-day Holiday Bible Club each summer. JIMS Youth centre hosted teams from USA to help with their outreach and they were based in the church hall. Boy's brigade groups attended our church when staying at Rathmore House for residential activities, St John's Ambulance Badgers, Happy Tots (external private nursery unit renting premises), Birches Primary school, Rainbows, brownies, CE and CEF, Global Expeditions CMSI (Church Missionary Society Ireland), and the Patrician Youth centre.

Some churches describe overseas activity such as missionary activity including taking young people abroad on missionary groups, and visits to Lourdes. For example, one church took young people overseas with adults to work with children with HIV and AIDs in Uganda for a 2-week mission. Another church had a team from church working in Ethopia with Crosslinks. Some described continued involvement in cross-community exchange programmes between NI and USA, the Ulster Project, and mission trips to Botswana, Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya and South Africa. One church had exchange trips with a Swedish youth club. One trip had a team of adult coaches travel to Kenya and Spain.

159 respondents provided more information relating to the connection with the administration of any schools. Similar to the earlier time periods, many of the faith organisations listed the names of individual schools (often multiple schools) or described that the minister is likely to have had some involvement with the Board of Governors. For example, comments included:

"None of the schools within the Parish of Termonamongan were directly administered by the Parish. Clergy from the Parish were likely to have served on school Boards of Governors, however, like every other governor they were autonomous and independent of the Parish."

"Diocesan clergy or religious may be represented on Boards of Governors and a number of schools may have had a Trustee relationship with the Diocese. There are also situations where clergy or religious were employed as teaching staff."

"The rector will most likely have been involved in the Board of Governors of Aghavilly Primary school. No specific details and only an assumption given normal practice."

"Department of Education and CCMs were responsible for administration of schools. Priests were appointed to a post primary boys' school as teachers and learners."

"St. Clare's Convent Primary School, St. Joseph's Convent Primary School, St. Patrick's Primary School, St. Ronan's Primary School, Ballyholland Primary School, Our Lady's Grammar School, Abbey Primary School, Sacred Heart Grammar School, Abbey Grammar School, St. Joseph's High School, St. Mary's High School."

With respect to teaching or pastoral involvement in any schools, 170 respondents provided more information. Similar to earlier time periods, this includes identification of schools (often multiple schools within a single response), as well as descriptions of the role.

With respect to involvement in the administration of a hospital, 7 respondents provided more information, with some naming specific hospitals as well as describing the role (usually chaplaincy or pastoral visiting of patients).

With respect to residential institutions, 9 respondents provided more information including the name of the residential institution or how they had been involved in bringing children on trips etc from institutions run by other parties.

With respect to any other activities, 176 people provided additional information. These are similar to those described for earlier time periods. They included Sunday school, Holiday Bible clubs, Youth group campaigners, uniformed organisation, Mums and tots, Confirmation class, connection with local GAA clubs, Altar servers choir, Schola Cantorum – Boys' choir, youth group, mission trip to hospital in Uganda, creche, church football team, Diocesan organised youth activities, Scripture unions in local primary schools, Youth activities through DRY (Derry and Raphoe Youth) and a Children's Ministry Officer, youth outreach, Pope John Paul II Awards, Hospital Chaplaincy, Counselling services, Pastoral support for children with disability, GIFT programme, after-school clubs, and charity events. Other comments included:

"Provided pastoral support to a couple of teenagers who had been abused and who were going through court processes. We didn't address the abuse directly because of the court process but the referrals came from a church who were supporting the family. The abuse was not linked to the church."

"Ulster Quaker Service Committee….Maghaberry Prison Visitors Centre, Quaker Cottage family centre Records accessed through Quaker Service."

"The Open Doors Learning Centre Barrack Street began 1998 (An outreach to pupils who found mainstream Secondary schooling very challenging) Edmund Rice Summer Camps for children began 2000."

"We had an organisation called Son Fun with over 100 children under 16."

"A lot of work with other denominations and organisations, such as YouthLink, Youth For Christ and Corrymeela. These would have been organised in a combination of local-level, or corporately at National Level."

"Ardglass Youth Club, a part-time Board Run Youth club that operated on in local Community centre owned by church but leased out to the community by way of a formal lease."

"Sunday School, Summer Church School, Youth Club, Youth Fellowship, Bible Class, Scouting, Guiding, Children's Ballet Class, Pre school playgroup, Ledley Hall Boys Club, Townsend St Summer Scheme."

Existence of records relating to 2002-2010
10% of respondents (10%, n=38) knew of records existing for the time period 2002-2010. More than half (64%, n=244) said no records existed and 27% (n=102) did not know. More respondents said there might be hard copy records (70%, n=62) compared to electronic records (27%, n=18).

In terms of where records are held relating to 2002-2010, the most likely place was in hard copy at a local site (41%, n=59), in a diocesan or central office (32%, n=46) or stored electronically by the faith organisation (10%, n=14) (Table 27).

Table 27: Likely location of records relating to 2002-2010

Where are records likely to be held	Number of responses
In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7	41% (n=59)
In hard copy in a diocesan or central church or faith organisation office (please provide more details below)	32% (n=46)
Stored electronically by your faith organisation	10% (n=14)
Stored by another organisation	3% (n=5)
Archived in PRONI	3% (n=4)
Other	33% (n=47)
Total Respondents: n=141	

89 respondents provided additional information and often this was to say they did not know. 48 respondents suggested potential locations (these suggestions should not be taken as indicative that records pertaining to allegations of abuse definitely exist in these locations).

Are there records relating to allegations of abuse relating to 2002-2010 held at the local location?
18% (n=26) said yes. Most did not know 45% (n=64). 37% (n=53) said there were no records.

31 people provided more information with the most common response being that an answer cannot be provided to whether there are allegations without trawling through all the information. For example, comments included:

"The allegations will be relating to a wide variety of situations - some of these may relate to victim or perpetuator focused, some may be reports from other entangled members (like family members or friends), or anonymous calls of people connected to either the victim or perpetrator. Some will also relate to enquiries made by churches about how to handle risk either relating to offenders within their congregation or who have approached them for help (where the offence may have no connection with the church) and also perpetrators where the offence has been connected in some way to the church. There will also be records involving allegations of incidents connected directly to NI or that may have occurred in ROI or England (the link to NI may be less clear in these latter cases)."

"One record only."

"4 cases."

"Presumably yes."

"Copies of Probation Licence and some correspondence -post 2010. Held in [named location] filing cabinet. Possibly meeting minutes held by church secretary."

In an earlier question, one respondent noted:

"There may be records pertaining to a [staff member] mentioned earlier which would be held in the [faith organisation] Safeguarding Office."

In terms of where records are held relating to 2002-2010, the most likely place was in hard copy in a diocesan or central office (32%, n=46), at a local site (41%, n=59) or stored electronically (10%, n=14) (Table 28).

Table 28: *Where records are likely to be held relating to 1969-2002*

Where are records likely to be held	Number of responses
In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7	41% (n=59)
In hard copy in a diocesan or central church or faith organisation office	32% (n=46)
Stored electronically by your faith organisation	10% (n=14)
Stored by another organisation	3% (n=5)
Archived in PRONI	3% (n=4)
Other	33% (n=47)
Total Respondents: n=143	

89 provided additional information about potential locations for records relating to 2002-2010, and often this was to say they did not know. 49 respondents suggested potential locations. These included similar locations to the previous time periods.

Most respondents did not know what condition the records are likely to be in 56% (n=49). 37% (n=33) said they would be in good condition (easily legible), 7% (n=6) would be a mix of poor and more legible documents, and 0% would mostly be poor condition (n=0).

Volume of records

The volume of records does not seem to be large in any specific location relating to allegations of abuse. Most settings said that they held upto 1 filing cabinet drawer (32 respondents). Two respondents said they held 3-5 filing cabinets (Table 29).

Table 29: *Quantity of information held relating to 2002-2010*

Quantity of information	Number of respondents
No information	62% (n=55)
Less than 1 box file of information	22% (n=20)
1-3 box files of information	4% (n=4)
1 filing cabinet drawer (4 box files)	9% (n=8)
2-4 filing cabinet drawers	0% (n=0)
2 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)
3-5 filing cabinets	2% (n=2)
Total	n=89

Number of allegations relating to 2002-2010

Number of perpetrators between 2002-2010

22% (n=20) said they could not estimate approximately how many people had allegations made against them relating to the abuse of children under the age of 18. 57% (n=51) said there were none. 16 respondents (18%, n=16) said that there were between 1 and 10 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse. One respondent 1% (n=1) said that there were between 11 and 20 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse. One respondent 1% (n=1) said that there were between 21 and 30 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse (Table 30).

Table 30: Estimated number of individuals alleged to have perpetrated abuse between 2002-2010

Estimated number of alleged perpetrators	Number of respondents to the survey (total n=89)
0	57% (n=51)
1-10	18% (n=16)
11-20	1% (n=1)
21-30	1% (n=1)
31-40	2% (n=2)
41-50	0% (n=0)
51-60	0% (n=0)
61-70	0% (n=0)
We can't provide an estimate	22% (n=20)

Respondents were asked not to provide details of individual cases, but some provided the following information:

"7 people who I had direct contact with as offenders. Contacted in relation to 29 other offenders where these were discussed by other people (e.g. church leaders, family members, victims)"

"1 only."

"No allegations made, but two instances 1) regarding access to church hall by Office holder of a club who was RSO. Other arrangements made. 2) Safeguarding procedures had indeed been carried out as required."

"Just the one."

"1 record."

Number of alleged victims between 2002-2010

21% (n=19) said they could not estimate approximately how alleged victims there were. 58% said there were none (n=52). 16 respondents (18%, n=15) said that there were between 1 and 10 alleged victims. One respondent 1% (n=1) said that there were between 21 and 30 alleged victims. One respondent 1% (n=1) said that there were between 31 and 40 alleged victims (Table 31).

Table 31: Estimated number of individuals alleged to have experienced abuse between 2002-2010

Estimated number of alleged perpetrators	Number of respondents to the survey (total n=100)
0	58% (n=52)
1-10	18% (n=16)
11-20	0% (n=0)
21-30	1% (n=1)

31-40	1% (n=1)
41-50	0% (n=0)
51-60	0% (n=0)
61-70	0% (n=0)
We can't provide an estimate	21% (n=19)

Respondents were asked not to provide details of individual cases, but some provided the following information:

"27 people came to see us, but most were not related to the church so this 1-10 is an estimate."

"1 only."

"1 record."

How many allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation?

58% (n=52) said they could not provide an estimate. 17% (n=15) said between 1-10 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. One respondent 1% (n=1) said between 21-30 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. One respondent 1% (n=1) said between 31-40 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. Respondents were asked not to provide details of individual cases but some provided the following information:

"We were consulted by 8 church leaders in connection to an allegation relating to their church."

"1 only."

"One."

How many allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings?

Sixteen respondents noted that allegations had resulted in the initiation of investigation. Fourteen respondents said 1-10 allegations had resulted in initiation of an investigation. One respondent said 11-20 allegations had resulted in initiation of an investigation. One respondent said 31-40 allegations had resulted in initiation of an investigation. 22% (n=20) said they could not estimate this. The other 60% (n=53) said there were none. Respondents were asked not to provide details of individual cases, but some provided the following information:

"Some records related to incidents which did not meet the threshold for reporting to the police or social services. Where this is the case, some records include evidence of consultation with the statutory authorities to ascertain whether an allegation meets the threshold for reporting."

"Many adult victims do not want to go the police route - they want the perpetrator to acknowledge it and accept responsibility."

"1 only."

"Definitely police, not sure about social services."

7% (n=6) said there may be abuses disclosed to the faith organisation that are not documented in their records. Most said they did not know 78% (n=69). Some of the themes in the responses are illustrated by the responses below:

"The [regional area] has 48 parishes and as such, records may be held in the parishes but not the [Safeguarding] Office."

"Only [senior faith organisation staff] have access to this information"

"This is a matter for Diocesan Central Office we don't have this data at parish level"

"It is possible yes. However, as we have undertaken our own Past Cases Review, this is a distant possibility."

"I am not confident that processes before 2010 were sufficiently understood /managed. If safeguarding concerns came to light locally - I am not confident all would have come to [our faith organisation headquarters."

Type of information that is likely to exist in records

For this time period, most people did not know what type of information was likely to exist. More than 64% of respondents answered 'Don't know' to each of the types of information (Table 32).

Table 32: Type of information relating to allegations of abuse during 2002-2010

Type of information relating to allegations of abuse	Very likely to exist	Possibly exist	Not at all likely to exist	We don't know	Total
Correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf	18% (n=16)	9% (n=8)	9% (n=8)	64% (n=57)	n=89
Correspondence with the faith organisation's legal advisors	8% (n=7)	13% (n=12)	13% (n=12)	65% (n=58)	n=89
Correspondence with the faith organisation's insurers	3% (n=3)	16% (n=14)	16% (n=14)	65% (n=58)	n=89
Minutes of relevant meetings and hearings	15% (n=13)	11% (n=10)	10% (n=9)	64% (n=57)	n=89
Accused individuals' personnel files	7% (n=6)	7% (n=6)	19% (n=17)	67% (n=60)	n=89
Records of the faith organisation's internal courts or dispute resolution processes	7% (n=6)	13% (n=12)	13% (n=12)	66% (n=59)	n=89
Correspondence with police	7% (n=6)	13% (n=12)	13% (n=12)	66% (n=59)	n=89
Correspondence with welfare organisations or social services	10% (n=9)	10% (n=9)	12% (n=11)	67% (n=60)	n=89
Correspondence with court officials	2% (n=2)	10% (n=9)	19% (n=17)	71% (n=63)	n=89
Correspondence with government departments	3% (n=3)	8% (n=7)	18% (n=16)	71% (n=63)	n=89
Correspondence with the faith organisation's local, regional or national authorities	13% (n=12)	10% (n=9)	11% (n=10)	65% (n=58)	n=89

Correspondence with the faith organisation's authorities abroad	4% (n=4)	10% (n=9)	17% (n=15)	69% (n=61)	n=89

21 people provided more information. Most often this was that no records were found, or they were not aware of any records. Comments included:

"[Mines of information in local locations] very likely to exist. There would have been a greater awareness in terms of reporting requirements to social service etc. so it is more likely that there are records, but I don't know for sure."

"On 2 occasions I have made a statement to the police about an offender. Have attended case conferences. Provided reports to Vetting and Barring Board about 1 offender. Reported to court about progress of young people they are supporting. Correspondence with government dept about travelling overseas. Tried to engage with [named] church in past but very difficult to get positive cooperation. Correspondence with church leaders in England, Kosovo and South Africa."

"All allegations made at parish level are passed directly to the Safeguarding Board of [named faith organisation]. All further communication with and formal referral to statutory agencies are conducted by the Safeguarding board and records are held by their office and not at parish level. A short outcome summary may be given to the parish safeguarding panel to be held confidentially as a record."

"Cases are discussed with Church authorities and then, where advised, with social services."

"Some records are lacking detail."

"Only one incident is known. It resulted in a criminal conviction in 2011."

Are records kept of specific details relating to the perpetrator, victim and incident?

Once again, most respondents did not know whether any of these details were likely to be recorded ≥71% (n≥63): name and date of birth of the alleged victim, name and date of birth of the perpetrator, or whether the person accused of perpetrating the abuse was living or deceased (Table 33).

Table 33: *Likelihood of specific details being recorded in the records relating from 2002-2010*

Type of information recorded	Yes – in every case	Sometimes but not always	Not likely to have been recorded	We don't know	Total
The name of the person who said they had been abused	15% (n=13)	11% (n=10)	2% (n=2)	72% (n=64)	n=89
The date of birth of the person who said they had been abused	6% (n=5)	12% (n=11)	9% (n=8)	73% (n=65)	n=89
The name of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	15% (n=13)	12% (n=11)	2% (n=2)	71% (n=63)	n=89
The date of birth of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	7% (n=6)	9% (n=8)	11% (n=10)	73% (n=65)	n=89

Whether the person accused of perpetrating abuse is living or deceased	12% (n=11)	11% (n=10)	4% (n=4)	72% (n=64)	n=89
Role of the alleged perpetrator (e.g., whether they were paid staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event)	24% (n=21)	4% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	72% (n=64)	n=89

Additional comments included:

"Sometimes allegations do not contain the name of the person who said they were abused or the name of the person accused. While a date of birth is not given records contain the age of the person when the abuse took place and year of birth of [the accused member of staff] is also available but not date of birth."

"We don't always ask for identifying information about the perpetrator but we would record it if it is disclosed. We usually ask if the perpetrator is alive or deceased to in order assess level of current risk to person or others."

"Names recorded. If a minor in a church organisation has been involved in a complaint then their date of birth can be accessed from membership records if required."

"The above estimates include a variety of possible allegations including allegations which were anonymous and/or the accused was not identified. It also includes allegations received by third parties and possibly relating to offences which occurred in other [locations] or relating to personnel within [other faith organisations]. It also includes reports which have no specified time period. It is likely that many of the reports estimated above may be also reported by other [organisations]. Some of these reports would not reach the legal threshold for reporting to authorities."

"I've not inspected any files as it's never been requested of me and I consider them confidential and only to be accessed if requested and then by chair of safeguarding committee for the parish."

"It is likely that any records will be identified by the name of the person accused, and the name of the [site location] that they were connected with."

"Allegations were made against [specific types of staff] only."

Most 72% (n=64) did not know how easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse) (Table 34).

Table 34: How easy would it be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records relating from 2002-2010

	Yes – the type of	**Yes – the information**	**No – this is unlikely to be**	**We don't know**	**Total number**

	abuse is likely to be clearly categorised in the record	may be detailed in a written description rather than clearly categorised	recorded for this time period		of responses
How easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse).	15% (n=13)	12% (n=11)	1% (n=1)	72% (n=64)	n=89

Additional comments included:

"Most are sexual abuse. Small minority (10%) are either physical abuse or emotional abuse. Smallest category is neglect. One consultation about satanic abuse."

More respondents in this time period knew whether it was likely that records would include descriptions of whether allegations were notified to other parties such as senior faith leaders, other leads within the faith organisations, safeguarding offices within the faith organisation, social services, police, schools or anyone else compared to the earlier time periods (Table 35).

Table 35: *Likelihood that records relating from 2002-2010 will include descriptions of whether allegations were notified to others*

	Not likely to be recorded very often	May be recorded for some records but not for all	Likely to be recorded for most cases	We don't know	Total
Senior leader in the faith organisation such as Bishop	4% (n=4)	7% (n=6)	24% (n=21)	65% (n=58)	n=89
Other leaders within the faith organisation such as vestry, Kirk committee, or other management committee	0% (n=0)	7% (n=6)	19% (n=17)	74% (n=66)	n=89
Safeguarding office within the faith organisation	1% (n=1)	4% (n=4)	30% (n=27)	64% (n=57)	n=89
Social Services	3% (n=3)	6% (n=5)	19% (n=17)	71% (n=63)	n=89
Police	2% (n=2)	7% (n=6)	20% (n=18)	71% (n=63)	n=89
School	7% (n=6)	3% (n=3)	11% (n=10)	79% (n=70)	n=89
Someone else (please specify below)	4% (n=4)	3% (n=3)	9% (n=8)	83% (n=74)	n=89

One respondent noted:

"Insurers and legal."

Most respondents did not know whether it was likely that the records could describe the outcome of each allegation (≥ 70%, n ≥ 62) such as whether an internal investigation took place, decision made by any internal investigation, allegation withdrawn, apology made to victim, financial payment to victim with or without civil proceedings, disciplinary actions for the accused, actions to mitigate risk such as the treatment or training for the accused, civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, policy or practice changes within the faith organisation (Table 36).

Table 36: *Likelihood that records relating from 2002-2010 would describe the outcome of any allegation*

	Not likely to be recorded very often	**May be recorded for some records but not all**	**Likely to be recorded for most cases**	**We don't know**	**Total**
Whether an internal investigation took place	3% (n=3)	8% (n=7)	19% (n=17)	70% (n=62)	n=89
Decision made by any internal investigation (e.g. whether allegation was upheld)	4% (n=4)	7% (n=6)	18% (n=16)	71% (n=63)	n=89
Allegation withdrawn	7% (n=6)	6% (n=5)	13% (n=12)	74% (n=66)	n=89
Apology made to the victim	7% (n=6)	4% (n=4)	9% (n=8)	80% (n=71)	n=89
Financial payment to the alleged victim with or without civil proceedings	7% (n=6)	2% (n=2)	11% (n=10)	80% (n=71)	n=89
Disciplinary actions for accused	4% (n=4)	4% (n=4)	17% (n=15)	74% (n=66)	n=89
Actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused	4% (n=4)	6% (n=5)	16% (n=14)	74% (n=66)	n=89
Civil proceedings	6% (n=5)	3% (n=3)	12% (n=11)	79% (n=70)	n=89
Criminal proceedings	6% (n=5)	4% (n=4)	17% (n=15)	73% (n=65)	n=89
Policy or practice changes within the faith organisation	8% (n=7)	8% (n=7)	10% (n=9)	74% (n=66)	n=89

Comments included:

"Records will contain information relating to civil or criminal proceedings, or whether an allegation was withdrawn if it happened."

"In the single recorded case, the allegation was referred to the Safeguarding Board and they referred it to social services as the allegation related to a domestic situation"

"Policy or practice changes would not be noted in individual case records"

"Answers based on one case. I have not seen the records that are held by Safeguarding Office."

Final section of the online survey

The last open-ended questions in the survey provided respondents to provide more information about record keeping within their setting as well as any important changes and concerns or suggestions they had for taking the research forward.

Most respondents did not think there were any records that would be difficult to assign to a time period (94%, n=349). Comments included:

"There were five records we had in which the time period could not be identified."

"Given the period of time it will be very difficult to locate records and you would be required to read through load of Select Vestry minutes which will cover everything being discussed."

"We, thankfully, have no information of abuse or alleged abuse in these three parishes in any of these time frames. There would be no one, to my knowledge, alive who would even remember. There is nothing, even by way of hearing say or folklore that anything ever happened. I believe that, even if details could not be recalled there would certainly be a memory of something had anything occurred. There are certainly no records of any kind in two of the churches."

"Presumably records from the pre-war period may be difficult to locate"

"In many cases, the dates of the alleged abuse was not disclosed."

"I'm not sure that we have full records available. I'm not sure if everything came to HQ. There have been a number of HQ moves. Local records may have been kept - but whether they have been retained is unknown."

"GDPR and as the records are stored in the Republic of Ireland, this could cause a problem."

In terms of what process would need to be followed in order to access records from each of these time periods, 254 people provided information relating to this question (these suggestions should not be taken as indicative that records pertaining to allegations of abuse definitely exist in these faith organisations). GDPR, confidentiality, understanding the purpose of the research, following appropriate data protection processes and having a clear terms of reference were all important. These suggestions do not presume that records relating to allegations of abuse definitely exist.

In terms of concerns about the work or anticipated barriers to engagement, 190 respondents provided further information. Most of these said they had no concerns. Other common themes are illustrated by the comments below:

People value the work being done

"Highlighting concerns and problems is crucial and anything that helps bring out to light things that have been done wrong can only be good. I appreciate the importance of the work you are doing and wish it had been done sooner. Sometimes record keeping can be difficult as it's often a situation people don't want to talk about so your results will hopefully help us all move forward when policies can be extended to help people."

“I have learned from this survey the importance of having an adequate reporting policy.”

“I have no hesitation in saying that any request for information from diocesan sources will be acted upon fully and complied with – not just with the letter of the law, but the spirit.”

“Needed for healing for the victims of abuse and to ensure the safety of all people, vulnerable or not.”

The time-consuming and burdensome nature of the work should not be underestimated

‘No concerns that come to mind other than the fact that a lot of Charity and Church related trustees, bearing in mind the periods you have selected, may be in their very senior years and many struggling with failing health etc.”

“I'm sure you realise that in order to complete your work you will need to write to every living Rector who served in the church over the past 100 years.”

“The lack of written records in our church will make it very hard to provide any information prior to the establishment of the Safeguarding board in 2012 when record keeping seems to have started.”

“Handwritten records exist, currently off-site, but we do not know if there are any allegations of abuse held within these. My congregation, its leaders and I, understand the pernicious nature of child abuse. We recognise the moral imperative to prevent it happening; to identify and address current and historic occurrences; and the responsibilities of all organisations to comply with current legislation, codes of conduct and best practice. We would not want anything to hinder the recognition of historic abuse and a determination of its incidence, or the eventual pursuit of justice your work may inform. We regret to say, however, given the huge amount of work involved in accessing and reviewing ninety years’ worth of handwritten records, most of which are centrally held off site, we feel that we cannot contribute to your current scoping exercise at this time. We have looked at the questionnaire but consider the sheer amount of time and work involved to be impractical. As a small charity, with a largely volunteer leadership, already stretched to over commitment delivering our core activities, we feel we cannot start, let alone complete, this work. This is why we have answered 'don't know' to the answers in this questionnaire”

“The use of online technology and the length of the questionnaire was difficult. It took a lot longer than we had anticipated. It was difficult to provide information about activities - I am not familiar with everything done in the church particularly over such a long time period. Re what records exist and allegations, I do not know exactly what is held in the church files and it would be time consuming to find that out. It was difficult to complete the questionnaire using the online form because of problems with internet connection and the Surveymonkey programme. I had to complete it over the phone with the researcher. Going forward these issues should be taken into account to make it easier, and plan to give people with more support in giving their answers so it is easier and less stressful. Also allow for more time to pull together and record the responses so people do not feel under as much pressure.”

“The files for schools are the property of the schools. The main barrier is finding time to search within the organisation.”

“The [name of faith organisation] is a diverse organisation with ministries that are consistently changing and evolving over time. It is difficult to quantify at a central level all that occurs at individual parishes with multiple records being duplicated and stored at parish level, diocesan level,

with the safeguarding office and with other organisations (where relevant). Due to the structure of the Church it is likely that records will be counted multiple times. This questionnaire has taken 3 staff 60 plus staff hours to complete with a very tight turnaround time to respond. Due to the structure of the questionnaire and the style of question asked it has involved reading every record in every file to ascertain the answers. We would appreciate being kept up to date and notified as the next steps of the project to enable us to have sufficient preparation time to complete the requirements of the project. In completing the questionnaire we excluded some records for three reasons 1. If the records related to allegations of abuse beyond the specified time periods in the questionnaire. 2. If the information did not relate to child abuse allegations 3. If the information related to risk management strategies for offenders who had convictions not related to Church ministry but who wished to access Church services. We were asked by the project team to mention this third category of information here as they believed it was important to demonstrate the proactive risk management that the Church alongside other statutory organisations are taking to reduce risk to children."

"Data protection may be an issue absence of historical records will also be a barrier. Fear of the process itself may be a barrier and there would need to be a 'no blame' culture instilled to those involved in information gathering/sharing."

"The storage of all safeguarding data is" "held" in the [faith organisation] offices in the ROI and how to ensure compliance with GDPR in such situations. In order to provide fully and comprehensive data responses, will require time and resources, financial and other."

Information is held at different levels within faith organisations (local vs regional)

"Please distinguish between a diocese and a parish. Many of your questions cannot be answered by a parish. There are central archives in every diocese with regards to these questions. Asking a Catholic parish to answer these questions doesn't make any sense given the centralised organisation of a Catholic diocese. Therefore, we cannot answer a lot of your questions and please do not conclude from that, that we are refusing to answer your questions."

The right people need to be tasked with providing the information

"This form should be completed by those on Safeguarding panel. As Church secretary I have no access to this information."

Scope could include vulnerable adults

"Does not include vulnerable adults' issues. Does not include more general concerns within safeguarding: - H & S - threats from aggressive members of the public and how the church dealt and deals with this - hearsay information that is not recorded anywhere or reported on (but action taken at the time, i.e. an apology)."

Clear parameters need to be set around the work

"The Diocese and the review team need to be clear as to what information is being requested, the purpose of this information and how it will be used moving forward. The Diocese needs to consider as Data Controller what information it can release especially the area of consent both with the complainant and the respondent, whether someone is alive/deceased and any third-party involvement in a case including psychiatric/psychological reports or any records directed by a Canonical process and the churches own internal structures."

"GDPR may present challenges in accessing information outside NI"

"There may be some difficulty accessing files that are kept in another jurisdiction due to GDPR rules and regulations."

"We are a cross-border diocese and our files are stored in [a location] which is in the Republic of Ireland and outside our jurisdiction. Adhering to GDPR regulations."

Specific info on cases or localities

"Again, I believe I probably have to gain more insight into the identified [staff] that were operating in the North of Ireland historically before I can be definitive in this regard but I do know that one of the identified [staff members] who had operated in the North of Ireland was convicted in Belfast Crown Court for child abuse-related offences, but he was deceased before he could face further actions in the Republic of Ireland. I do not know currently what is retained in archive specific to this individual, so I am not really in a position to specify concerns until I myself am better informed."

"I went to the [faith organisation training school] and … during these 43 years have been in 5 parishes [named]. … In the latter parishes I was laid to believe that they were incidents that were recorded under historical sexual abuse and that these records are within the [regional] office. But I no direct role or indirect role in any way."

There is a need to take a trauma-informed and victim-centred approach

"How to ensure victims/ survivors are fully briefed om all aspects of the data collection, their right to be included, kept informed of all stages."

"I do think that in conducting any work of this kind, there needs to be a constant and prominent sensitivity to the fact that if there are recordings relating to child abuse, there are victims and their families at the front and centre and that this is highly sensitive information relating to their lived experiences. It is also information relating to deceased individuals and that in the hands of people or organisations, it may be weaponised or used outside its context or intent against individuals - so my global concern is that the information is managed sensitively at this stage."

Previous research

Overview of Irish inquiries

Previous published research in similar areas has been examined to see what methodological approaches were used, any barriers encountered and how these were overcome. Some of the key points from the evidence review in Ireland are outlined below, and then in other countries.

Judicial inquiries in Ireland have included:

- **Mr Justice Frank Murphy's inquiry into the Diocese of Ferns[20]** – this focused on sexual abuse allegations made against clergy operating under the aegis of the Diocese of Ferns. Approximately 100 allegations of sexual abuse were made between 1966 and 2005 against 21 priests. Over 40 of these complaints related to 2 priests only.
- **Judge Yvonne Murphy's Commissions of inquiry into clerical abuse in the Archdiocese of Dublin[21] and separate Commission into the Diocese of Cloyne[22]** - both of these focused on abuse by diocesan priests, mostly in Parish roles but also in some other public roles such as hospital chaplain or teacher. These did not include members of religious orders who had no diocesan role. The Dublin commission invited victims and survivors to come forward, as well as reviewing documentation and records held by the Dublin Archdiocese, Health service executive, An Garda Síochána, the Director of Public Prosecutions and other organisations. The Commission conducted its investigation by means of oral evidence and in-depth analysis of the documentation supplied by all parties. Where gaps in the evidence were apparent, the Commission filled them, where appropriate and possible, with questionnaires and follow-up interviews.
- **Mr Justice Ryan's inquiry into abuse in residential institutions[23]** (generally Church-run institutions such as various types of schools, orphanages, hospitals schools and any other place where children were care for other than as members of their families). Abuse included physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. Data collection comprised an Investigation committee (initially approached by 1712 complainants), confidential committee (providing people with opportunities to recount the abuse and which heard oral evidence from 1090 witnesses), evidence from representatives of survivor group, and a study of health records in institutions which was limited by the quality of available information.

Redress Boards were established to deal with compensation for survivors and were totally independent of the Commissions.

A consistent message throughout the Irish inquiries is the importance of clearly stating that the purpose of any research such as this is *"not to form any view as to whether those complaints or allegations are, or anyone of them is, well founded. The primary task of the Inquiry is to identify the response by the Church and public authorities to such complaints whether they are true or false"* (Ferns Inquiry, p.69).

The Ryan inquiry (2009, p.1) describes: *"The function of the inquiry at its most basic is as we see it to find out whether child abuse took place; if so what was the nature of the abuse; where did it happen; why did it happen why was it not discovered and stopped; how widespread was it in any institution and how many institutions were contaminations by child abuse. Another vital function of this or any inquiry into child abuse is to look at the present and the future to see what steps can be taken to reduce the risk of abuse of children in care taking place in the future."*

The Ryan Inquiry used the institution as the unit of enquiry and describes boundaries around what it was aiming to achieve: *"This is an inquiry into child abuse – it is not an inquiry into specific allegations of child abuse. In other words, it is not and cannot ever be a substitute criminal or civil process for trying individual accused people on charges laid by a long list of complainants."* It clarifies further that the role of the Law Reform Commission can be commonly misunderstood (para 7.8*): "The Law Reform Commission was aware of the fact that many people felt that one of the core functions of tribunals or commissions of inquiry was to apportion blame and responsibility for the wrong that has occurred to specific individuals. However, the Law Reform Commission was of the view that where this view is widely held in relation to a particular issue, the appropriate forum for investigation should be the courts and not a tribunal commission of inquiry."* They conclude that the ideal form of public inquiry was: *"a private, low-key inquiry which focuses on the wrong or malfunction in the system and not the wrong-doer" (para. 7.10).*

As well as bearing witness to the experiences of individuals, the Irish inquiries have included a focus on what the learning is from the processes to ensure that children are kept safe in the future. Most note that the desire to have people learn from these experiences so the same things can never happen again to other children. This desire to protect others is a primary motivator for victims and survivors to share their stories.

The inquiries have taken a broad view with respect to examining how processes operate both in their own right, within for example church systems, as well as when they connect and intersect with other parts of the system such as the health boards and An Garda Síochána. Inquiries have looked at church responses, health board responses and Garda responses.

Irish Inquiries have varied as to whether they have been carried out on a statutory or non-statutory basis. For example, the Ferns Inquiry notes: *"Because of the non-statutory nature of this Inquiry, all evidence received by it is unsworn. The Inquiry is satisfied that those who contacted it did so in good faith and out of a desire to be of assistance. However, the unsworn nature of the evidence available to the Inquiry must be emphasised."*

The Dublin Commission was undertaken on a statutory footing. It highlights that it is important to understand that issuing formal orders of discovery against various parties was not an indicator of resistance or lack of cooperation. It was instead, a way to provide access to documents (Murphy et al., 2009, para 2.17):

"The Commission issued formal Orders of Discovery against the Dublin Archdiocese, the Health Service Executive (HSE), An Garda Síochána, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), a number of religious orders whose priests worked under the aegis of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin and a number of other organisations. This should not be taken as an indication of a lack of co-operation on the part of those to whom the orders were directed. The reasons for issuing formal Orders of Discovery were, first, that the Commission had to be satisfied that it had received all relevant information and, secondly, to protect those who were furnishing to the Commission confidential information on third parties. The Commission considered that it would be unreasonable to expect people to furnish such confidential information without giving them the statutory protection afforded by Section 16 of the Commissions of Investigation Act 2004. Without information obtained through discovery, the Commission could not have effectively discharged its remit."

The Irish Commissions and inquiries used a variety of data collection methods including oral histories and interviews (obtained in public and private) and reviewing of records. In terms of identifying allegations of abuse, inquiries tended to use a multi-stranded approach:

- **Open calls and advertisements for victims/ survivors** to come forward and tell their story. When they provided the name of the alleged perpetrator, this then provided the start of a trail that could be further investigated in the records of the church, health board and An Garda Síochána.

- **Reviewing documentation relating to the allegations raised by those who had come forward**, e.g. this focused on how that particular allegation was handled by the church, health board or An Garda Síochána, and also then looked to see whether any other allegations had been made against the priest.

- **Further interviews and discussions with personnel who may have had personal recollections of what happened**. Inquiries interviewed personnel from the churches, health boards and An Garda Síochána .

- **Some perpetrators were identified from documentation held by the churches,** but more often the allegations were not fully detailed in the documentation or were described in general language such as 'there had been trouble' and it was only when the victim's story was heard, that it was provided context and made it clearer what was being referred to.

- **Asking key personnel to recall any incidents where an allegation had been made against a priest.** For example, the Murphy Dublin Commission (2009) identified there would be a major challenge in sourcing information from health boards and An Garda Síochána. This was because of the sheer volume of information, and information being organised in reference to the name of the abused and not in any way cross referenced to the alleged abuser. The Murphy Commission (2009) noted that the HSE would have to examine individually up to 180,000 files in order to ascertain whether an alleged abuser was a priest in the Dublin Archdiocese. The Commission decided to take a pragmatic approach. They asked the HSE to contact all relevant current and former staff including directors of community care, senior social workers and childcare managers, who had been employed in the area of the Dublin Archdiocese during the relevant period, to ascertain their knowledge of complaints of child sexual abuse by clerics. It heard evidence from senior social workers, childcare managers and senior managers.

The scale of the work (the number of allegations and the timeframe for the work) have made it necessary in many of the Irish inquiries to:

- Limit the scope to a specific geographic area such as a Diocese.
- Focus on one type of abuse, e.g. sexual abuse.
- Focus on one faith organisation, e.g. the Catholic church rather than a range of faith organisations.
- Take a representative sample rather than reviewing all allegations. Sampling strategies have included:
  - Taking a representative sample of priests against whom allegations of child sexual abuse had been made (e.g. in the Murphy Commissions for Dublin, between 1975 to 2004, there were 102 priests against whom complaints had been made and a representative sample of 46 were examined. In relation to these 46 priests, the Commission examined complaints in respect of over 320 children against the 46 priests in the representative sample. Of the 46 priests examined, 11 pleaded guilty to or were convicted in the criminal courts of sexual assaults on children. There was one clear case of a false accusation of child sexual abuse. The Murphy (2009) commission used the following sampling criteria – distribution of allegations through timespan of 1975 to 2004, single abusers, multiple abusers, instances where there were interactions between different parts of the system. It did, however, examine every case where there had been a conviction rather than sampling from amongst these.
  - Looking at allegations in a specified time frame in a specific institution where many priests had been present and abuse was known to have occurred. For example, the

Ferns Inquiry noted that many of the priests attended seminary training at St Peter's College. They found that within a random 5-year period selected by the Inquiry, 10 priests who were in St Peter's came to the attention of this Inquiry as being the subject of child sexual abuse allegations.
    - Taking the priest as being the focus for the sampling. For example, the Ferns inquiry sampled by number of priests, rather than by number of allegations. It was a consistent finding across the inquiries that the number of children involved was much higher than the number of perpetrators. Many priests had more than one allegation and often more than one victim.
    - Taking an institution as the focus for the sampling. For example, the Ryan inquiry examined institutions where more than 20 allegations of abuse had been made.

The need for anonymity to protect those who had made allegations as well as alleged perpetrators has been consistently highlighted as a critical factor through the reports. Reports from the Irish inquiries varied in terms of how information was summarised in the reports and level of detail. For example:

- The Ferns Inquiry presents a large amount of information in the form of case studies – each priest is described as a case study including a section organised by alleged victim which describes the nature of the abuse, how it was handled during the allegation stage by the church, health board and garda, and what mitigations (if any) were used. To preserve anonymity of the complainants, each of them was identified by a fictious Christian name. As far as was possible this was also done with priests by giving them a fictious surname.
- The Ryan inquiry noted the difference type of information reported by each of its committees. The confidential committee could make findings of a general nature. It would not identify or contain information leading to the identification of individuals, witnesses, perpetrators or institutions. If the committee was satisfied that the abuse of children took place in a particular institution, the reports of the Investigation committee could contain findings to that effect and could identify the institution and the person that committed the abuse. It could also make findings in relation to the management, administration, operation, supervision and regulation of an institution in which abuse took place and could identify the persons responsible for the management, administration, operation, supervision and regulation of the institutions. The reports of the investigation committee could not contain findings in relation to individual cases of abuse. The legal context in Northern Ireland is different and so the same reporting restrictions may not apply.

Some of the Irish inquiries named individual priests who were alleged to have abused children in Northern Ireland. For example:

- The Ferns Inquiry describes **Father Séan Fortune** who worked in Belfast and although he was already prohibited from having any contact with the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland, he formed his own scout group that was independent of the CBSI. One victim 'Charles' alleged that he had been abused in the late 1970s as an altar boy at the Holy Rosary Church, Ormeau Road, Belfast. Allegations were also made by students from St Mary's College Belfast, and 'Ian' alleged abuse at the mater Hospital. The Inquiry notes there is no documentary evidence relating either to Father Fortune's appointment to the Diocese of Down and Connor or to his removal from that Diocese.
- The Ferns Inquiry also describes **Father Doyle** as having spent some time in Belfast (p.134). He served in a parish in Belfast from 1974 to 1979. A young boy alleged abuse in 2001 in the Diocese of Down and Connor. The Ferns Inquiry noted that it did not have any details of this allegation which was being handled at that time by the authorities in Northern Ireland (Ferns Inquiry, p.135).

The inquiries all highlighted the importance of:

- Seeking the cooperation of the church.
- Adequate data protection and consent procedures.
- The need to ensure that processes for investigation and data collection were trauma informed.
- Not underestimating the scale and complexity of the task at hand. Most inquiries appear to have taken much longer and been more expensive than originally anticipated.
- There was a large difference between number of complaints and actual instances of child sexual abuse. While some priests admitted child sexual abuse, many denied it. Of those investigated by the Murphy Dublin Commission (2009), one priest admitted to sexually abusing over 100 children, while another accepted that he had abused on a fortnightly basis during the currency of his ministry which lasted for over 25 years. The total number of documented complaints recorded against those two priests is just over 70. In another case, there is only one complaint, but the priest has admitted to abusing at least six other children.

Scoping Inquiry into Historical Sexual abuse in schools run by religious orders in Ireland[24]

In March 2023, the Irish government approved the establishment of a non-Statutory scoping inquiry to inform the government's response to revelations of historical sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by religious orders. This piece which has recently been published in October 2024 is a useful comparator for how scoping can be approached in a methodologically robust way, albeit in a much narrower field of focus than the current Historical Records research.

The O'Toole Scoping Inquiry had a detailed Terms of Reference which assigned the following tasks:

1) To make recommendations on the scope/ breadth and sequencing of a response that will, in so far as is possible, best meet outcomes sought by survivors of historical sexual abuse and to suggest Terms of Reference for same.
2) Give consideration to child protection and restorative justice initiatives by religious orders.
3) Analyse previous domestic inquiries, their methodology, outcomes achieved, impact on policy and practice, and impact of outcome on survivors and their families.
4) Assess the options for an independent inquiry, having regard to the outcomes sought by survivors, the impact of the process on survivors and their families, including the potential for re-traumatisation, the legal issues that may arise, and timeframe and cost.
5) Have regard to international practice.
6) Engage with religious orders to establish the level and extent of their intended co-operation with any proposed inquiry.
7) Identify the potential scale of historical sexual abuse in schools run by religious orders in Ireland.
8) Commission expert reports on child protection and the restorative justice schemes/ supports operated by the religious orders.
9) Have regard to the potential impact of their considerations and / or report on any criminal prosecution or ongoing Garda Investigations.

As can be seen from the above, the O'Toole Scoping Inquiry has a clearly defined scoping function in terms of: being asked to ascertain what survivors want; what the likely attitude of the religious orders will be towards a future inquiry; to identify the scale of abuse in schools run by religious orders; and to assess what Irish past inquiries, as well as international inquiries, have to teach us about the best framework for a future process.

Additionally, the Scoping Inquiry is noted has having some separate, somewhat interrelated tasks:

i) To examine child protection in schools and identify best practice in this area.
ii) To consider the restorative processes/ supports offered by religious orders.

The Scoping Inquiry's remit included all primary and secondary schools, day or boarding that are run by, or had been run by religious orders. In practice, religious orders are, or were, involved in the majority of secondary schools in Ireland, and a considerable number of primary schools. The Inquiry aimed to present the information provided by the Orders about the numbers of complaints of historical sexual abuse made to them in respect of their day and boarding schools. The Scoping Inquiry had no function to investigate the allegations made or make any findings in relation to the veracity of the allegations and complaints made. The timeframe under investigation related to incidents alleged to have occurred within living memory, taken as being a period from 1927 to 2013. A cut-off period of 10 years prior to the commencement of the Scoping Inquiry in 2023 was intended to distinguish between historical and recent incidents of sexual abuse.

Information was sought from a range of sources:
- The Scoping Inquiry ultimately identified 73 religious orders who ran day or boarding schools in the State. They were asked to complete anonymised details of the number of allegations of historical child sexual abuse made in respect of their schools. Also sought was the number of alleged abusers and their association with the school, as well as information, where known, as to whether the alleged abuser was living or deceased. These figures were broken down on a school-by-school basis.
- a survivor engagement process was central to all the work. Survivors who registered their interest were invited to complete questionnaires in the first instance to allow the team to build a picture of the nature and extent of the abuse that participants said they had experienced. There were two stages to this:

- Stage 1: Scoping exercise - Survivors could complete the questionnaire online using a secure survey tool, use a printed form posted out to them, or over the telephone where they could speak to a trauma-informed facilitator who could record their answers. The questionnaire provided an indication of how many complainants there are and how they would like to be contacted; what school(s) they attended and when, the role of the person(s) they believed were responsible for abuse, and if their complaints had been made known to An Garda Siochána and/ or Tusla other authorities.
- Stage 2: Direct contact – for those that wanted to be contacted for the second stage of the process, the Scoping Inquiry arranged for trauma-informed facilitators to reach out to them and the survivors could select the ways they wanted to be contacted. They could participate via online interview, telephone interviews, in-person interview and a written submission.

The Scoping Inquiry team highlighted that this trauma-informed process was key to ensuring participants had choice and control over what they told the Scoping inquiry team and how that information was documented. This included detailed information booklets discussed with participants prior to them giving consent (see O'Toole (2024) Appendix 2 for a detailed description of the Survivor Engagement process and Appendix 3 for the 10 page participant information booklet).[25] The team highlighted the importance that it may have been the first time that some survivors have spoken of what has happened to them, and it was important that people have enough time and space to say what they want the Scoping Inquiry to hear. As a result, the process took much longer than the team had anticipated, and the team ensured that all participants in the process were kept informed of developments to the work and the reasons for the delay to the deadline.

A key purpose of the Scoping Inquiry was to ask participants what they wanted the Government to do next. In advance of the interviews, participants had been given a booklet setting out options and inviting other proposals. Survivors' feedback provided was instrumental in shaping the Scoping inquiries recommendations for the next stage.

The Scoping Inquiry initially aimed to furnish its report by November 2023. Because of the scale of the task, an extension was granted to submit the reports in June 2024 and publicly released in October 2024.

O'Toole's Scoping Inquiry made the following recommendations:

- A Commission of Investigation pursuant to the Commissions of Investigation Act 2004 should be established. The team held the view that any inquiry process should be as inclusive as possible. The procedural flexibility of a commission affords the least adversarial model of inquiry and therefore the greatest prospect of reducing the risk of re-traumatisation. A commission model is also likely to be speedier than a tribunal model of inquiry.
- In early course, consideration be given by the Government to establishing a redress scheme for survivors of historical sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by the religious orders. They further recommended that the Government approach the relevant religious orders about contributing to a redress scheme.
- A Survivor Engagement programme be established by the Commission in accordance with the Terms of Reference proposed in the O'Toole report. The function of this would be to provide survivors who cannot, or do not wish to give evidence before the Commission an opportunity to recount their experiences on a confidential basis and in a wholly non-adversarial environment.
- With respect to the Terms of reference for a Commission, the Scoping Inquiry recommended;
    - The Commission investigate the handling of historical sexual abuse allegations and concerns and suspicions of abuse in day and boarding schools run by the religious orders.
    - Consideration be given to extending the Terms of Reference of the Commission to all schools.
    - The Commission should be as survivor-centered as possible consistent with fair procures. This should include:
        - Consultations with survivors and other stakeholders around language and nomenclature, how survivors will engage with and communicate with the commission and the Survivor engagement programme.
        - Transparency – the Commission and Survivor Engagement programme should provide clear and regular information about how they intend to go about their work.
        - Regular communication with stakeholders – the commission should establish a means of regular communication with all stakeholders, particularly survivors, in an accessible manner, about the Commission's ongoing work and any interim findings or rulings of the inquiry. The development of an inquiry website would be essential to achieve this.
        - Support for survivors – at key stages of the process, when survivors are preparing statements, giving evidence before the Commission or attending at the Survivor Engagement programme, and in the aftermath of these stages, survivors should have access to appropriate one-to-one support, as required, to assist in reducing the risk of re-traumatisation.

        - Training – future Commission members, staff and their legal teams should receive appropriate and adequate training to understand trauma associated with sexual crimes.
        - Practical steps – consideration of a number of other practical measures as set out in Chapter 25 to facilitate survivors in giving their evidence in a manner than minimises re-traumatisation.
    - The Survivor Engagement Programme furnish a report to the Commission and that the Commission may have regard to any proposal of the report, including in respect of policy matters relevant to survivors and the lifelong impact of child sexual abuse, in making its recommendations.
    - The Department of Education set up a Child Protection in Schools group to carry out the functions set out in Chapter 25 and there be a review of child safeguarding measures in unrecognised schools to consider current measures and make any recommendations to improve or strengthen same.
    - There is reasonable cause to believe that further allegations of sexual abuse in schools will emerge and the numbers of allegations will exceed the numbers recorded in the religious orders' records. The number of people coming forward to allege historical sexual abuse in day or boarding schools is also likely to increase following the publication of the report and further public discussion of the topic that may follow publication. Predicting the scale of this increase is difficult. O'Toole's team sought by considering the data of the Sexual Violence Survey carried out by the CSA to give some indication of how this might translate to overall numbers in the population affected by childhood sexual violence. Given the likely scale of allegations, the Commission may need to use a sampling approach or consider sitting in divisions in order to complete its work in a timely fashion. The O'Toole report recommended that the Commission be entitled to adopt a sampling approach if required to decide what issues it must investigate and the extent of the investigation of same, and may given consideration to sitting in divisions to enable it to complete its work in a timely fashion.
    - Further engagement with the religious orders is advised after the Terms of Reference are fixed by the Government. This is likely to greatly influence the likely level and extent of their cooperation with a future inquiry. The religious orders are entitled to rely on their legal and procedural rights before a commission. However, the extent to which they may do so, and the extent to which issues are contest, will be relevant to the likely duration of the commission's work and to the experience of survivors before such an inquiry, having regard to the need for oral evidence and cross-examination.

Overview of methodologies used in other countries

Large scale independent inquiries into child sexual abuse were conducted across several countries. The key themes from England, Wales, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand are summarised below.

The aims of these inquiries included (but were not limited to):

1) To make findings and recommendations to better protect children against sexual abuse and alleviate the impact of abuse on children when it occurs (Australia).
2) To estimate the numbers of people who have suffered abuse in state/faith-based care (New Zealand).
3) To identify the nature and extent of child sexual abuse associated with particular congregations which were subject to case studies (England/Wales - English Benedictine Congregation case study):
    a. To investigate the nature and extent of any failures by these institutions to protect children from abuse.
    b. To assess the adequacy of the response of the churches, law enforcement agencies, prosecuting authorities and any other relevant institutions to allegations of child sexual abuse by individuals associated with the congregations.
    c. To assess the extent to which the congregations sought to investigate, learn lessons, implement changes, and/or provide support and reparation to victims and survivors.
    d. To assess the adequacy of the child protection and safeguarding policy and practice across these congregations during the relevant period.
4) To evaluate the effectiveness of current policies, procedures and practices (Scotland).
5) To review and evaluate in-built safeguarding mechanisms within the Church, including inspection, continuous improvement and learning (Scotland).
6) To review whether safeguarding is embedded in the theology and ministry of the Church and identify any barriers to achieving this (Scotland).
7) To review and evaluate the policies and procedures of the Church to determine whether the Church has been taking appropriate account of the applicable law and the guidance of public bodies (Scotland).
8) To examine if the structures are in place to allow transparency, accountability, ownership and a consistency of approach towards victims and survivors (Scotland).
9) To assess how effective communication and liaison is among interested and concerned parties responsible for safeguarding (Scotland).

Methods used by the various commissions to meet these aims are summarised in Table 38 below.

Table 37: *Methodologies used in various countries*

Method	**Description of method**	**Countries which used this methodology**
Prevalence estimates	New Zealand's Royal Commission report used two ways to calculate the numbers of people who have suffered abuse o The main estimate used a "top-down" approach ▪ The 'top-down' approach starts with an estimate of the number of people in State and faith-based care (in a range of settings) between 1950 and the present day – 'the Cohort' – and uses data on the prevalence of abuse (from New Zealand and international studies) to estimate the percentages of the Cohort who may have been abused. ▪ The data inputs into this method are (a) estimates of the size of the Cohorts in each setting, between 1950 and now, and (b) estimates of the prevalence of abuse within each of these settings. o The second was a supporting estimate, made using a "bottom up" approach ▪ The 'bottom-up' approach starts with the number of people in State and faith-based care (in a range of settings) between 1950 and 2029 who have identified that they have been abused in care – the 'known' survivors of abuse. The additional 'suspected' survivors of abuse are then estimated using assumptions around the proportion of crime that goes unreported in New Zealand.	New Zealand
Case studies	In England/Wales, case studies of specific churches and Catholic independent schools were conducted. o For example, a case study was conducted on Ampleforth and Downside abbeys and their associated schools, where there have been numerous accounts of child sexual abuse (English Benedictine Congregation case study) o Core participants were: 63 victims and survivors, 3 groups of victims and survivors, 3 other individuals and 11 institutions o The Inquiry held preliminary hearings in July 2016 and June and October 2017. o The Inquiry held substantive public hearings in this investigation over 14 sitting days between 27 November 2017 and 15 December 2017 o The Inquiry took evidence from a number of sources. Witnesses who gave evidence to the Inquiry included complainant core participants, who gave accounts of the sexual abuse they suffered. o The Inquiry also took evidence from corporate witnesses on behalf of the EBC, Ampleforth and Downside, the Catholic Church's safeguarding bodies (Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (COPCA), Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) and National Catholic	England/ Wales

	Safeguarding Commission (NCAS)), the North Yorkshire Police and the Metropolitan Police Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, and safeguarding coordinators from the relevant dioceses.	
Interviews with survivors and/or their supporters/representatives	In Scotland, the Commission held interviews with 24 individuals who were either survivors of abuse or supporters of abused people. o Advice was taken from representatives of survivors' groups before conducting these meetings, in order to seek advice and guidance about the approach o Meetings with survivors were held between June and December 2014 In England and Wales, "The Truth Project" was a vital part of the inquiry's work o It was designed to enable victims and survivors to share their accounts in a confidential setting o More than 6,200 survivors contributed over the course of 6 years o Victims and survivors were invited to attend a private session in an Inquiry centre or pop-up location in England or Wales, with their costs met by the Inquiry. o They were also offered the choice to submit a written account of their experience of abuse, or to participate by telephone or video call. o Those who chose to take part in the Truth Project were not tested, challenged or contradicted. They could share as little or as much of their experience as they chose.	Scotland, England/ Wales
Online question-aires	In Scotland - a call for submissions to the Commission was made via national media in June 2014. A general call for participation in the Commission process was also sent out via parish bulletins throughout Scotland in August 2014. Respondents were directed to a secure website where they could post information about their experiences via a questionnaire. Questions were as follows: o Participants were asked for demographic and contact details o Participants were then asked a series of questions about their experiences of the Safeguarding Service for children and vulnerable adults within the Catholic church o For example, whether they had used it, if it was easy to find, helpful (why? Why not?), whether they were encouraged to bring a friend/supporter, who was present (e.g., a Bishop or priest) and whether they had any comments or suggestions based on their experience o Respondents were also signposted to organisations which could help if filling out the survey was distressing 32 questionnaires were completed in Scotland	Scotland
Interviews with clergy/ those in	In Scotland, church leaders were invited to give oral evidence *"We invited all the Bishops (or representatives where there was a*	Scotland

positions of power in the relevant institutions	*vacancy) and their Advisors, as well as representatives from Religious Orders, to meet with various members of the Commission."*	
Public hearings	In England and Wales, 325 days of public hearings were held ○ These were conducted as part of 15 individual investigations and 19 related investigation reports ○ Survivors and victims gave accounts of the abuse they suffered ▪ These survivors and victims were granted anonymity under s.19(2)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 ▪ Proceedings were broadcast, but for anonymous witnesses, all that was 'live streamed' was the audio sound of their voice ○ More than 700 victims and survivors gave evidence at public hearings or provided statements	Australia, England/ Wales
Forums e.g., the Victims and Survivors Forum and the Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel in England and Wales	The Victims and Survivors Forum was set up in 2016 to ensure that the voices of victims and survivors were at the heart of the Inquiry's work ○ Forum members were offered a variety of ways to engage with the Inquiry, including face-to-face events, webinars, polls and consultations. ○ The trauma informed approach adopted by the Inquiry allowed members to share their thoughts and suggestions in a safe space, without judgement. ○ The inquiry states that "The experiences that we heard helped us to better understand the breadth and complexities associated with child sexual abuse. This resulted in the publication of summary reports on topics including accessing records, redress, culture change, protected characteristics and the criminal justice system, to demonstrate the impacts of abuse."	England/ Wales

All countries' reports made extensive recommendations based on their findings such as:

- Calling for changes to churches' internal safeguarding policies and recommending mandatory reporting of abuse allegations to the police.
- Making Legal/policy recommendations including:
  - calling for government-commissioned awareness campaigns
  - a cabinet minister for children
  - the creation of Child Protection Authorities in England and Wales
  - banning the use of pain compliance techniques on children in custodial institutions
  - improved access to records
  - calling for publicly funded specialist therapeutic support for child victims of sexual abuse.

Summary

We have been heartened by the response of many of the stakeholders and their willingness and candour in speaking with us during this scoping phase. Staff from social services, justice and the main denominations of the religious orders were helpful and open in their discussions about both the benefits and challenges of this type of work.

All the stakeholders we spoke with said they would help as much as they could with the work, but cautioned that they could foresee considerable challenges with the project as originally specified.

It should be remembered that over the last number of years, there have been several large-scale investigations into abuse linked to faith organisations. Several stakeholders highlighted that there are many separate pieces of work being undertaken around historical child abuse and these could (and should) be much better coordinated.

We experienced the negative effects of this directly when there was extensive media coverage about the consultation for the redress scheme for survivors of the institutions during the same week as we released the online survey. This led to increased anxiety and some confusion amongst stakeholders as to what the survey related to. It would be better if we received forewarning about what other pieces of work are underway or being planned, so we can take account of that in our planning and discussions with stakeholders.

Relating to this, it is crucial that each of the 3 pieces of work commissioned in this programme are aware of what the others are planning and there is some level of coordination across the 3 projects. For example, stakeholders have been asking us what will happen with the oral narratives piece and to date we have only been able to tell them that it has been commissioned. If there will be 3 projects all potentially liaising with the same stakeholders, this needs to be carefully coordinated and sequenced to avoid confusion and reduced engagement. Convening meetings involving the project leads has potential but all three research projects need to be represented to make best use of everyone's time.

Many of the faith organisations who have already participated in previous research and Inquiries feel overwhelmed and fatigued with scoping exercises and investigations. They wholly appreciate the importance of the work, and it is not that they do not want to co-operate in any further investigations. But at the same time is important to remember that this is additional to their day-to-day work.

Several stakeholders also said that every time another inquiry is held, or there is coverage on media about these issues, it will bring invariably bring people forward who need support. Providing support to these people is the faith organisation's immediate priority, and this is often being done in the face of stretched and diminishing resources. The research needs to take account of this when planning any data collection which places an additional requirement or burden on the faith organisations. The need to consider the impact on survivors, victims and staff were all consistently highlighted, as well as signposting to appropriate sources of support.

In summary, consistent themes emerged throughout the Phase 1 study in terms of:

- The original specification to examine allegations of all types of abuse in all faith organisations between 1922 and 2010 is extremely ambitious and is likely to take considerable time and resources.
- The stakeholders we spoke with are all keen to support the research and see it as an importance piece of work.

- It is very important to note the impact on having several investigative pieces of work recently and currently underway at the same time and with the same stakeholders. A trauma-informed approach needs to be implemented to the work with careful coordination, sequencing and messaging required going forward.
- It is crucial that the 3 pieces of work commissioned in this strand of work are familiar with what is planned and there is some level of coordination across the 3 projects. Stakeholders have been asking us what will happen with the oral narratives piece and to date we have only been able to tell them that it has been commissioned. If there will be 3 projects all potentially liaising with the same stakeholders, this will need to be carefully coordinated and sequenced to avoid confusion and reduced engagement.
- Previous similar research in other areas has taken a coordinated approach to different strands with most who have looked at records, oral narratives and policies using the learning from one strand to influence the information gathering in the other strands. For example, some have used the oral narratives from people who have come forward to identify which records to seek from faith organisations, health boards and justice agencies.

What has the scoping study helped us to understand?

Willingness of faith organisations to engage and support the research

Faith organisations have varied to the extent to which they had prior knowledge of the research and their willingness to engage. The larger denominations had been notified that this research was to be undertaken by TEO but did not understand what it would involve, the timescales or what was expected from them. There was no externally facing description of the research available on the TEO website until the end of September. A lot of engagement work had to be undertaken as part of this scoping study including written communications, meetings and identifying contact details for faith organisations.

Whilst many denominations have actively supported the research (such as the Catholic church, Catholic Orders, Church of Ireland, Methodist, Baptist, and to some extent the Presbyterians), others have been less forthcoming and engaged such as the Free Presbyterians and independent churches.

Variation between faith organisations in terms of their activities and record keeping

There are many different types of faith organisations in NI, each with their own history, variety of activities, geographical spread and scale. There is a lot of variety in the structures, governance and record keeping of different denominations.

Faith organisations with centralised structures like the Catholic orders, Catholic church, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian are more likely to have better records held in regional safeguarding offices from the mid-90s onwards. A brief overview is provided below of each of the main denominations' available information about allegations and records.

With respect to the **Catholic Church**, some written reports exist in the public domain which summarise numbers of allegations in the Catholic Church (freely available at: https://www.safeguarding.ie/publications/national-board-publications). Similar reports exist relating to the **Catholic Orders** but these do not separate out allegations relating to Northern Ireland. These have been compiled by the National Safeguarding Board but are not without controversy with some questioning their accuracy. Local returns would suggest that in the Catholic churches, there are few if any records likely to be held at a local level that are not also held in the regional office. These reports could be summarised to provide number of allegations in different areas in different time periods within the Catholic orders and catholic church. This could be done without further permissions being required because the information is already in the public domain. The reports could not be used to identify total number of perpetrators because of the way the information has been coded within the reports, but it may be possible to supplement this by discussion with safeguarding officers from their regional office records. Appropriate consent and data protection agreements would need to be obtained before this could happen.

The **Church of Ireland** hold records at a regional safeguarding office and also at a local parish level. The Safeguarding team has been through their records at a regional office level and could probably provide information from these relatively quickly if appropriate consent were in place. There is no pre-existing report summarising this information. It may be possible to summarise the information through discussion with safeguarding officers from their regional office records. Appropriate consent and data protection agreements would need to be obtained before this could happen. Individual parishes appear to hold records, but it is not clear what information is held in most settings.

The **Methodist Church** has examined their records at a regional office level and could probably provide information from these relatively quickly if appropriate consent were in place. There is a report produced by the Methodist Church which summarises this information from the 1950s onwards (freely available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/604f6c4cbaa61721597a264b/t/6481ed3f4b15817a6ef2538a/1686236480883/PCR_Final_Report.pdf). This report does not include information from the Methodist Colleges or missionary work. Summarising the information from this report could be done without further permissions being required because the information is in the public domain. Some records may also be held in the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland.

The **Presbyterian Church** holds records in their regional safeguarding office, but did not submit their questionnaire response to us in respect to records held there. In the initial discussions with the Presbyterian church they were still working their way through the centrally held records to understand what was held and we assume, in the absence of further information, that this is still a work in progress. We cannot therefore comment the feasibility of whether they would be able to provide a summary of this or how long this might take them to compile. Presbyterian churches hold their records at a local level but within the local church responses, many noted that they did not know how many records exist or what type of information was likely to be contained within them. This is due to the highly confidential nature of records meaning that their contents are not known. Allegations are likely to be mixed amongst other records so it will be time consuming to find them.

The **Baptist church** does not have any records relating to allegations of child abuse held centrally. Individual churches hold local records and it would appear that relevant information could be sourced fairly easily as most of the parishes seem to have looked through the small volume of information they hold.

There were no responses from **Free Presbyterian** churches, so more investigation is needed to understand this.

In terms of **independent churches** there were limited responses but those that were received suggested that few records or held or they did not know what information was available. More investigation is needed to understand this.

Changes in record keeping since 1922

Stakeholders generally reported that record keeping improved from the mid-1990s onwards in line with changes to safeguarding practice. At this stage many of the larger denominations began to hold more comprehensive records at a regional level. Stakeholders report that these records should be more comprehensive, easier to search and more likely to record relevant details than earlier time periods.

Instances were records of allegations have been identified
Faith settings were asked to estimate (using a range) how many allegations of abuse were known to have been made in relation to their organisation. This was at a local level if they were making a response representing a parish or townland level, or at a regional level if there were responding with respect to records held in a safeguarding or clerical leadership office. We left the questionnaire open beyond the original closing date of 6th October since responses were still coming in. It was closed in January 2025 and the figures in this report updated to reflect the additional responses (a report of preliminary findings and recommendations had been discussed with the Advisory Group and Commissioning group in November 2024.

A total of 31 responses had identified locations of allegations – some of these will likely be referring to the same allegations (e.g. if a record is held at parish level and also at regional level), and some included multiple time periods. Most of these respondents were estimating between 1-10 alleged perpetrators on their site (Table 39). These could be used as a starting point to ask the faith organisations for more details about these records, subject to appropriate consent and data protection processes being agreed.

The estimated number of allegations is shown in the Table below. It should be noted that this will include some duplication across settings, e.g., allegations noted at a local level within a parish may also be included in the response at a regional level if records are held in both locations about the same allegation.

Table 38: Estimated number of allegations for each time period from the online survey

Time period	Estimated number of people	Survey respondents providing estimates of the number of people who had allegations made against them (n)	Survey respondents providing estimates of the number of alleged victims (n)
1922-1944	0	73	72
	1-10	2	2
	11-20	0	0
	21-30	0	0
	31-40	0	0
	41-50	0	0
	51-60	0	0
	61-70	0	0
	Cannot provide an estimate	28	30
1945-1968	0	74	74
	1-10	7	8
	11-20	2	1
	21-30	1	1
	31-40	0	0
	41-50	0	0
	51-60	0	0
	61-70	0	0

	Cannot provide an estimate	29	29
1969-2001	0	53	56
	1-10	14	9
	11-20	2	2
	21-30	0	0
	31-40	2	0
	41-50	0	1
	51-60	0	1
	61-70	0	2
	Cannot provide an estimate	29	29
2002-2010	0	51	52
	1-10	16	16
	11-20	1	0
	21-30	1	1
	31-40	0	1
	41-50	0	0
	51-60	0	0
	61-70	0	0
	Cannot provide an estimate	20	19

In terms of volume of information, few respondents at a local level estimated more than a filing cabinet of information, although it should also be noted that many respondents were not able to provide any estimate so the volume of information held by them could be quite different. Respondents also said they found it difficult to estimate volume of records when there may only be a box file of information dispersed throughout a larger volume of information and which would have to be identified by manual searching through a range of records all organised, for example, by date rather than type of record.

A letter was also sent to the Executive Office from a solicitor representing a client who had been a plaintiff in action against a faith organisation. It notes *"a large dossier of disclosable material which is made available pursuant to High Court litigation …The Disclosure material is highly relevant to the work of the HCCA which points to systemic failures to the both the deceased [staff member] to account for his criminal activities. The Discovery material is subject to the usual implied understanding not to disclose in connection with any other cases or matters."* Phase 2 should explore options to engage on the issue of accessing material such as this from solicitors.

Differences between prevalence and incidence
The research team would like to acknowledge that the words 'Prevalence' and 'Incidence' are often used to describe 'numbers' of cases. However, caution must be applied in using this terminology as these words have different and nuanced meanings.

Prevalence specifically refers to the number / proportion of cases within a population at a specific time, regardless of when it occurred. Prevalence is therefore a measure of a disease category in an entire defined population (in this case, abuse cases). The term incidence refers to the number of new cases that develop in a population during a specific time period. It is then translated into a probability of new cases occurring.

One example of the difficulties around establishing prevalence is highlight in the Australian Royal Commission report. The commission spoke to more than 8000 survivors of child sexual abuse, as well as receiving 1000 written accounts but the authors also caveated their report with how difficult it is to determine the prevalence of abuse:

> *"There are some limitations on the data sources available to us. They do not represent the total number of allegations of child sexual abuse relating to religious institutions in Australia and cannot be used to determine the incidence or prevalence of child sexual abuse in religious institutions. They represent only those survivors who have come forward and may not accurately represent the demographic profile or experiences of those who have not come forward. They are also likely to under-represent victims of more recent abuse, as long delays in disclosing child sexual abuse are common."*

It would be more appropriate to use the phrasing 'number of allegations' or 'extent of abuse allegations' rather than 'prevalence of abuse' in this piece of research going forward, to avoid misinterpretation.

One must also be careful that the number of alleged incidents in one setting or faith organisation is not inappropriately generalised as being characteristic of all faith organisations. Caveats around sampling characteristics and methodological limitations need to be clearly described.

Practical considerations and ethical research practice
A key element of ethical practice in undertaking research is that of doing no harm. With this in mind, there are several important issues which need to be carefully considered in how to take this research forward into Phase 2.

Identifying details about allegations of abuse is not an emotionally neutral exercise. At a parish level many of the people who had been tasked with responding to the online survey were volunteers and did not necessarily have the resources they would need to be able to make a full response either in terms of time, or the position of authority or skillset needed to search through confidential records and extract information. The emotional burden and potential for transferred trauma should be taken seriously, and appropriate support for those involved funded and provided as part of the research process. It is not sufficient to signpost to support where people may encounter waiting lists or delays in receiving support.

The safeguarding teams also emphasized the importance of how best to support people in the community who would be affected by the research. This may include victims of abuse who may come to the faith organisation for support, those who may not approach the faith organisation, as well as those who care for them. Research of any nature into historical abuse may also lead to people disclosing for the first time, and faith organisations and others need to have forewarning of a likely increase in disclosures so they can prepare. Coordinating the research, allowing sufficient time for preparation and response, and providing the right type of support are all crucial. These need to be properly planned for and resourced going forward if the research is to be undertaken in a way that does not cause harm.

There are several other practical considerations which need to be considered when deciding how to undertake data collection and reporting in Phase 2.

The expectations of what this strand of work can achieve need to be realistic and carefully managed. Records by themselves can be limited in terms of offering insights into the extent of abuse or the processes used to deal with it. Records may contain very limited amounts of information which, without additional or background narrative, may be difficult to interpret. Key information and decisions may never have been recorded in written form so records may not have been created. Over the passage of time, records may also have been disposed of or destroyed.

Several parishes in the survey noted that their settings have merged, and boundaries also changed over time. This may mean that records were disposed of or may be harder to locate. Some records are located outside Northern Ireland and some stakeholders were concerned that this may have additional implications over Data protection and sharing of information across country boundaries.

Stakeholders and respondents to the survey said that most records held outside of the safeguarding offices are likely to be hard copy rather than electronic. At a local level, there often does not seem to have been any cataloguing of records relating to allegations of abuse or separation of these from other records. This will make identification of potentially relevant records a time consuming and labour-intensive task. Many of the respondents at parish level did not know what records existed or what they were likely to contain. The explanations they provided for not knowing were that it was not possible to check in the time available for responding to the questionnaire, and often they did not have the authority to look through this confidential information.

Most faith organisations do not have a resource available to them to do this quickly, so if this is not resourced, it will take months, if not years. With respect to how data could be collected, many of the faith organisations are relying heavily on volunteers who have little capacity to spend a lot of time sifting through records. For an outsider to the church to do it, appropriate consents and data protection agreements would need to be put in place, but it would still be time consuming and resource intensive.

Consent processes, confidentiality and data protection were all raised as important issues that need to be worked through. Clear Terms of Reference, data sharing agreements and protocols will need to be agreed before any data collection in Phase 2 can commence. This will take time to negotiate. It was clear and consistent feedback from the stakeholders that if the research has Inquiry status that will provide clearer structures to operate within and provide greater security and protection for everyone involved to ensure that highly sensitive information is handled appropriately. The use of the information and level of disaggregation of data and how identifiable individual allegations, diocese or denominations will be in the reporting will also need to be carefully detailed in advance as part of the consent process.

With respect to the research team seeking a meeting with the TEO legal and data protection advisers, the TEO have advised that TEO has a public task lawful basis to carry out the research which negates the need for consent to access records, however there is no underpinning law to fall back on. They have recommended that the research team completes a Data Protection impact Assessment (DPIA) detailing how any personal data associated with the project will be processed, and can then ask them to provide further advice based on the DPIA.

Similar challenges to those outlined above have all been well documented in the research undertaken in other countries. The learning from those other studies is that it takes adequate time and resource, with the research usually taking years, rather than months.

Whilst there was a reasonable return rate to the online questionnaire, many respondents found the online platform difficult to use because of a lack of confidence and familiarity with technology.

Many churches draw heavily on older people who are not confident with technology and who also are volunteers, so they are limited in time. We input the data for more than 30 respondents over the telephone or from hard copies for congregations because they had difficulty with the technology. As well as inputting the answers, this often involved lengthy discussions around particular questions and how these could relate to their specific setting. Future data collection like this should be undertaken through orally administered questionnaires either face-to-face, online or on the telephone, and adequate resource put towards that.

For the optics of the research process, it is important that there is a presence on TEO website which clearly positions the research as a TEO commissioned and supported process and details how the information will be used and sources of support for people.

We would also suggest that the research should be led by and located within University structures in order to provide additional gravitas to the work and also legal protection for the researchers. Ethical approval will need to be sought for Phase 2 and this could be done within University structures.

Some potential methodologies for Phase 2 with their pro's and con's are outlined below in Table 40.

Table 39: Potential methodologies for Phase 2

Data collection approach*	Scope	How will this help answer the question of extent of abuse?	How will this help answer the question of process?	Methodological considerations (strengths and limitations)
Summarise information that is already in the public domain in the form of church reports	Limited to Catholic church, Catholic orders and Methodist church	Can provide insights into extent of allegations. Catholic reports cannot provide insight into total number of perpetrators because of coding system used. Methodist report is only from 1950 onwards and did not cover Methodist schools or missionary work	May provide some insights into the process from the faith organisation perspective, but little from the victim's perspective	Could be done without needing further permissions. Not available for most denominations so very limited in scope. May be concerns about some churches not including all allegations. ***This would be an unsatisfactory methodology if used as a single approach - it is very biased in terms of only including a small number of denominations rather than all faith organisations. Likely to be most useful in combination with other approaches.***
Summarise information that is already in the public domain in the form of media reports	If a strong search strategy is developed, it could include a range of faith denominations	Could provide insights into the extent of alleged abuse which has progressed through criminal prosecution. Media reports may be more likely to cover sexual and physical abuse (and more serious or repeated instances) rather than other forms of abuse. Will provide no insights into allegations which were not escalated to criminal proceedings.	Some investigative reporting may include accounts of the behaviour of perpetrators over time	Potentially bias if higher profile cases are more likely to be reported on in the media. Link with faith organisation may not always be apparent, so this will not include all relevant cases that proceeded to court (resulting in bias and underestimation). Will be limited in terms of only including cases which have made it to court and if confidentiality has been waived. ***Could potentially provide the start to a 'breadcrumb' trail to identify other records in church, criminal justice and social services systems. Likely to be most useful therefore in combination with other approaches.***
Summarise records held by regional	Likely to only be do-able for main	Will provide more insights into number of allegations that were escalated as being of sufficient	As a single source of information,	Biased in terms of only being larger denominations, so will provide no insights into other faith organisations.

safeguarding teams in faith organisations	denominations such as Catholic church, Catholic orders, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist	concern, and also those from mid-1990s onwards	records are likely to be limited in terms of providing insights into process. Better insights would be supplementing these with interviews and those are likely to only provide insights into last few decades (i.e. those with living memory will be limited and that may be flawed)	***Direct access to records by researchers will probably be limited because of confidentiality/ data protection.*** ***An alternative to direct access by the researchers would be to undertake interviews to discuss anonymised data with faith organisation personnel. This will be time consuming and resource intensive for both faith organisations and research teams and timelines will need to take this into account in a realistic way.*** ***Likely to be stronger as part of a wider methodological approach including interviews with survivors***.
Examination of faith organisation records	Could include all faith organisations	Could provide insights into the extent of alleged abuse. The online survey has identified the location of some allegations. These could provide a basis for extracting the information from these (either by direct access or through interview). The online survey does not, however, provide any insights into allegations that may be held in faith settings who have responded 'don't know' to the	Could provide insights into the processes although information held in records is likely to be of limited detail so will be difficult to piece together without insights from other sources	Records of some of the main denominations are more organised and it will be easier to identify relevant records at regional safeguarding office level (Catholic Church, Catholic orders, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian). This will require appropriate consent processes and is likely to be more straightforward using powers of an Inquiry. Other faith organisations will need to be examined or this will be an extremely biased approach and not fulfil the aims of the specification. The other faith organisations will need a different approach as they do not hold records centrally. The online survey suggests they are much less likely to know what they hold, so time and resource will be needed to identify, retrieve and extract the relevant information.

		questions because they do not know what is held, or faith organisations that have not responded to the survey. In terms of estimating the extent of alleged abuse, although the online survey provides a starting point, more information will be needed.		There are gaps in records held by faith organisations with relation to any external parties working in connection with them such as uniformed organisations, There are gaps in records held by faith organisations in relation to the work they have done in schools. The survey shows that faith organisations have been involved in schools in many different ways since 1922. The specification for Stage 2 will need to define exactly what this link comprises in order to be included. No list exists summarising schools that have a faith connection. In the online survey some churches have listed the names of schools with whom they had some sort of a connection (ranging from pastoral care to administrative responsibility). This will not have identified all the schools and no information is available from faith settings who did not respond to the survey. ***It may be possible to use the regional safeguarding records for the main denominations and then undertake a search of records for other denominations, potentially using a sampling approach. To only extract information from regional safeguarding offices would be biased and inadequate as it will only look at the more structured, larger denominations and shed no insight into the other independent churches who may have very different approaches to safeguarding since they do not have the established governance structures or oversight present in the larger churches. Looking at records in individual settings may be the only way to try to get insights into the extent and process around allegations outside the main denominations.***

Examination of social services and criminal justice records	Could include all faith organisations	Could provide insights into the extent of alleged abuse which has been escalated to these agencies	Could provide insights into the processes although information held in records is likely to be of limited detail so will be difficult to piece together without insights from other sources	These types of records are not easily searchable without additional information about the perpetrator, victim or incident. This will require appropriate consent processes and is likely to be more straightforward using powers of an Inquiry. Time and resource will be needed to identify, retrieve and extract the relevant information. ***If names could be identified from other sources, these could be used as the start of a 'bread-crumb' trail into the social services and criminal justice records.***
Examination of PRONI records	More likely to include larger denominations	Limited in terms of providing insight into extent of allegations although could provide useful information if another source is used to provide a 'breadcrumb' trail to search within these records	Could provide some insight into how allegations were dealt with although another source will likely be needed to provide a 'breadcrumb' trail to search within these records	An initial list of potential sources has been identified by PRONI of sources which may be relevant. Time and resource will be needed to identify, retrieve and extract the relevant information. ***If names of individuals and/ or settings could be identified from other sources, these could be used as the start of a 'bread-crumb' trail into these records.***
Public call for individuals to come forward to describe allegations	Could include all faith organisations	Could provide insights into the extent of alleged abuse but not everyone will come forward who has experienced abuse.	Could provide insights into the processes, particularly if interviews were	High risk of triggering emotional distress and so will need a strong trauma-informed approach. Expectations will need to be managed and an approach decided as to whether this is part of an Inquiry process similar to that used in other areas, and the extent to which a 'confidential panel' approach

			used to triangulate information with church and system responses in individual cases or settings	would be used, or any level of cross-examination. The Irish research made it clear that the process in these situations was not akin to criminal proceedings so it was not to prove or disprove any single allegation. This is an approach used in most other jurisdictions when records are being examined both to keep the research task manageable and also to provide the most useful insights ***A public call for individuals to come forward will take time and be resource intensive but will likely provide best insights into process as part of a broader methodological approach involving triangulation of data.***

* these are not presented in any list of priority

Considerations around the original scope of the research specification
It was consistent feedback from stakeholders that the scope of the specification as outlined in terms of definition of perpetrator, geographical coverage and time periods was extremely large and ambitious.

One option would be to narrow the specification of the work going forward to make it more manageable. Some possibilities around this are outlined below in Table 41. Each of these present challenges.

Table 40: Potential approaches to narrowing the scope of the research

Possible ways to narrow the scope of the research*	**Pro's and con's**
Narrow the definition of perpetrator, e.g. to only be those employed and paid by the faith organisation	In theory this could narrow the scope, but it is problematic. For some faith settings this would exclude several allegations and areas of known risks such as volunteers. It would probably be better to reword it into a more informative definition with better use of wording.
Narrow the geographical area of focus	Currently the remit is NI. Further consideration needs to be given as to what makes an allegation NI relevant. Records may not specify where the victim lived or where an incident took place so it may not be possible to narrow geographical aspects of allegations or incidents using these as criteria. The focus could be narrowed by taking a geographically based sample could be taken, e.g. all cases within the Belfast area if that gave a spread of faith organisations. It will not be possible to generalise the learning from this to other areas and one cannot assume that an area with a high number of allegations presumes that a higher incidence of abuse – it may just have better safeguarding investigative or record keeping procedures compared to an area where abuse may have been equally likely but not documented. Challenges in this will be that the different faith organisations will have different geographical boundaries and these do not necessarily align with County boundaries or the border between NI and ROI
Narrow the timeline	There are likely to be more records available from mid 1990s onwards as well as more people who could be interviewed to provide background information and narrative to the information in the records. There may therefore be an argument for excluding earlier time periods and instead only focus on the later time period, e.g. only examine from 1980 or 1990 onwards. To focus from mid-1990s onwards would mean you are looking at the learning from the most recent approaches to safeguarding and more records likely to be held. It may, however, reduce the potential of the work to provide insights into the more historical aspect of the piece which in other countries was instrumental in driving change. Although now that there is greater recognition that abuse occurred, that may be less important to have a focus on.

* these are not presented in any list of priority

Conclusions

Phase 1 used a robust mixed methods approach of interviews, surveys to local and regional faith settings, and desk research. It has provided useful insights into the complexities of faith organisation activities, the information held in records locally and regionally, and the consent and data protection issues that will need to be addressed when trying to access and retrieve information from faith organisations, social services and criminal justice records.

The stakeholders we spoke with all highlighted both how important this research is and how complex it would be. This research programme is broader in scope than most other research into clerical abuse because it includes all types of abuse, all faith organisations, a lengthy time period (1922 to 2010), and a broad range of perpetrators including those who were not members of religious congregations or directly employed by faith organisations.

Stakeholders highlighted the challenges around defining inclusion criteria for allegations of abuse. Stakeholders were concerned that the use of the current definitions would lead to potentially relevant allegations not being included. For example, Categories A, B and C in the Specification use language and terminology that mean different things in different faith organisations, or that are not applicable to all faith contexts. In addition, the Specification does not make clear exactly what connection an allegation should have to Northern Ireland in order to be included in any investigation.

Stakeholders also recognised that this programme of work has potential to validate survivors' experiences and to support healing, and to enable learning to ensure that similar situations do not happen again in the future. They also recognised that the programme has potential to cause distress. The HCCA Survivors Reference Group highlighted the importance of this research for them; they have seen how other victims' experiences have been addressed by IDWG-commissioned research while they have continued to wait.

There are challenges in establishing the extent of recorded allegations of abuse using records held by religious and faith organisations. Some faith organisations such as the Catholic Church, Catholic Orders and Methodist Church have already made public what they know about allegations of abuse associated with their settings. However, concerns have been raised about omissions in some of the Catholic Church's publications. Other faith organisations hold records which have not yet been summarised and made public. Some faith organisations simply do not know what allegations may be recorded within the materials they hold. Others did not engage with Phase 1, and so we do not know what records they may or may not have. A small number of organisations have said they will not engage in research like this while participation is voluntary.

Although we were able to establish that larger faith organisations held records of allegations of abuse in their Regional Safeguarding offices, and some individual settings described holding records relating to abuse, the research has also clearly highlighted how much we still do not know. In making recommendations for Phase 2, this is of critical importance. It is necessary to balance the resources that would be needed to fill these gaps in understanding against the value and rigour of the findings that can be produced from the records available. There is little value in commissioning research that is unlikely to be able to answer the questions set in a methodologically robust way. Ethical research requires that methods used are good enough to answer the questions with a sufficient level of rigour.

We assessed the potential of various approaches that could be used in Phase 2 and identified advantages and disadvantages for each. Each is briefly outlined below (these approaches are not presented in any order of priority):

- **Summarising information that is already in the public domain in the form of reports produced by the faith organisations.** This could be done without needing further permissions. However, it could only produce partial findings because most faith organisations have not yet published detailed reports. There are also concerns that allegations have been omitted from reports produced in relation to some of the Catholic dioceses. This approach cannot therefore be used on its own. It is likely to be most useful in combination with other approaches.

- **Summarising information that is already in the public domain in the form of media reports.** This approach has important limitations. It will only uncover cases deemed 'newsworthy' and will often exclude cases which were not investigated by police or prosecuted. A link with a faith organisation may not always be reported on in any detail. This method is likely to be most useful in combination with other approaches. It could, however, potentially provide the start to a 'breadcrumb' trail to identify other records held by faith organisations, criminal justice and social services systems.

- **Summarising records held by regional safeguarding teams in faith organisations.**
    - Larger denominations are more likely to have regional safeguarding teams. Smaller independent faith organisations may have very different approaches to safeguarding since they do not have the established governance or oversight structures present in the larger churches. Safeguarding teams' record holdings are more comprehensive from the mid-1990s onwards. On its own, an investigation into records held by regional safeguarding teams will produce limited results in terms of faith groups, time period and geographical area. It may also lead to an over-emphasis on larger denominations.
    - In addition, concerns around confidentiality and data protection are likely to present barriers to direct access to records by researchers. An alternative to direct access by the researchers would be to undertake interviews to discuss anonymised data with faith organisation personnel. This would be time-consuming and resource intensive for both faith organisations and research teams and timelines would need to take this into account in a realistic way. This approach is best used in combination with other methods including interviews with survivors.

- **Examination of faith organisation records.** Although the online survey has identified the location of some records relating to allegations of abuse, it has not provided a full picture of what is held in all faith settings:
    - It would be inadvisable to focus only on records already located using the online survey because: i) a high number of respondents said they did not know whether their organisation held any records of allegations of abuse, and ii) a significant number of faith organisations contacted did not respond to the survey.
    - It may be possible to use the Regional Safeguarding Team records (as discussed above) for the main denominations and then undertake a search of records for other denominations, potentially using a sampling approach. This would be inadequate and biased because to only extract information from Regional Safeguarding offices would involve only being able to examine the more structured, larger denominations. It is important to note, however, that examining the records in individual settings may be the only way to try to get insights into the extent of recorded allegations outside the main denominations, and the processes used to respond to them.

- **Examination of social services and criminal justice records –** These records do not contain any searchable marker allowing researchers to quickly identify those related to clerical child abuse. It would be extremely resource intensive to trawl these records without narrowing the search parameters. Where identifying information such as the names of alleged perpetrators and those reporting abuse can be gleaned from other sources, these could be used as the start of a 'bread-crumb' trail into the social services and criminal justice records.

- **Examination of PRONI records.** As noted above, if names of individuals and other identifying information could be identified from other sources, these could be used as the start of a 'bread-crumb' trail into these records.

- **Public call for individuals to come forward to describe allegations.** This approach has been used in other jurisdictions. A public call for individuals to come forward will take time and be resource intensive, but, as part of a broader methodological approach involving triangulation of data, will likely provide better insights into the processes used in responding to allegations of abuse. Public calls involve a high risk of triggering emotional distress and so the research design requires a strong trauma-informed approach. Expectations will need to be managed. Consideration should be given to gathering individual testimony through both public and confidential, and statutory and non-statutory mechanisms.

Phase 2: Key Challenges

The key challenges identified during the Scoping Research in Phase 1 are outlined below. These form the basis for a set of recommendations about what should happen next. Our recommendations are set out in the next section.

The Scoping Research in Phase 1 established that, given the scale and complexity of the records piece, it will not be possible to complete a robust investigation of the extent of recorded allegations of clerical child abuse and the processes used to respond to them within the available time and resources. We have considered the advantages and disadvantages of various research approaches above. Even using a combination of these will fall short of what is needed unless more resources and time are available, and the issues over how to handle and expedite consent processes will persist.

An appropriate legal structure must be put in place before work on records concerning historical clerical abuse progresses any further. The most efficient way to expedite this would be through a Statutory inquiry. This would address stakeholder concerns about data protection and consent. Previous research in Northern Ireland such as the report into Magdalene laundries, mother and baby institutions and workhouses has shown that the issues around data sharing agreements and identifying a lawful basis for access to records have been very time consuming for everyone involved. The stakeholders we interviewed commonly stated that a statutory inquiry would allow for easier access to records and appropriate safeguards for all concerned. Different forms of statutory inquiry are possible, each of which involves different processes and can produce different insights and outputs. Further investigation should be made around what approach will be best suited to use in investigating historical clerical abuse in Northern Ireland.

We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical clerical abuse. There must be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith

organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each. The original project specification recognises that abuses which took place outside of residential settings are no less important or emotive than institutional abuse. It would do a great disservice to all those involved to undertake the next phase of the research in a less robust manner than previous research into historical abuse in religious and faith settings. Decisions that are taken now around how to take this research forward should be particularly sensitive to the repercussions of proposing an approach that is less robust than the inquiry-based methods used in the institutional abuse cases. For victims and survivors who may have had their experiences ignored, minimised or denied when they previously disclosed clerical child abuse, this could further compound their trauma and make them feel like they have been left behind by the State.

The HIAI was independent from government and had two main components, investigating 22 institutions.[26] One was the Acknowledgement Forum, whose members listened to the experiences of those who were children in residential institutions (other than schools) in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995. The other component was the Statutory Inquiry. In its 223 days of public hearings between 13 January 2014 and 8 July 2016 it investigated 22 institutions, as well as the circumstances surrounding the sending of child migrants from Northern Ireland to Australia, the activities of Father Brendan Smyth, and issues of finance and governance.

The Mother and Baby Institutions, workhouses and Magdalene Laundries that existed across Northern Ireland from 1922 to 1990 were investigated by a research team based at Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast.[27] The research published in 2021 comprised a literature review, analysis of archived records and oral histories. Thirteen institutions were included in the research. Given the tight research timescale and extensive range and number of sources, it was necessary to sample material in some of the archival collections. Sixty individuals offered oral testimony to the researchers. A 12-week consultation on proposals to establish an inquiry into Mother and Baby Institutions was launched in June 2024. An Independent Panel, established in April 2023. The Independent Panel will report on its findings and recommendations, some of which will be taken up by a planned Public Inquiry. The Panel is currently working on ensuring that individual institutions' records are digitised, catalogued and made available for analysis. The Panel does not have statutory powers of compulsion; this means that they must secure agreement to digitisation, which can be a complex and time-consuming process.

It is difficult to compare the research envisioned for Phase 2 with these previous pieces of research because residential institutions vary from faith settings in many ways. Even so, it is useful to highlight the sheer scale of any project including all faith organisations in Northern Ireland. Although there is no single official list of faith settings, we were able to identify over 3000 settings from a variety of sources. This was not an exhaustive list. There are more than 10 Christian denominations, each of which has multiple settings (e.g., Catholic Church, Catholic Orders, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Brethren, Free Presbyterian, as well as non-Christian faith organisations (e.g., Judaism, Buddhist, Hinduism) and so on. There are also a range of independent churches and gospel halls.

This project is not the first piece of research undertaken in faith organisations and we need to learn from the experiences of previous researchers and investigators in this field. Several investigations have examined the extent, process and experiences of abuse within faith settings in Northern Ireland, Ireland, the UK and further afield. Common themes in these other investigations relate to:

- Taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach to designing the work, collecting the data and developing findings, and sharing the learning from the investigative process. Victims and survivors need to be placed at the centre of the Phase 2 process.
- Managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be (e.g., having clear Terms of Reference clarifying whether a research project is intended to be a precursor to an official inquiry).
- Engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in to and support of the process.
- Paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes.

Many previous investigations have taken the form of statutory inquiries although the specific characteristics, scale and resources required by each inquiry vary. One of the main strengths of the inquiry mechanism is its ability to publicly and politically engage with the State's commitment to acknowledge and address systemic wrongdoing. It also raises public awareness of the harms of child abuse in ways that can lead to positive change by promoting policy, practice and legislative reform. Previous inquiries have required a significant investment of time and resources, reflecting the seriousness and complexity of their work. Some have been criticised because they were impacted by delays or unnecessarily adversarial processes or were limited in how well they met victims' and survivors' needs. Victims and survivors demand inquiries that produce statements of truth and answers to questions; acknowledgement; accountability; procedural justice; follow-through on agreed actions; and non-recurrence.[28] It is important that we learn from past inquiries in ways that respond to these demands.

If the goal of this research remains to determine the extent of allegations of abuse as well as how these were addressed, going forward it would be useful to consider the approach recently used in O'Toole's scoping research and other Irish research.[29, 30, 31, 32, 33] These aligned the survivors' piece very closely with looking at the information held by faith organisations to make best use of both. This comprises a possible methodology for assessing likely extent as well as survivors' experiences. This has implications for the oral narratives piece of research which is currently underway, and it may be prudent to consider pausing this until decisions are made about what happens next. There will be limited opportunities to approach survivors to tell their stories and share their experiences, so it is important that a trauma-informed approach is used, and people do not have to repeat their stories unnecessarily. Fully informed consent is also critical at the start of the process. This will include talking with victims and survivors about how the information they provide will be used and to what extent they may become identifiable to faith organisations or other statutory organisations as part of accessing records if their interviews are used as part of a 'breadcrumb' trail.

The research into the Magdalene laundries, Mother and baby institutions and workhouses has also demonstrated what a trauma-informed approach should like in practice. This approach took a long time to put in place. Ensuring adequate support for victims and survivors meant that the services commissioned to provide support had to recruit additional staff. The interviewing process was deliberately paced in order to minimise the time between people coming forward, being spoken with and follow-up support being available. Doing anything less than this has the potential to retraumatise and do harm.

Careful selection of methodological approach and sequencing could be beneficial can help to make the best use of resources and time. For example, it may be possible to expedite the process by using a modular approach focusing on different faith organisations concurrently similar to the IICSA or Royal Commission in Australia.[34] A modular inquiry[35] can be designed to address immediate and narrow institutional context and issue specific interim reports on those topics while also producing a broader analysis of historical abuse issues that offer a more holistic and systemic examination of the issues, causes and context. It may also be possible to examine records using a sampling methodology to yield illustrative insights about processes without having to investigate every case to the same extent. For example, many Irish inquiries into historical clerical abuse limited their scope to a specific geographic area such as a Diocese, focused on one type of abuse (e.g. sexual abuse), or focused on one faith organisation (e.g. the Catholic Church rather than a range of faith organisations). Some also examined a representative sample of recorded allegations rather than reviewing all available allegations. Sampling strategies included taking a representative sample of priests against whom allegations of child sexual abuse had been made, looking at allegations in a specified time frame in a specific location where clerical abuse was known to have occurred, focusing on individual know perpetrators, or taking a location as the focus for the sampling (e.g. examining settings where more than 20 allegations of abuse had been made).

Those commissioning research and investigations into historical clerical abuse need to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and how long it will take. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process, while avoiding further delays whenever possible. In particular, the research process should be designed to avoid unnecessary delay. Survivors of non-institutional historical clerical abuse were first informed that research into their experiences would be commissioned in October 2016. For a variety of reasons, it has taken 8 years to progress this research to this stage. It is a sad reality that as time goes on, more victims will die without seeing this process come to fruition. There is likely to be understandable frustration if there is a perception that the work is being further delayed. Research of this kind takes time, but unnecessary delays should be avoided.

Northern Ireland now has considerable experience in investigating historical abuses in religious settings. Learning from past and ongoing investigations were undertaken should be directly integrated into the design of Phase 2. In particular, the TEO teams supporting this programme and the ongoing work into the Magdalene laundries, mother and baby homes and workhouses should work more closely together to learn from each other's experiences. Connections should also be established between the research teams. This would assist with coordination of the research and interfacing with faith organisations. **It would be useful for those commissioning government-funded work around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken. This could be done through a reflective session under Chatham house rules.**

Clear Terms of Reference should be drawn up setting out the purpose of the Phase 2 research, the decisions or actions it will influence and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda. A Steering Group should be convened with people experienced in undertaking inquiries and research of this nature to design the scope and nature of any inquiry and develop a clear Terms of Reference. This could be similar to the Truth and Recovery Programme. Some of the members of our Advisory Group may be well-placed to contribute to this scope. This should also be informed by what survivors and victims want to see come out of the process.

Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset. Phase 1 has shown that records of abuse in schools are likely to be held in schools rather than by faith organisations. Existing research has highlighted that this is a complex area. Faith organisations have adopted different governance arrangements in running schools, and stakeholders' relationships and responsibilities vary.

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, our analysis leads us to conclude that Phase 2 should not go ahead as originally envisaged. Our key recommendation is that that historical clerical child abuse should be the subject of a Statutory inquiry. The full set of recommendations is provided below.

1. **An appropriate legal structure must put in place before Phase 2, or any review of records relating historical clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland progresses any further.** The most effective structure would be a Statutory inquiry.

2. **We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical abuse.** There should be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each.

3. **The Historical Records project is not the first piece of research undertaken into abuses within faith organisations. We need to learn from previous research.** Core considerations include taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach; managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be; engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in and support of the process where possible; and paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes. **It would be useful for the commissioners involved in ongoing research projects and inquiries around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken.** This could be done in a closed reflective session under Chatham House rules.

4. **In commissioning research, it is important to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and of the likely time commitment involved. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process.**

5. **Phase 2 should have clear Terms of Reference which set the research in its policy context. These should clarify the purpose of the research, the policy decisions or actions it will influence, and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda.**

6. **Steps should be taken to ensure that Phase 2 is closely aligned with any oral history work undertaken with survivors.** Without close collaboration, it will be difficult to understand how individual allegations were addressed in practice, or to understand the extent of allegations of abuse.

7. **Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset.**

Appendix 1: Stakeholders who participated in discussions

We circulated information and updates about the research to all stakeholders originally supplied to us by the HCCA, to the organisations listed on the Charities Commission list as having a religious purpose, and to other faith organisations whose contact details have been obtained through online searches. All communications have included an invitation for stakeholders to contact us if they would like to discuss the research.

We also issued direct invitations requesting meetings to the main denominations (Church of Ireland, Catholic church, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Free Presbyterian, Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish organisations), and senior staff in the Health and Social Care Trusts, Department of Health, Department of Justice and Public Prosecution Service.

The list of stakeholders who have met with us is provided below in Table 42.

Table 41: List of stakeholders who participated in discussions

Stakeholder group	Name
Faith organisations	
Baptist	Dave Ramsey (Association Director)
Catholic Church	Archbishop Eamon Martin (Archdiocese of Armagh)
	Stephen Sherry (Director of Safeguarding)
	Bishop Donal McKeown (Diocese of Derry)
	Bishop Eugene O'Hagan (Diocesan Chancellor, Diocese of Down and Connor)
	Philip O'Hara (Diocese of Down and Connor Designated Liaison person for Safeguarding)
Catholic Orders	Mary Tallon (Coordinator of Safeguarding, Dominican Provincialate)
	Cait O'Leary (Province Leader, Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd)
National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland	Aidan Gordon (CEO)
Church of Ireland	Gillian Taylor (Safeguarding Officer, NI)
	Niall Moore (Safeguarding Officer, Ireland)
Evangelical Church Alliance	David Smyth (NI Lead)
Methodist	Rev. Heather Morris (Secretary of Conference)
	Nicky Blair (Safeguarding Officer)
Presbyterian	Jayne Bellingham (Acting Head of Safeguarding)
	Dermot Parsons (Director of Care)
Health and Social Care Trusts and Department of Health	
	Marian Hall (Strategic Planning and Performance Group, Dept. of Health)
	Lynsey Armstrong (Head of Child Protection, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Unit, Dept of Health)
	Eilis McDaniel (Director of Family and Children's Policy, Dept. of Health)
	Doreen Bacon [Business & Governance Manager, Children & Young People's Division, NHSCT]
	Ann-Marie McKinney [WHSCT]

	Catherine Weaver [Head of Information Governance, SHSCT]
	Sonya McGuckin [BHSCT]
	Marie Campbell [BHSCT]
	Margaret Lynch [SPPS]
	Jim McLean [BHSCT]
	Catherine Beatty [BHSCT]
	Lisa Campbell [SHSCT]
	Rena Stanley [SESCT]
Justice	
Department of Justice	Maura Campbell (Head of Criminal Justice and IDWG member)
Public prosecution	Marianne O'Kane
	Catherine Kierans (Assistant Director for the Serious Crime Unit)
PSNI	Jordan Piper (Temporary Detective Superintendent Public Protection Branch, Crime Department)
	Lauren Burke (Detective Superintendent Public Protection Branch, Crime Department)
PRONI	
	Matthew Woods
	Graham Jackson
	David Huddleston (Acting PRONI Director)
Other stakeholders	
Thirty-One Eight	Leigh McFarlane (Public Policy and research manager)
Family Spectrum	Willie Patterson

APPENDIX: LEGAL ISSUES

Draft: Not for Circulation Without Permission

Máiréad Enright

March 13 2025.

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Introduction

This document discusses past legal frameworks relevant to the question of child abuse in faith settings as they existed in Northern Ireland. However, relatively little discussion in this document is entirely specific to child abuse in faith settings. Instead, child abuse in faith settings is addressed using law which is also relevant outside of specific religious contexts. Although much of the discussion in this document will also be relevant to children who lived in residential institutions, the focus is on those who were living with their families in private households at the time the abuse took place.[2] This document focuses on law relevant to cases of abuse where the perpetrator and the victim were not members of the same nuclear family (i.e. parent-child or sibling). It does not currently discuss schools, hospitals, or the particular position of disabled children. Further research is required here.

It is important to note that, for the greater part of the period under study, child-specific laws, particularly in the area of child protection, addressed individuals aged under 16 or 17, rather than those under 18, as would be expected today.

The document is in three main sections. In structuring them, the document compares the law as it was between 1922 and 2001, with the law as it is now. It offers comparisons with the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, which came into force in 2009, and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which came into force in 1996. This is the key relevant legislation in force today. Section 1 discusses the law on violence against children. It shows that most conduct with which this scoping project is concerned was criminalised, in some way from the foundation of the state. This section also briefly discusses relevant civil law. Section 2 examines child protection law, focusing on public sector powers to intervene to stop and prevent child abuse. It shows that, before 1968, the law on child protection did not provide adequate powers of intervention, particularly by comparison with laws in force in England and Wales. This position gradually changed over time. Section 3 discusses state responsibilities and powers to respond to child sex abuse in faith-based settings once it was disclosed.

[2] Dedicated legislation and policy which applied to children abused while already in the care of the state is summarised in the Report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, 37-155

This includes discussion of responses to religious organisations' obligations to facilitate investigation and prosecution of crimes against children - obligations which were well-established in law in the period under study. This section also discusses some legal issues which have been considered in inquiries into child abuse in faith settings elsewhere; particularly issues related to the canon law of the Catholic church, and to difficulties in prosecuting 'historical' claims or pursuing them in the civil courts. It is important to note that the legislative picture around child protection and criminal law is complex; in some places it has mirrored the law in the Republic of Ireland, England and Wales, while in others it has been very different. For much of Northern Irish history, the child protection framework has been something of a legislative hodgepodge, rather than a deliberately-designed streamlined framework.

Identifying the relevant legal frameworks applicable between 1922 and 1996 matters because it allows us to assess (i) the state's and related agents' knowledge and understanding of particular kinds of harms to children and (ii) the duties and powers of adults, particularly public servants and church officials, to address those harms.[3] However, it is also important to evaluate the adequacy of those frameworks, especially as they stood following the coming into force of the European Convention of Human Rights in September 1953. Under the Convention, as set out in *O'Keeffe v. Ireland*,[4] the state was required to take measures to ensure that individuals were not subject to inhuman and degrading treatment. This meant, for instance, that a state which was aware of the risks of child sexual abuse, and which prosecuted such offences in its courts, was also obliged, at a minimum, to establish an effective legal framework enabling detection and reporting of such abuse.

Although this document references published policy on the implementation of relevant law where available, it does not offer any in-depth commentary on how the law was applied in practice. Further archival research and oral history will be necessary to flesh out our understanding of these issues.

Section 1: Violence Against Children

This section discusses relevant criminal law and shows that most child sexual offences recognised by Northern Ireland's law today had antecedents in statute or common law before the foundation of the state. Most of the offences discussed below, though affected by various reforms, remained on the statute books, essentially in their original form, until the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Most of these antecedents, of course, were not perfect matches for today's offences. The point here is to show that criminalisation of child abuse is not new, and that the law has long recognised a variety of offences against children, which would be broadly familiar to us today. Further archival research into cabinet papers and parliamentary debates would help to clarify lawmakers' understanding of the purposes and scope of these offences.[5] At all times between 1922 and 2001, the police and others familiar with the criminal justice system should have had broad working knowledge of long-established offences. The law in this area was repeatedly subject to public discussion and reform, which should have heightened public and professional awareness of relevant offences.

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[3] On this approach as a response to concerns about assessing past behaviour by reference to present standards see the Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report Part B.3

[4] [2014] ECHR 96. See also Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991.

[5] It is not currently possible to access a searchable online version of older Hansards of the Northern Irish Parliament. The Stormont Papers (1922-1976) website at Kings College London is currently offline.

A. Child Sexual Offences[6]

The first two columns in the table below identify existing child sexual offences under the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, and their antecedents under older legislation.[7] The focus is on offences with an adult perpetrator who was not related to the victim. Future research is needed to take account of peer, familial and domestic abuse, as relevant. The right-hand columns indicate three time-periods; 1922-1944, 1945-1968 and 1969-2001. A '✓' symbol in the right-hand column indicates that a comparable offence was recognised in law in that time period. The most important older statutes mentioned in the table are the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 (noted as CLAA) and the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 (noted as OAPA). References to these Acts indicate offences that were recognised in law long before the foundation of the state.

Offence Today under 2008 Order	**Antecedent Offences**	**1922-1944**	**1945-1968**	**1969-2001**
Article 5				
Rape of a child over 13.[8] Gender neutral offence. Penetration of child's vagina, anus or mouth with the perpetrator's penis.	Common law rape[9] of a girl.[10]	✓	✓	✓
	Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under 15 under s. 6 CLAA.[11] Age raised to 17 in 1950.[12]	✓	✓	✓
	Buggery (anal penetration, boy or girl)[13] under s. 61 OAPA.[14]	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent assault (penetration of child's mouth with perpetrator's penis).	✓	✓	✓

[6] The age of consent is not the only relevant age limit in criminal law. However, it is useful to summarise the developing law here. The age of consent to sexual contact (including indecent assault) between a male and a female was raised from thirteen to sixteen under the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. In Northern Ireland, the age of consent was raised to seventeen by the Children and Young Persons Act 1950. It was reduced again to sixteen by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Under the Homosexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 the age of consent to same-sex sexual conduct between men was twenty-one. This was reduced to seventeen under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000. Today the age of consent for all sexual contact is sixteen.

[7] Attempts are not discussed in detail here but attempt was recognised at common law, and to some extent in statute, before the Criminal Law Attempts and Conspiracy NI Order 1983 was passed.

[8] Note that a specific offence of assault with attempt to commit rape was enshrined in the Attempted Rape Act (Northern Ireland) 1960.

[9] The availability of the statutory offence of unlawful carnal knowledge means that this offence was most relevant to girls over 15 before 1950, and over 17 after 1950.

[10] The offence was codified in the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 Article 3. A man or boy could not be recognised in law as a victim of rape until the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003.

[11] Repealed by Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

[12] S. 13 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1950.

[13] In principle both consenting parties to buggery were offenders. However, a boy under 14 could not be convicted even if a court deemed that he had consented; Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 110-111.

[14] Later criminalised by Article 19 Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 Repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Assault with intent to commit buggery and attempts were also criminalised under s.62 Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and Article 20 of the Criminal Law (Northern Ireland) Order 2003; see Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 111-112.

	Indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Articles 12-15				
Article 12 - Rape of a child under 13. Gender neutral offence. Penetration of child's vagina, anus or mouth with the perpetrator's penis.	Common law rape of a girl.[15]	✓	✓	✓
	Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under 13, s. 4 CLAA. Age raised to 14 in 1950.[16]	✓	✓	✓
	Buggery (anal penetration, boy or girl) under s. 61 OAPA.[17]	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent assault (penetration of child's mouth with perpetrator's penis).	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Article 13 - Assault of a child under 13 by penetration. Vaginal or anal penetration with an object or a body part other than the perpetrator's penis.	Indecent assault under ss. 52 and 62 OAPA (both boys and girls).[18] Consent was no defence.[19]	✓	✓	✓
	Gross indecency under s. 11(1) CLAA (boys).[20]	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 Children and Young			✓

[15] A man or boy could not be recognised in law as a victim of rape until the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003.

[16] Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1950.

[17] Later criminalised by Article 19 Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Assault with intent to commit buggery and attempts were also criminalised under s.62 Offences Against the Person Act 1861; see Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 111-112.

[18] Both offences were repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Both men and women could commit an indecent assault. An indecent assault might involve, for example, touching a boy's penis, touching a girl's breasts, digital penetration of a girl's vagina or pushing a girl against the perpetrator's erect penis. An assault was indecent if right-minded people would consider the assault by itself or the accompanying circumstances indecent; Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 92-93. Today a man penetrating a child's mouth with his penis would be charged with rape, whereas in earlier periods he would be charged with indecent assault.

[19] S. 1 Criminal Law Amendment Act (Northern Ireland) 1923. See discussion in *R v. Brown* [2013] UKSC 43
A belief that the child was aged over seventeen was no defence; Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984), 90.

[20] S.11 (1). Under the Homosexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 1982, gross indecency remained an offence, even if done in private, whether either party was under 21 or where either did not consent. The offence could not be committed unless both parties were deemed to have consented. Equivalent conduct directed at a person who did not consent could constitute indecent assault; Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 112**.** Until the partial decriminalisation of sex between men under the Homosexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 1982, a boy aged fourteen or older who reported sexual activity with an older boy or man ran the risk of prosecution for gross indecency.

	Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968[21]			
Article 14 - Sexual assault of a child under 13. Sexual contact without penetration.	Indecent assault under ss. 52 and 62 OAPA (both boys and girls).	✓	✓	✓
	Gross indecency under s. 11(1) CLAA (boys).	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Article 15 - Causing/inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity	Procuring[22] a girl to have sex using threats under s. 3(1) CLAA.[23]	✓	✓	✓
	Procuring a boy to commit gross indecency with a man under s. 11 CLAA.[24]	✓	✓	✓
	Causing or encouraging the seduction of a girl under 17 under s. 21 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968.[25]			✓
	Inciting a child to engage in an act of 'gross indecency' with the perpetrator or with another person could constitute indecent conduct towards a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Articles 16-22				
Article 16 - Sexual activity with a child under 16 by an adult[26] encompassing	Indecent assault under ss. 52 and 62 OAPA (both boys and girls).	✓	✓	✓

[21] Indecent assault could include moving in such a way as to cause the victim to apprehend that they will be touched. However, beginning in 1951 with *Fairclough v. Whipp* (1951) 35 Cr App R 138, there was some difficulty where the perpetrator commanded a child to touch the perpetrator's genitals; Catarina Sjölin 'The Need to Kill Off Zombie Law: Indecent Assault, Where It Went Wrong and How to Put It Right' (2017) 81 (1) *The Journal of Criminal Law*, 50-65. This gap was remedied by the introduction of offence of indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 of the Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968; Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 91-92.

[22] 'Procured' means caused by the efforts of the accused.

[23] Note that this offence applied in any part of the world, and so could have been used in respect of offences in other jurisdictions e.g. offences perpetrated by missionaries. This offence applied to women or to a man who wanted a girl to have sex with him. This offence was repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

[24] 'A man' here could be the perpetrator or a third party. An attempt to procure a boy to commit gross indecency was an offence until the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (N.I.) Order 1983

[25] This offence could only be committed by a person having 'custody, charge or control' of the girl.

[26] Equivalent conduct towards a child aged over sixteen would be prosecuted as sexual assault, and consent would be a potential defence. Consent is no defence to this offence.

penetrative and non-penetrative sexual touching other than with a man's penis.	Gross indecency under s. 11(1) CLAA (boys).	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Article 17 - Causing/inciting a child under 16 to engage in sexual activity, whether penetrative or non-penetrative.	Procuring[27] a girl to have sex with under ss. 2 or 3 CLAA[28]	✓	✓	✓
	Procuring a boy to commit gross indecency with a man under s. 11 CLAA.[29]	✓	✓	✓
	Causing or encouraging the seduction of a girl under 17 under s. 21 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
	Inciting a child to engage in an act of 'gross indecency' with the perpetrator or with another person could constitute indecent conduct towards a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Article 18 - Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child under 16 Article 19 - Causing a child under 16 to watch a sexual act	Indecent exposure to a female under s. 4 Vagrancy Act 1824 (applied only to acts done in public)[30]	✓	✓	✓
	Indecent conduct with a child under s. 22 Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968			✓
Article 21 - Arranging or facilitating commission of a sex offence against a child under 16[31]	Procuring a **girl** to have sex using under ss. 2 or 3 CLAA[32]	✓	✓	✓
	Procuring a boy to commit gross indecency with a male perpetrator or a third party s. 11 CLAA.	✓	✓	✓

[27] 'Procured' means caused by the efforts of the accused.

[28] Note that this offence applied in any part of the world, and so could have used in respect of offences in other jurisdictions. This offence applied to women or to a man who wanted a girl to have sex with him. This offence was repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

[29] The offence applied both where offence took place with the perpetrator as well as where it took place with a third party. As above, an attempt to procure a boy to commit gross indecency was an offence until the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (N.I.) Order 1983.

[30] Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984), 106-107

[31] An attempt to procure was an offence until the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (N.I.) Order 1983.

[32] Note that this offence applied in any part of the world and so could have been used in respect of offences in other jurisdictions e.g. by missionaries working abroad. This offence applied to women or to a man who wanted a girl to have sex with him.

	Permitting one's property to be used for sexual abuse of **girls** under s. 6 CLAA.[33]	✓	✓	✓
	Aiding, abetting or counselling someone else to commit a sexual offence.			
Articles 23-32				
Offences involving abuse of a position of trust where victim is under 18	There was no such independent offence under N. Irish law before 2008 but breach of trust could be considered an aggravating factor in sentencing.			
Article 65				
Administer with substance with intent to overpower or stupefy the victim so as to enable a person to have sex with them	Administering drugs to facilitate or obtain sexual intercourse, under s. 3(3) CLAA 1885.[34]	✓	✓	✓
Article 22				
Meeting/communicating with a child following sexual grooming, or with a view to grooming them.	Not a crime in the period under study.			
Article 71				
Voyeurism	Not a crime in the period under study.			

Another set of relevant offences involve kidnap or child abduction. Again, these have antecedents in earlier law.

Offence Today	**Antecedent Offences**	**1922-1944**	**1945-1968**	**1969-2001**
Child abduction under the Child Abduction (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.	Abduction of an unmarried girl under eighteen with intent to have carnal knowledge under s. 7 CLAA.[35]	✓	✓	✓
	Abduction of a girl under s. 55 OAPA.[36]	✓	✓	✓
	Unlawful detention under s. 8(1) CLAA.[37]	✓	✓	✓
	Kidnapping at common law.[38]	✓	✓	✓

[33] This offence includes permitting a girl to be on the premises knowing that she is there to have sex with a known man or men; see Stannard, *Northern Ireland Supplement to Smith and Hogan* (SLS Legal Publications, 1984) 88-89. The offender may own, lease, manage or otherwise control the premises

[34] This offence applied to women or to a man who wanted a girl to have sex with him or with a third party. Repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

[35] Repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

[36] Repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

[37] Repealed by the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

[38] Kidnapping means taking or carrying away of one person by another, by force or fraud, without the consent of the person taken or carried away and without lawful excuse.

	False imprisonment at common law.[39]	✓	✓	✓

Another significant set of offences, related to indecent images, did not develop until later in the period under examination:

Offence Today	**Antecedent Offences**	**1922-1944**	**1945-1968**	**1969-2001**
Possession, creation and distribution of indecent photographs of children.	Protection of Children (Northern Ireland Order) 1978; Criminal Justice (Evidence, Etc.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1988; Coroners and Justice Act 2009.			✓

In principle, the law on child sexual offences could have been used to prosecute child sex abuse in faith-based settings at the time it occurred. The existence of specific offences on the statute books demonstrate official awareness that children could be exposed to sexual risks within the home, family or community.[40] Some of the older offences listed above have been successfully prosecuted in cases where disclosure or investigation has been delayed by some decades.[41] Reported examples of such convictions in cases of historical child sexual abuse in faith settings include:

- Joseph Michael Steele (indecent assault, gross indecency)[42]
- Gerald John McCallion (indecent assault)[43]
- Camillus Donovan (indecent assault)[44]
- Michael Gerard McQuillan (indecent assault, gross indecency, sexual assault)[45]
- Martin Kerr (indecent assault)[46]
- James Donaghy (indecent assault, attempted buggery)[47]
- Eugene Lewis (indecent assault)[48]
- Daniel Curran (indecent assault on a male)[49]
- Colin Finnegan (indecent assault, indecent conduct with a child and buggery)[50]
- James Donaghy (indecent assault and common assault)[51]
- Vincent Lewis (indecent assault, buggery and attempted buggery)[52]

[39] False imprisonment applies when a person is detained by force or fraud, without their consent and without lawful excuse.
[40] SS. 16-20 Children Act, 1908.
[41] In cases of this kind, the victim will often also be entitled to apply for criminal injuries compensation A CPS decision to prosecute will be required. Compensation will not be available for offences committed before the commencement of the Criminal Injuries to Persons (Compensation) Act 1968. Shortcomings of this infrastructure are discussed at IICSA Accountability and Reparations Report [D3]. On difficulties in securing a conviction without independent evidence see *R v. Judge* [2017] NICA 22.
[42] 'Belfast priest apologises for hurt caused as he faces child abuse charges', *Irish Times* February 16 1996.
[43] Gail Walker, Era of abuse comes to an end' Belfast Telegraph (Belfast, 28 November 1997)
[44] 'Priest, 75, gets four years for assault.
[45] Priest jailed for child sex abuse' (*Bishop Accountability.org* 12 November 2004)
[46] [2005] NICA 33
[47] 'Former priest guilty of sex abuse crimes' (Bishop Accountability.org 15 December 2011
[48] *R v. Eugene Lewis* [2010] NICC 30, [2013] NICA 79. The offences took place in 1963-1973.
[49] *R v. Daniel Curran* [2012] NICC, 6; [2013] NICA 1. The offences took place in 1989-1992.
[50] *R v. Colin Finnegan* [2014] NICA 20
[51] Priest James Donaghy jailed for two years for further abuse BBC News 5 July 2013. These offences took place in 1989.
[52] *R v. Vincent Lewis* [2019] NICA 26. The offences took place in 1973-1978.

- Paul Dunleavy (indecent assault, attempted buggery, gross indecency)[53]
- Gary Thompson (indecent assault)[54]
- Thomas Gillespie (indecent assault)[55]

Further research would help in understanding whether some kinds of offence are more amenable than others to prosecution in 'historical' cases. There is some evidence that a few Catholic priests, for example, were arrested and prosecuted for sexual offences in England, at the time they occurred, in the first half of the twentieth century, and that this was done under broadly the same statutory framework that applied in Northern Ireland.[56] Further research is needed to explain relevant differences in Northern Irish practice.

The nature and strength of barriers to prosecution of child sexual abuse in faith settings varied over time and will require further research. However, we can make some initial observations:

- There were social barriers to disclosing, recognising and prosecuting sexual abuse in faith settings. Some possible explanations are suggested by the wider literature including:
    - Religious organisations and personnel enjoyed significant deference and community trust. The prospect that child sexual abuse could occur in faith settings not widely discussed in public or in the media in Northern Ireland until after the Fr. Brendan Smyth case made headlines in the 1990s.
    - For the early part of the twentieth century, abused children were often seen as threats as much as victims. A child's or their family's reputation might be put in issue if their involvement in an abuse case became publicly known.
    - Criminal justice processes were not well adapted, or indeed, were hostile to the needs of children and their families.[57] Reforms – for instance, to the law of evidence[58] - were required to ensure that children could participate effectively in trial processes. Further research is required to understand the context and impact of these reforms in Northern Ireland.
- Although the authorities were aware of the phenomenon of child sexual abuse, inadequate record-keeping and statistical analysis meant that the scale of the problem may not have been officially visible until later in the twentieth century.[59] As discussed in Section 2, until the 1970s professional understanding of child abuse was dominated by a concern for physical abuse. In this context, child sexual abuse in faith settings was more likely to be overlooked.
- Available criminal offences were limited in important ways, and this made them difficult to prosecute. For instance, as set out in the table above, some offences could not be applied to boys, or to children under or over a given age. Some offences were designed around the assumption that it was possible for children to consent to sexual activity with an adult. Unlawful carnal

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[53] 'Former Christian Brother guilty of sex abuse' BBC News 12 September 2025. The offences were committed between 1964 and 1991.

[54] *R v. Thompson* [2024] NICC 40. The offences took place in 2006. Thompson was a church youth leader.

[55] *Belfast Telegraph* November 15 2024. The offences took place between 1996 and 1999.

[56] *Leigh Chronicle* January 11 1907 (Fr. William Hume); *Illustrated Police News* March 30 1912 p. 2 (Fr. Daine); *Nottingham Evening Post* April 22 1932 p. 16 (Fr. Michael Dunne); *Nottingham Journal* August 7 1943 (Fr. John Nolan); *Yorkshire Evening Post* September 1 1942 p. 8 (Fr. Gerard Croker); *Staffordshire Sentinel* July 13 1945 p. 3 (Dom Basil Whelan).

[57] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Criminal Justice Report,* Parts III-VI, p233-43

[58] Where a child could not give sworn evidence, their unsworn evidence had to be corroborated by the sworn evidence of another person; *R v. Coyle* [1926] NI 208; *R v. Campbell* [1956] QB 432. This requirement is no longer part of the law.

[59] For example, Jean M. Graham, 'Children In Care in Northern Ireland: A Statistical Study' [1980] p. 23 – notes children in care for non-accidental injury but doesn't specify sexual assault.

knowledge was subject to time limits for prosecution, and so any delay in disclosure affected opportunities for effective use of the criminal justice system.

B. Other Criminal Offences Against Children

The law on other criminal offences against children is less complex than the law on child sexual abuse. From the foundation of the state, physical abuse of a child was criminalised in the same ways as physical abuse of an adult. Relevant non-fatal offences included wounding or causing grievous bodily harm,[60] assault occasioning actual bodily harm[61] and common assault.[62] An assault on a child could be prosecuted as aggravated assault.[63] These offences did not directly criminalise infliction of emotional abuse[64] but could cover physical actions inflicting severe psychological or psychiatric harm. Assault could encompass threats[65] as well as actual use of physical force.

Specific child cruelty offences were also recognised in law at the foundation of the state. These were the common law offence of cruelty to children and the statutory offence of wilful ill-treatment or neglect of a child under sixteen.[66] This latter offence concerned the child who had been wilfully assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or exposed 'in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health (including injury to or loss of sight, or hearing, or limb, or organ of the body, and any mental derangement)'. This language remained in Northern Irish law until the 1995 Children Order. The offence had several limitations:[67]

- It only covered abuses which had what were deemed to be significant impacts on a child's health. For instance, it encompassed abuse causing severe mental illness, or 'mental derangement',[68] but did not cover emotional abuse.[69] However, prosecution was possible even if actual suffering or the likely impact of that suffering had been avoided or minimised by another person's actions.
- It only covered wilfully inflicted injuries.[70]
- It could only be committed by people having 'custody, control or charge' of the child.[71] The Children and Young Persons Act 1968 (Northern Ireland) also included an offence of cruelty to children under 16 but the emphasis was on perpetrators who had 'custody, charge or care' of the child. Under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, this language was changed so that the Act applied to anyone having 'responsibility for the child'; a phrase encompassing both those who had responsibility for a child or were liable to maintain them, and those who had care of the child. 'Custody', 'care', 'control', 'charge' and 'responsibility' indicate that the offence could also committed by adults other than a parent or guardian. From the perspective

[60] S. 18 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.
[61] S. 20 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.
[62] S. 42 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.
[63] S. 43 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.
[64] Elements of emotional abuse are now criminalised under s.2 Domestic Abuse & Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021, in the context of domestic violence.
[65] See in particular threats to kill under s. 47 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.
[66] S. 1 Prevention of Cruelty To, And Protection of Children Act 1889. This age limit was raised to seventeen by the Children and Young Persons Act 1950.
[67] See discussion in R Taylor and and L Hoyano, 'Criminal Child Maltreatment: The Case for Reform' [2012] Criminal law review 871
[68] See s. 12 Children Act 1908; S. 20 1968 Act. Repealed by Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order 2021
[69] Children and Young Persons Review Group (1979) *Report of the Children and Young Persons Review Group (Chairman: Sir Harold Black)* Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office 24
[70] Until *R v. Sheppard* [1981] AC 394, 'wilful' was interpreted as meaning intentional or deliberate. After *Shepphard* it could include advertent recklessness.
[71] S. 1 Prevention of Cruelty To, And Protection of Children Act 1889

of abuse in faith-based settings, it seems clear that abuse in some contexts came within the scope of this offence; for instance, abuse perpetrated by a teacher in a day or boarding school, by a staff member in a residential school, or by a youth leader in charge of children on a residential retreat or tour. It is unlikely that they could be applied to an individual who was simply visiting a child's school or residence; the other assault offences discussed earlier would be more relevant.

C. The role of Civil Law

From at least the 1940s, children were owed relevant duties of care in civil law, particularly by those acting *in loco parentis*. In recent years, some adult survivors have been able to bring relevant civil claims enforcing the duties that applied at the time they were abused; for instance, in negligence, assault and battery.[72]

Some 'historical' civil law cases have reached the Northern Irish courts. The Limitation (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 permits a court to allow a 'historical' case[73] to proceed,[74] notwithstanding that the limitation period has expired. In exercising its discretion, the court must have regard to a range of issues including the length of the delay, the reasons for the delay,[75] the impact on witnesses' memories, and the loss or destruction of any relevant records. In other jurisdictions, claimants have struggled to identify a defendant with legal personality, since some faith-based organisations have never been incorporated, have been wound up, or do not have any or sufficient assets.[76] Further research is required to understand obstacles to relevant civil claims in Northern Ireland, because litigation of this kind is central to understanding the scope of state and private organisations' legal responsibility to victims of child abuse.

In clerical and related lay abuse cases, the defendant is typically the faith organisation which employed or otherwise had authority over the perpetrator.[77] The organisation may have owed the claimant a duty of care, and in breaching that duty harmed the claimant. In recent years, the courts have come to recognise that the organisation can also be held 'vicariously liable' for the abuser's actions.[78] In essence the organisation is held responsible for providing the abuser with the opportunity – for instance, the access and status - to sexually abuse a child. Liability will be imposed where (i) the relationship between the organisation and the defendant is one which makes it proper for the organisation to pay for their fault and (ii) the abuse can be regarded as committed in the course of the perpetrator's employment.[79]

[72] See e.g. *Irvine v. Sisters of Nazareth* [2015] NIQB 94; *Jordan v. Bangor Grammar* [2024] NI Master 11.

[73] This includes both cases of negligence and cases where the abuse was intentional; *A v. Hoare* [2008] UKHL 6.

[74] Relevant shortcomings of the civil justice system are discussed at Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, *Accountability and Reparations Report* ch1-3, ch5, ch7-10].

[75] For instance, mental ill-health; *McClarnon v. Sisters of Nazareth* [2024] NIKB 3 or difficulties in reporting abuse in a climate where the victim is unlikely to be believed; *Larkin v. De La Salle* [2011] NIQB 129. See discussion at Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, Accountability and Reparations Report chC6.

[76] See discussion in Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Redress and Civil Litigation Report, ch 16

[77] Northern Irish law does not recognise an offence of 'reckless endangerment of children' equivalent to s. 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 (Republic of Ireland).

[78] See e.g. *Carr v. Dromore Diocesan Trust* [2021] NIQB 46 (trust vicariously liable for sexual abuse by Fr. Seamus Reid) and George Conger, 'Church of Ireland clergy abuse case settled for £1000,000, *Anglican Ink* (December 8 2023) (settlement). It was not possible to bring such a case before *Lister v. Hesley Hall* [2001] UKHL 22. Traditionally, the courts maintained that an abuser's employer or superior could not be held responsible for their sexual abuse of children.

[79] See further *Trustees of the Barry Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses v. BXB* [2023] UKSC 15

Section 2: Child Protection Law

The relevant time period in this section is 1922-1996, when the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 came into force. Three key pieces of child protection legislation preceded the Children (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995; the Children Act 1908 (1922-1950),[80] the Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1950 (1950-1969),[81] and the Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1968 (1969-1996).[82]

Historically, Northern Ireland's child protection legislation was poorly designed to respond to abuse in faith-based settings or, indeed, to other forms of extra-familial abuse. Prosecution and detention of the perpetrator was a more effective route to protection. For most of the twentieth century, the courts had a key role in legitimating action taken to protect children, including by removing them from their families and taking them into state care. Other authorities and organisations needed the courts' permission to intervene in children's lives to any great extent, and the courts decided on appropriate outcomes.[83] In England, at various points, statute granted social workers greater autonomy. For example, the Children and Young Persons Act 1969 gave local authorities significant power to decide on appropriate outcomes in child protection cases coming before the courts,[84] while the Children Act 1975 allowed local authorities to assume parental responsibility over a child in certain circumstances by making a resolution to that effect.[85] No equivalent legislation was passed in Northern Ireland in the period under examination. In Northern Ireland, there was strong political support for judicial involvement in child protection. For example, the Black Committee recommended preserving a judicial setting to protect the 'rights of children.'[86]

Key points for further research include:

- At the foundation of the state, child protection legislation in Northern Ireland took a reactive rather than a proactive approach to child abuse; it allowed the state to react once a criminal offence had already been committed. Child protection proceedings under the Children Act 1908 were closely linked to prosecution of offences against children.[87] The focus was on parental behaviour rather than children's needs. If offences were not being investigated and prosecuted, child protection law was not engaged. This changed with the Children and Young Persons Act 1950. In addition to intervening where the child was the victim of certain criminal offences, the courts could now intervene where a child was deemed in need of 'care, protection or control',[88] including where they were 'exposed to moral danger'.[89] In 1979, the Black Review noted this short-coming in the legislation; that the law tended to protect the child who had already been abused or neglected and did not authorise action to prevent abuse

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[80] The 1950 Act commenced on February 14 1950

[81] The 1968 Act commenced on December 12 1968

[82] The 1995 Order commenced on November 4 1996

[83] Harold Black, *Legislation and Services for Children and Young Persons in Northern Ireland : A Consultative Document for the Children and Young Persons Review Group.* Belfast: HMSO, 1977, 17

[84] Greg *Kelly*, '*Social Work and the Courts in Northern Ireland*' in Howard Parker (ed) Social Work and the Courts. (Edward Arnold, 1979) 178-179. See also Harold Black, *Legislation and Services for Children and Young Persons in Northern Ireland: A Consultative Document for the Children and Young Persons Review Group.* Belfast: HMSO, 1977, 9.

[85] S. 57 Children Act 1975

[86] Harold Black, *Legislation and Services for Children and Young Persons in Northern Ireland : A Consultative Document for the Children and Young Persons Review Group.* Belfast: HMSO, 1977, 13-15. See also CAB/4/1398 May 30 1968

[87] Relevant crimes included any offence involving bodily injury and any sexual offence under the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 (see Schedule 1 1908 Act).

[88] S. 63 1950 Act, continued as S.95 of the 1968 Act.

[89] S. 62 1950 Act

or neglect.[90] In this respect, the development of child protection law in Northern Ireland had fallen behind that in England.[91] Today, by contrast, court action is possible under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 where there are reasonable grounds to believe child is suffering or *is likely* to suffer significant harm (emphasis mine). In addition, concepts of harm to children are now more broadly defined than under the old criminal law; the Order may be engaged where a child experiences 'ill-treatment or impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural)'. [92]

- Child removal was not appropriate in cases where the abuser was not part of the child's family. The 1908 Act focused on enabling short-term or longer-term child removal by the courts, and this was inappropriate in cases where the child's parents or caregivers were not themselves privy to the abuse[93] or were not otherwise deemed to be failing in their duties to the child. Although the 1908, Act, for example, permitted intervention when 'anyone' committed a relevant crime against a child, the child could not be removed if the parents were not involved in the abuse. [94] When 1950 Act expanded the courts' child protection jurisdiction, again, the courts could only intervene where the child's parents were deemed 'unfit' or 'not exercising proper care or guardianship'. This remained the case under the 1968 Act, [95] which referred to a child who was 'not receiving such care, protection or control as a good parent may reasonably be expected to give or... [was] beyond the control of his parent or guardian'. [96] Non-consensual removal of a child from parents and loss of parental rights was only tolerated where a court was satisfied the welfare of the child was at grave risk and could not reasonably be protected in any other way. [97] As the law evolved, the courts obtained powers to require parents to exercise 'proper care', or to enable a child in need of care or protection to be supervised by a probation officer while continuing to live at home. [98] Arrangements could also be voluntarily agreed with parents. [99] More research is required to understand whether and how these arrangements could have been used in cases of abuse in faith-based settings. In particular, further research should seek to understand whether the inadequacy of available statutory remedies affected social services' responses in any cases where abuse in faith-based settings was raised.

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[90] Children and Young Persons Review Group (1979) *Report of the Children and Young Persons Review Group (Chairman: Sir Harold Black)* Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 25

[91] s. 1 (2) Children and Young Persons Act 1969

[92] Article 2(2), Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

[93] See e.g. S. 21(1) Children Act 1908.

[94] In theory, other elements of the Act could also have been relevant. A child aged under 14 affected by abuse might also come before the juvenile court because they were deemed 'beyond control' under s. 58(4) 1908 Act. Then the court, inquiring into their home circumstances, might discover evidence indicating abuse. In such cases, even if the child was not removed from their home, they could still be placed under the supervision of a probation officer. However, a child could not come before the court under this section except on the application of their parents. There was no equivalent power where the child was aged over 14; Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938). A child who had run away from home to escape abuse might come to the court's attention under s. 58(1), which dealt with wandering.

[95] S. 93 1968 Act

[96] SS 93(1) and (2) 1968 Act.

[97] Children and Young Persons Review Group (1979) *Report of the Children and Young Persons Review Group (Chairman: Sir Harold Black)* Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 14. See s. 95, 1968 Act

[98] SS. 81, 82, 95(1), 96(1), 97(1) and Schedule 3 1968 Act.

[99] Children and Young Persons Review Group (1979) *Report of the Children and Young Persons Review Group (Chairman: Sir Harold Black)* Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 18

- Historically, child protection law was closely integrated with juvenile justice.[100] In the early part of the century, powers of intervention in the family were often framed and understood through the lens of prevention of 'juvenile delinquency'. [101] So, for instance, the Lynn Committee did not discuss child sexual abuse at any length, save for observing that some neglected children were more 'vicious' and 'immoral' than some child offenders. The White Paper which preceded the Children and Young Persons Act 1950 was dominated by the question of 'juvenile delinquency'. [102] This focus is likely to have affected the authorities' capacity to recognise and act on child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and to propose appropriate reforms
- In Northern Ireland during the twentieth century, child protection legislation was reformed sooner and more frequently than the equivalent legislation in the Republic of Ireland, which did not make significant amendments to the Children Act 1908 until 1991.[103] However, reforms to child protection law in Northern Ireland lagged behind those enacted in England and Wales,[104] despite the principle of parity of social services and standards established by the Government of Ireland Act 1921.[105] Comparative gaps in legislative provision were especially acute between 1933 and 1950, and again between 1968[106] and 1996. Further consideration of archival sources held at PRONI would help in understanding the reasons for delays in reforming relevant legislation.
- For the bulk of the period under examination, child protection legislation did not foreground children's rights. The 1950 Act, for example, bound the court to have regard to the 'welfare' of every child it dealt with,[107] but this did not mean that the child's views were central to proceedings.

In addition, the framework for implementation of the legislation meant that child abuse in faith settings was unlikely to be detected or addressed by relevant courts:

- The courts were not always well placed to address child abuse. In the early part of the century children who were victims of crime were dealt with in the ordinary courts. [108] Even the juvenile courts[109] were often poorly equipped to assist such children and, in particular, to detect child abuse, including abuse in faith-based settings, in cases where it was not directly in issue.

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[100] The Black Committee (1979) recommended separation of the two systems. However, its recommendations were shelved following the Kincora scandal. See David O'Mahony and Frieder Dünkel, 'Northern Ireland' in *European Research on Restorative Juvenile Justice* (European Council for Juvenile Justice, 2015) 125.

[101] See e.g. Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938) 11-12.

[102] 'Moral and Physical Danger' are discussed in *The Protection and Welfare of the Young and the Treatment of the Young Offender* (Ministry of Home Affairs, 1948) at pp 18-19.

[103] The Act underpinned child protection law in Ireland until the Chid Care Act 1991. Its last vestiges were removed by the Children Act 2001.

[104] Brian Caul, *A comparative study of the juvenile justice systems of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Trinity College Dublin, 1984, 96

[105] John Pinkerton, 'From parity to subsidiarity? children's policy in Northern Ireland under New Labour: the case of child welfare' (2003) Children & Society, 17: 254, 258 (largely discussing juvenile justice)

[106] Harold Black, *Legislation and Services for Children and Young Persons in Northern Ireland : A Consultative Document for the Children and Young Persons Review Group.* Belfast: HMSO, 1977, 12. Child protection law was not reformed in step with English law even under direct rule.

[107] S. 46(1).

[108] Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938), 145

[109] By 1938, these were held twice monthly in Derry, weekly in Belfast and less frequently in other districts; Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938), 45.

- The Lynn Committee raised concerns about lay justices of the peace and their understanding of social problems and child psychology. [110] Magistrates could serve until death or voluntary retirement which meant that they could be relatively old. [111] From 1942, under the Children (Juvenile Courts) Act (Northern Ireland), the juvenile courts consisted of a resident magistrate and two lay children's guardians but these acted in an advisory capacity only. Following the Children and Young Persons Act 1950, lay representatives with experience of children's issues obtained equal voting rights with the magistrates. However, they were often dominated by the resident magistrate. [112] Courts in rural areas heard fewer cases and had limited opportunities to improve their experience. [113] The Black Committee recommended the appointment of children's advocates or guardians ad litem in its 1979 Report.[114] They were introduced under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- Probation officers were an important potential point of contact between the courts and children deemed 'beyond control' or 'in need of care and protection'. Resourcing and staffing of the probation service was noted as a concern in the 1930s[115] and 1960s. [116] A full-time probation service was not introduced until the Probation Act (Northern Ireland) 1950. The first probation officer with a professional social work qualification appointed in 1966[117]
- In common with policy-makers, courts often understood child protection through the lens of juvenile delinquency. This position began to shift with the Children and Young Persons Act 1950, which obliged the courts to take account of children's welfare and gave them discretion to drop any criminal charge against a child, and to deal with them under the new 'care and protection' jurisdiction instead.[118]
    - From at least 1960, policy-makers were aware that court proceedings and surroundings were ill-suited to children's needs.[119] In 1960, the Child Welfare Council noted that children and their parents tended not to be aware of their legal rights and, in the absence of legal aid, had limited opportunity to improve their understanding.[120] The Black Report later recommended that guardians ad litem should be appointed to represent children, and that lay panel members should receive appropriate training.[121] In 1983 the Report of the Sub-Committee on Foster Care re-iterated the need to take account of children's wishes and interests, including through the appointment of guardians ad litem.[122]

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[110] Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938), 26-27

[111] Northern Ireland Child Welfare Council, *Operation of Juvenile Courts in Northern Ireland* HMSO 1960,10

[112] Northern Ireland Child Welfare Council, *Operation of Juvenile Courts in Northern Ireland* HMSO 1960,11

[113] Northern Ireland Child Welfare Council, *Operation of Juvenile Courts in Northern Ireland* HMSO 1960,8

[114] [4.6]

[115] Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938), 81-94

[116] Northern Ireland Child Welfare Council, *Operation of Juvenile Courts in Northern Ireland* HMSO 1960, 18

[117] P. 101

[118] This discretion did not exist before 1950; Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938), 37.

[119] Northern Ireland Child Welfare Council, *Operation of Juvenile Courts in Northern Ireland* HMSO 1960, 13-14 (discussing court language, speed of proceedings, lack of separate waiting rooms, courts being held e.g. in a cinema or a kitchen annexe)

[120] Northern Ireland Child Welfare Council, *Operation of Juvenile Courts in Northern Ireland* HMSO 1960, 12

[121] Children and Young Persons Review Group (1979) *Report of the Children and Young Persons Review Group (Chairman: Sir Harold Black)* Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 15

[122] *Report of the Sub-Committee on Foster Care in Northern Ireland* (1983) at [2.11]-[2.13]

- For most of the twentieth century, policymakers understood religion almost as a uniformly positive influence on children.[123] When children were removed from family homes, they were often committed to religious-run institutions. Within the child protection system for a great part of the twentieth century, religious groups were considered appropriate substitute parents. Religious personnel (for instance, Catholic priests or senior members of the Salvation Army) sat on bodies concerned with child protection, including, for example, the Lynn Committee, and the Child Welfare Council established under the Children and Young Persons Act 1950.[124] This emphasis on religion as a positive social force may have affected perceptions of abuse in faith-based settings. Further research is required.

Section 3: Notification, Reporting and Investigation

As noted above, this document does not discuss the implementation of relevant statutory frameworks in detail. The purpose of this section is to highlight some developments in understanding of state agents' and religious organisations' duties to report and investigate child abuse. Further archival research and, if necessary, oral history will be needed to understand how these duties were applied in practice, and how they interacted with prevailing understandings of child sexual abuse in faith settings.

In some circumstances, adult survivors of abuse have brought civil claims against state authorities who could have intervened to prevent or halt child sex abuse in faith-based settings but did not do so. However, even today, public authorities will generally not be liable in negligence for their own failure to act, unless they clearly assumed responsibility to prevent harm to the individual claimant.[125] So, for example, the police will generally not be held liable in negligence for past failure to investigate child sexual abuse, or past failure to protect a child from their abuser, even in circumstances where they failed to act on information that a specific child was at risk.[126] Similarly, a local authority will not be held liable for failure to act to protect a child even where they were investigating or monitoring that child or their family.[127] It may, however, be liable if, once an investigation or child care proceedings are begun, reasonable care is not taken, during the investigation or in the conduct of proceedings, to protect the child from foreseeable injury.[128]

Local authorities/HSSBs

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[123] *The Protection and Welfare of the Young and the Treatment of the Young Offender* (Ministry of Home Affairs, 1948) includes statistics and summarised anonymised case studies related to the home lives of 'juvenile delinquency'. These do not engage with questions of child sexual abuse, but sometimes mention other forms of neglect. One case study (no.57, p. 29) mentions religious involvement as a negative, but most mentions are positive.

[124] For instance, Brother S. Kelly FSC, Rev WGM Thomson and Senior Major Mary Patrick of the Salvation Army (1955-59). The Council was established February 1953 and reconstituted in 1956 by Minister (later judge) George Boyle Hanna MP.

[125] See discussion in *Kerr v. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety* [2023] NIMaster 5. On local authorities' vicarious liability for abuse of children in their care see further *Armes v. Nottinghamshire CC* [2017] UKSC 60.

[126] *Robinson v. Chief Constable of West Yorkshire* [2018] UKSC 4. The position is different if the child is taken into custody; *Kerr v. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety* [2023] NIMaster 5 [23]

[127] *N (by the Official Solicitor) v Poole Borough Council* [2019] UKSC 25, [2019] 4 All ER 581. The position is different if the child is taken into care and the local authority is acting *in loco parentis*; *Kerr v. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety* [2023] NIMaster 5 [22]

[128] *Barrett v. London Borough of Enfield* [2001] 2 AC 550. See further Richard Scorer 'Litigation for Failure to Remove.' *Justice for Children and Families: A Developmental Perspective* (2018): 110.

At the foundation of the state, children's social services were provided by local authorities.[129] Integrated Health and Social Services Boards (HSSBs) were introduced in October 1973 under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972.[130] These brought health and personal social services together under a unified administration. Four Boards were established, across four geographic areas; Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western. Boards became responsible for all social work staff, nurses, hospital medical and ancillary staff, GPs and school heath services and teachers in special care schools.[131] Boards were accountable to the Department for Health and Social Services for child care.[132] Area Child Protection Committees (previously Area Executive Teams) were established in 1975. [133]

Under the 1908 Act, local authorities could initiate court proceedings in child protection cases. However, they had no duty to consider initiating such proceedings until the 1950 Act. Under the 1950 Act, they could decide not to bring a case if they were satisfied that such action was not in the child's best interests or that some other agency was already bringing the case. Other relevant agencies included the NSPCC. The position remained the same under the 1968 Act.

Preventive duties were recognised later in the twentieth century. Under the 1950 Act, a welfare authority which decided not to bring a child before the court was bound 'in practice' to visit and offer support[134] but there was no statutory obligation to do so. The 1968 Act contained a new general duty of preventive intervention, which was not directly tied to court proceedings.[135] In addition to visiting and offering support, welfare authorities, and later HSSBs, had an obligation to make advice, guidance and assistance available to children at risk. In theory, in the course of exercising this duty, Board staff could have become aware of child sex abuse in faith-based settings.

The law was also slow to impose statutory duties of investigation. Under the 1968 Act, Health and Social Services Boards had a statutory duty to investigate situations where it was believed a child was at risk and grounds for bringing proceedings might exist.[136] This duty was triggered where the Board received information suggesting a child might be in need of care, protection or control, unless it was 'satisfied that such inquiries are unnecessary'. Boards had a further duty to investigate cases referred to them by the RUC, [137] while the RUC in turn had a corresponding statutory duty to notify the welfare authority of children in need of advice, guidance or assistance even where they were not to be brought before a court.[138] Where inquiries showed that the child was in need of support, the Board should take the appropriate action, whether preventive, or by way of court proceedings.

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[129] Responsible to the Department of Home Affairs under the 1950 Act; Eileen Evason et al. *Social Need and Social Provision in N. Ireland : (Social Security, Personal Social Services, Health and Education),* New University of Ulster (1976) 144

[130] The August 1978 Circular HSS (CCB) 5/78 suggested that integrated structure in NI should make communication easier than elsewhere; Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 17

[131] Most school teachers were the responsibility of the education and library boards.

[132] Mary McColgan 'The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995: Considerations of the legislative, economic and political, organisational and social policy contexts.' *Children and Youth Services Review* 17.5-6 (1995): 637, 640

[133] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 46

[134] Robert Moore '1968 Act' (1969) 20 *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly* 333, 339. Moore was the Belfast Welfare Authority Children's Officer.

[135] S. 164(1) 1968 Act. See e.g. Fred Powell 'The Effect of the Northern Ireland Civil Conflict on Child Welfare' (1980) 23(2) *International Social Work* 25 re: preventive powers

[136] S. 94(2) but also see 103(1) and 163(2)

[137] SS. 163(1)-(2)

[138] S. 163

Although the relevant legislation did not change substantively until 1996, there were important shifts in interpretation and application. Guidance for social services on implementation of statutory child protection duties began to be published in the 1970s. In 1971, 1973 and 1974 the Chief Medical Officer issued circular letters concerning non-accidental injury to children. In April 1975, the Department of Health and Social Services issued its first circular on Non-Accidental Injury to Children.[139] The circular was issued to senior officers of all Boards, all GPs and relevant professional associations. Boards were asked to ensure adequate training and guidance for all field staff in hospital and community nursing, doctors, health visitors and daycare services. It seems that policy focus at this time, including in Great Britain, was primarily on physical abuse of children within the family. [140] It is, however, clear that social workers were officially encouraged to investigate at an early stage where any child showed signs of being 'at risk'. For instance, an Eastern HSSB[141] handbook on mandatory procedures in respect of non-accidentally injured children, published in early November 1977[142] encouraged action where there was a 'suspicion' that a child had been injured or was at risk of injury.[143] By this time, [144] a central register and inquiry register were established to facilitate record-keeping.[145] An Area Review Committee had responsibility for monitoring case conferences and adherence to procedures. The handbook set out procedures for record-keeping; medical examination; reporting to the local police department; application for 'place of safety orders' and communication with a child's doctor, teacher, parents, and the local NSPCC. The handbook also set out a clear expectation that GPs, school principals and nursing officers would inform the District Social Services Officer of cases of suspected child abuse, and the handbook described clear procedures for reporting. Confirmed cases of abuse were to be reported to police immediately, with an expectation that investigation would begin without delay, while suspected cases were to be reported within 24 hours, and a case conference convened to determine appropriate actions. The 1979 Campbell Report[146] demonstrates that these procedures took some time to bed in. As examples, the Report expressed concerns about; GPs' and consultant

[139] HSS (Gen.1) 1/75**.** Based on LASSL (74) 13 issued in England and Wales. Issued following Tunbridge Wells Study Group and Maria Cowell case.

[140]See e.g. Children and Young Persons Review Group (1979) *Report of the Children and Young Persons Review Group (Chairman: Sir Harold Black)* Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 24 noting that the recommendations of the 1977 Select Committee on Violence in the Family had been circulated to relevant Northern Irish agencies.

[141] Covering Belfast, Down and Lisburn

[142] Reproduced in Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 74-88

[143] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 14-15. A draft of the handbook was circulated the previous year. All districts were issued with the handbook, told procedures were mandatory and superseded previous guidance. Copies issued to consultants, registrars, SHOs and casualty departments, voluntary agencies and the probation service.

[144] As an indication of numbers, the Report found that about 10 case conferences a month were held in in East Belfast and Castlereagh District. 60 children were on the register in that district and 200 were on the register from the whole Board area; Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 21.

[145] The new Circular (CCB) 1/78 issued by the DHSS also emphasised the importance of record keeping and case review. See discussion in DHSS Social Work Advisory Group, *Child Abuse Registers in Northern Ireland* (Belfast, 1983).

[146] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979).

psychiatrists' engagement with case conferences;[147] and awareness of child abuse among health and social services staff; [148] need for training of school-teachers and magistrates.[149]

The Eastern Health and Social Services Board 1987 'minimum code of practice'[150] was broadly comparable in content to the 1977 handbook. Again, it set out timelines for notification of suspicions within social services and to other agencies including the police, [151] and for agreeing plans of action.[152] It prescribed reporting procedures for teachers,[153] probation officers, [154] voluntary social workers, [155] and healthcare workers[156] in cases where child abuse was suspected. It emphasised that child abuse cases should be handled by experienced trained staff. [157] It prescribed processes for case conferences.[158] It clarified that confidentiality should not be a barrier where child safety was in jeopardy.[159]

By *Co-operating to Protect Children*, issued by the DHSS in 1989,[160] it was clear that social services were expected to recognise an expansive definition of child abuse. As well as physical abuse, social workers were concerned with sexual and emotional abuse ('severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child cases by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection') and children whose circumstances were of grave concern even if they did not fit prevailing definitions of abuse.[161] These guidelines contained a dedicated chapter discussing child sexual abuse,[162] and promoted awareness of the dynamics of abuse by close contacts of the family.[163] It also reiterated advice about ensuring that an inappropriate concern with confidentiality did not operate

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[147] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 21

[148] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 67

[149] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 68

[150] Belfast, Down, Lisburn.

[151] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 9-10

[152] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977),4

[153] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 18

[154] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 21

[155] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 11

[156] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 12-15

[157] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 3

[158] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 22-23

[159] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 5. Confidentiality was a particular concern for doctors. In the 1970s the Medical Defence Union confirmed that GPs would be immune from prosecution if they released confidential information on behalf of an abused child; Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 16

[160] Issued under the cover of circular HSS (CC) 4/89.

[161] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 5

[162] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 1. Specific guidelines are provided in Part Five.

[163] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 29

as a barrier to protection. This publication was also clear that children's welfare was a paramount consideration, [164] that they had a right to be consulted and involved in decision-making related to their welfare,[165] and that parents had rights to respect, information and participation.[166] In keeping with established policy, *Co-operating to Protect Children* stressed investigative[167] and preventive duties;[168] restated the principle of interagency working[169] and emphasised that a child should be entered on child protection register if their situation indicated abuse or gave rise to grave concern.[170]

Further research is needed to understand how, if at all, the changes described here affected social services' responses to abuse in faith-based settings. In addition, further research is needed to understand the relationship between responses to abuse in faith-based settings and obstacles to implementation of social services' duties, and their evolution over the period under study. In the decades after the foundation of the state, for instance, concerns were raised about social workers' access to formal training. From 1969 onwards, social work academics raised concerns about the impact of armed conflict on social work practice; issues included growing mistrust of central government, difficulties in recruiting social workers,[171] lack of clear authority structures and growing reliance on community organisations.[172] A 1977 Review Group noted that social agencies in Northern Ireland were under severe pressure.[173] It noted that 'civil unrest' and '[acute] demand on scarce national resources' limited possibilities for change.[174] The 1979 Campbell Inquiry noted that child protection social workers were affected by lack of resources and pressure of work.[175] At the same time, there is evidence that social work was increasingly professionalised from the 1970s onwards.[176] Finally, the ongoing conflict meant that '[s]ome of the simplest tasks – making domiciliary visits, arranging transport, maintaining hospital visiting arrangements – [were] difficult and sometimes impossible [particularly in Belfast].'[177] Researchers have not, so far, examined the specific impacts of

[164] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 2

[165] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 3

[166] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 3

[167]DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 7

[168] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 7

[169] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 3

[170] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 41

[171] Eileen Evason et al. *Social Need and Social Provision in N. Ireland : (Social Security, Personal Social Services, Health and Education),* New University of Ulster (1976) 163-164, 166

[172] Eileen Evason et al. *Social Need and Social Provision in N. Ireland : (Social Security, Personal Social Services, Health and Education),* New University of Ulster (1976) 105-107

[173] Harold Black, *Legislation and Services for Children and Young Persons in Northern Ireland : A Consultative Document for the Children and Young Persons Review Group.* Belfast: HMSO, 1977, 2

[174] Harold Black, *Legislation and Services for Children and Young Persons in Northern Ireland : A Consultative Document for the Children and Young Persons Review Group.* Belfast: HMSO, 1977, 4

[175] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 22, 46-47

[176] John Pinkerton 'Exploring history in the social ecology of care leaving: Northern Ireland as illustration.' *Child & Family Social Work* 26.2 (2021): 270, 274-275

[177] Colin Campbell, *Concern for Children: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Ireland* (1979), 66

these factors on social workers' capacity to detect and address child abuse in faith settings, but they are likely to have played a role.

Police

The role of the police in addressing child sexual abuse and other forms of child abuse in Northern Ireland is poorly documented in the academic literature. Further research, including archival research, is required. In addition to their role in investigating and prosecuting relevant offences, it is important to understand how the police exercised their powers of emergency intervention, and their approach to co-operation with social services.

The police were empowered to bring children in need of care and protection before the juvenile courts.[178] They also had powers to effect entry and arrest where necessary to protect a child,[179] and they had statutory powers in respect of 'place of safety orders'[180] which could be obtained where a child needed to be removed from a dangerous situation, to facilitate further investigation.[181] Where a place of safety order was made, the police were empowered to arrest the perpetrator(s) and bring them before a court.[182]

Until the 1970s, the RUC had no specialist child sex abuse investigation unit.[183] In the 1980s, police began to receive guidance on working with children, including in developing approaches to interviews which were congruent with children's needs. The RUC reviewed their arrangements for handling child abuse and sexual offences and established a number of special Child Abuse and Sexual Investigation Units.[184] By the 1990s, statistics suggest a high level of police involvement in reported child sexual abuse cases. A study published in 1992 examined 408 new cases of verified (rather than suspected or alleged) child sexual abuse reported to professional sources in Northern Ireland during 1987.[185] Police were notified in 96.4% of these cases, and the offender had already been charged in 47.8%. The study did not refer to abuse in faith-based settings.

Gaps in communication between police and social services may have meant that cases of abuse in faith-based settings were missed. Cases of abuse which were reported to social services may not necessarily have been referred to the police, even where a crime was clearly involved. An expectation of co-operation between police and social services was enshrined in statute by the 1968 Act. The Act recognised an RUC duty to notify the welfare authority of child in need of guidance or assistance for

[178] s. 58(1) 1908 Act.
[179] 32, 99, 100, 101 and 180(1) 1968 Act.
[180] S. 67 1908 Act. 'Place of safety' included a workhouse, police station, hospital, surgery or 'any other suitable place', but did not include remand homes; Lynn, *Report of the Committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young Offender* (HMSO: Belfast, 1938), 145. See also ss.32 and 99, 1968 Act.
[181] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 9. By 1992 there was some concern that place of safety orders were being used otherwise than in emergencies; McColgan and Salter, *Place of Safety Orders in Northern Ireland* DHSS (NI) 1992, 8. Greg Kelly, 'Patterns of care: The first twelve months.' in *The State as Parent: International Research Perspectives on Interventions with Young Persons*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1989 401, 403 citing Jean Graham (1980) *Children In Care in Northern Ireland: A Statistical Study.*
[182] S. 32(2) 1968 Act
[183] Police Ombudsman (2022) 'Police Failures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse at Kincora Boys' Home'. These were referred to as Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry Units.
[184] DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 14
[185] M. T Kennedy, and M. K. C. Manwell. 'The pattern of child sexual abuse in Northern Ireland.' *Child Abuse Review* 1.2 (1992): 89-101.

any reason.[186] This was in keeping with the introduction of preventive duties under the Act. By the 1980s, the clear national policy was that child abuse cases should be jointly assessed and investigated with social services.[187] The Eastern Health and Social Services Board 1987 'minimum standards' document, to this effect, stated that police would notify social services of confirmed or suspected cases coming to their notice. [188] Cases of suspicion or risk of abuse should be notified to police within 24 hours, letting police know of the decision as to what immediate action is to be taken and the date of case conference. Following discussion at the case conference, police would decide what action they need to take, if any.[189] Confirmed cases should be reported to police immediately and investigations were expected to begin without delay[190] A Protocol for Joint Investigation of child sexual abuse cases by social workers and police was introduced in 1991. However, the Police Ombudsman has recently reported that RUC working relationships with social services were not formalised until 1992.[191]

Religious Organisations

Religious organisations had no particular legal obligations to report child abuse, in the period under discussion. Unlike the Republic of Ireland, there is currently no dedicated 'mandatory reporting law' in Northern Ireland.[192]

In recent years, concerns have been raised that religious actor have often assisted perpetrators of child sexual offences to escape criminal liability. Where an individual or individuals[193] in authority in a religious institution facilitated abuse – for instance in transferring known perpetrators to new locations where they committed new offences against other children - they may have been secondarily liable for the perpetrators' offences. The complexity of religious networks may make it difficult to identify who is responsible under criminal law.[194]

The general law is that someone who intentionally[195] aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission of an offence, knowing the type of crime involved, can be tried, convicted and punished as if they were a principal offender.[196] Prosecution was also possible where an individual in was an 'accessory after

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[186] s. 163 of the 1968 Act

[187] See Home Office Circular 52/1988 (published simultaneously with the report of the Cleveland Inquiry) and Home Office Circular 67/1989. See also the Agreed Joint Statement of the Working Party of Association of Police Surgeons of Great Britain and the British Paediatric Association.

[188] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 8

[189] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 8

[190] Eastern Health and Social Services Board, *Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Non-Accidental Injury* (1977), 8

[191] Police Ombudsman (2022) 'Police Failures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse at Kincora Boys' Home'.

[192] Note the IICSA's recommendations on a mandatory reporting law for England and Wales. Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse Part F6.

[193] On possibilities for corporate liability of a church see John Stannard, 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 259, 268-269. The same arguments apply to 'accessories after the fact'.

[194] John Stannard, 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 259, 269 – 272.

[195] 'Intentionally' here does not mean that they approved of child sex abuse, but that they foresaw that their actions would enable the commission of a crime or wilfully turned a blind eye to it; John Stannard, 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 259, 263-264.

[196] Stannard notes difficulties in identifying an appropriate defendant where multiple individuals were involved; John Stannard, 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 259, 264.

the fact'. [197] This means that without any lawful excuse and believing the perpetrator to be guilty of an offence, they did something intending to prevent or impede the perpetrator's arrest and prosecution.[198] Obstructing the police was also an offence under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994.

In addition, until 1967, failure to report a felony[199] to the police amounted to the old common law offence of misprision of felony. After 1967,[200] it was an offence to withhold information from the police without reasonable excuse, where a serious offence had been committed and the information withheld was likely to secure, or materially assist in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of the person for that offence.[201] There is no evidence that this offence has been used in respect of failure to disclose child sexual abuse.[202]

Further research would be useful in determining whether relevant prosecutions have been considered or pursued.

<u>Catholic Church</u>

Previous inquiries have highlighted obstacles to state detection and prosecution of child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, within the Catholic church. These relate particularly to the period before publication of *Our Children Our Church* (2005) and the establishment of the NBSCCCI[203] in 2006.[204] Many of these findings chime with those of initial NSBCCC diocesan reviews.[205] They included:

- Framing of child sexual abuse, in particular, not as a crime but as a sin which should be met with efforts to heal the perpetrator (Australian Royal Commission).[206]
- Subordinating child protection to questions of secrecy and preservation of individual and institutional reputation (Ferns Inquiry).
- Hierarchical and complex institutional structures which inhibited clear communication within dioceses and within networks of religious organisations (HIAI module on Fr. Brendan Smyth) and made it difficult to discipline or supervise offenders (Australian Royal Commission).[207]
- Allowing significant discretion to bishops on whether and how to implement nationally-agreed church safeguarding policy. Lack of Vatican support for the Irish Bishop's Conference's agreement to legislate to establish binding all-island policy on mandatory reporting to civil

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[197] Principle established in *R. v. Jones* [1949] 1 KB 194.

[198] John Stannard, 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 259, 265

[199] Note that not all sexual offences were felonies.

[200] S. 5(1) Criminal Law Act 1967. Serious arrestable offences were likely to include cases of child abuse, DHSS *Co-operating to protect children: a guide for Health and Social Services Boards on the management of child abuse* (1989), 13.

[201] Interview with Sean Brady cited in John Stannard, 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 259, 267.

[202] See further Isla Wallace and Lisa Bunting, <u>*An examination of local, national and international arrangements for the mandatory reporting of child abuse: The implications for Northern Ireland*</u>. NSPCC Northern Ireland, 2007.

[203] Discussed in Mary O'Toole<u>, *Report of the Scoping Inquiry into Historical Abuse in Day and Boarding Schools Run by Religious Orders*</u> (June 2024), 29-30. General discussion of evolution of church policy post 1996 is at HSE, <u>*Audit of Safeguarding Arrangements in the Catholic Church in Ireland (Volume 1)*.</u>

[204] Current canon law on reporting is summarised at <u>Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse, *The Roman Catholic Church Investigation Report*</u>, 24-31 and 88

[205] See discussion in Amnesty International, <u>*Briefing: Child abuse in faith settings in Northern Ireland*</u>, 5

[206] <u>Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2</u>, 711-713

[207] <u>Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2</u>, 823- 827; 833-839

authorities (Cloyne inquiry and Archdiocese of Dublin Inquiry discussed this issue in relation to *Child Sexual Abuse: Framework for a Church Response* (1996)). As a matter of canon law, the Irish Bishops Conference's existing 2009 standards and guidance document *Safeguarding Children* is not binding on any diocese, religious order or missionary society.

- Prioritising particular interpretations of canon law over civil law (Cloyne Inquiry, Australian Royal Commission). This is a complex issue – it does not mean that penal procedures in canon law have been used instead (Australian Royal Commission; Archdiocese of Dublin).[208] Instead, its most important practical consequence has been that allegations of child sexual abuse were not reported to civil authorities. The Australian Royal Commission heard from some canon lawyers that nothing in canon law prohibited disclosure of offences to investigating civil authorities or required non-cooperation with those authorities. However, others noted that the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law, together with the CDF instruction *Crimen sollicitationis*[209] and the canonical instruction *Secreta Continere* imposed obligations of secrecy on those involved in canonical trials, and fed into a broader culture of secrecy within the church.[210] *Crimen* was abolished in 1983, and *Secreta Continere* in December 2019.[211] The Commission concluded that some obligations of secrecy persisted at the time of its report, particularly in jurisdictions without a relevant mandatory reporting law.[212] At the same time, bishops failed to make adequate use of penal powers under canon law to investigate claims or punish offenders (Archdiocese of Dublin Inquiry, HIAI module on Fr. Brendan Smyth). In earlier periods, this may have been due to lack of awareness of the 1922 and 1962 Vatican Instructions on investigating and trying offenders under canon law (Archdiocese of Dublin Inquiry). Procedures included in the 1983 Canon Law code were ineffective; for instance, imposing a high standard of proof and a short limitations period. The Archdiocese of Dublin Inquiry noted a lack of transparency around the procedures adopted.[213]
- Lack of proper care for victims including failure to take proper measures to protect a child witness, failure to notify one child's parents of the abuse, and failure to follow up with children's families (HIAI module on Fr. Brendan Smyth).
- Failure to report crimes to the police or health authorities even where required to do so by law (Ferns Inquiry, Cloyne Inquiry, HIAI module on Fr. Brendan Smyth).[214] The Australian Royal Commission identified the seal of the confessional as a particular obstacle to disclosure.[215]
- Undue police deference to religious authority (Archdiocese of Dublin Inquiry).

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[208] On the limitations of these processes see Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2 716-727 Relevant canon law is discussed at Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2, 49-67 and Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse, *The Roman Catholic Church Investigation Report*, C2 and Carole Holohan, 'In plain sight: Responding to the Ferns, Ryan, Murphy and Cloyne reports.' *Dublin: Amnesty International Ireland* (2011), 121-130

[209] This instruction required the maintenance of a secret archive of probative evidence in child sexual abuse cases and required destruction of detailed evidence on the priest's death or after ten years, so that only a brief factual summary and decree was preserved.

[210] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2 700-704

[211] Marci A. Hamilton (2021). Religious Practices That Have Contributed to a Culture of Secrecy Regarding Child Sex Abuse in Five Religious Organizations. *The SAGE Handbook of Domestic Violence*, 627-646.

[212] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2 705-710

[213] See also Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2, 726-729

[214] The Inquiry notes that he abused children who did not fall within its terms of reference; in their homes, at school or on excursions and trips.

[215] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2 849-872

- Failure to remove known offenders from the priesthood or from priestly duties, perhaps because of lack of clarity around a bishop's powers under canon law (Australian Royal Commission).[216] This included transferring known offenders to other dioceses or other jurisdictions, often without notifying colleagues of the risks posed by a transferred offender (HIAI module on Fr. Brendan Smyth). Transfers across jurisdictions generate difficulties in legal analysis e.g. where the responsible authority with knowledge of offences was based in the Republic of Ireland but crimes were committed in Northern Ireland. [217]

Other churches

Although there have been fewer national inquiries into child abuse in non-Catholic settings, these issues are not confined to the Catholic Church. For instance, in its discussion of the Anglican Church, the Australian Royal Commission noted the following factors as inhibiting application of the relevant law in cases of child sexual abuse:[218]

- Reluctance to break the seal of the confessional.[219]
- Lack of adequate supervision of those involved in ministry and inadequate disciplinary structures.[220]
- A culture of deference to those in clerical positions.[221]

[216] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 2, 722-725

[217] John Stannard. 'Bishops in the Dock: Child Abuse and the Irish Law of Complicity.' *Participation in Crime*. Routledge, 2016. 268.

[218] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 1

[219] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 1, 744-748

[220] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report: Religious Institutions, Vol 16, Book 1, 720 – 731 See also Keith Makin, *Independent Learning Lessons Review: John Smyth QC* (2024) https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/independent-learning-lessons-review-john-smyth-qc-november-2024.pdf#page=239.54

[221] Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Final Report: Religious Institutions,* Vol 16, Book 1, 735-739

Appendix 3: ***Types of Public Inquiry described in O'Toole (2024)***[36]

	Public or private hearing	Cross-examination of survivors	Compel witness/ documents	Power to make findings against individuals/institutions	Compensation to survivors	Average Length
Tribunal of Inquiry: (Statutory)	Public (with exceptions)	Yes, usually in public, if abusers or institutions are to be publicly named as responsible for abuse.	Yes	Yes, if they are charged with investigating whether abuse happened or who is responsible for that abuse. The fair procedures rights of a person accused of abuse create certain legal requirements that must be met before they can be named. These may be difficult to meet where they are deceased, untraceable, or incapacitated, or the events complained of happened many years ago. Tribunals cannot convict or imprison alleged abusers.	No	6 years: This an estimate based on the average time between establishment and final report of Tribunals of Inquiry established since 1990. No tribunal of Inquiry has dealt with the investigation of sexual abuse to date. If a tribunal was to deal with a large number of complaints, this may take longer than 6 years.
Commission of Investigation (Statutory) if investigating whether abuse happened and who is responsible	Private (with exceptions)	Yes, usually in private if abusers or institutions are to be publicly named.	Yes	Yes. The fair procedures rights of an accused person create certain legal requirements that must be met before they can be named. These may be difficult to meet where they are dead, untraceable, or incapacitated, or the events complained of happened many years ago. Commissions of Inquiry cannot convict or imprison alleged abusers.	No	9 years: This is the total timeframe of the Ryan Report/CICA, However, CICA's investigation of child abuse in institutions did not, for various reasons, get fully underway until 2005, and completed in 2009. CICA heard a sample of survivors' testimony in investigating selected institutions. CICA had circa 1,700 complaints and found that the process required to name alleged abusers could have taken up to 18 years to complete.
Commission of Investigation (Statutory) if investigating the handling of abuse allegations	Private (with exceptions)	Likely to be limited to the evidence about how complaints were handled. The Dublin Archdiocese & Cloyne Inquiries heard accounts of abuse as part of the background to the handling of complaints.	Yes	Where the commission is investigating the handling of allegations it will not generally name alleged abusers. While not mandated to name abusers, some abusers were named in the Dublin Archdiocese & Cloyne Inquiry Reports, predominantly where there was a criminal conviction, or they were widely identifiable.	No	3.5 years: This timeframe is based on the Dublin Archdiocese and Cloyne Inquiries, which concerned the handling of abuse allegations against a sample of 46 priests (Dublin) and 19 priests (Cloyne).
Non-statutory Inquiry (e.g. the Ferns Inquiry into the handling of abuse allegations in the diocese of Ferns)	Private	In a non-statutory Inquiry all evidence is unsworn. Where the Inquiry may make findings of serious wrongdoing against individuals, procedural rights (including the right to cross-examine) will arise. There was no cross-examination allowed in the Ferns Inquiry as it was only concerned with how allegations of abuse had been handled.	No. Modern data protection requirements may prevent voluntary production of documents to a non-statutory inquiry. Witnesses cannot be compelled to give evidence or answer questions.	Yes. However, a non-statutory inquiry could have difficulty making negative findings against named individuals or institutions because it would not have the power to compel that documents be provided or that witnesses answer questions.	No	2.5 years: This is based on the Ferns Inquiry, which investigated the handling of allegations of abuse against 21 priests.

	Public or private hearing	Cross-examination of survivors	Compel witness/ documents	Power to make findings against individuals/institutions	Compensation to survivors	Average Length
Confidential Committees as part of a Commission of Investigation	Private	No. Confidential Committees cannot make findings or name abusers or institutions, and therefore cross examination does not arise.	No	No	No	7 years on average: The Mother and Baby Homes Confidential Committee heard 550 witnesses over 5 years. CICA's Confidential Committee heard 1,090 witnesses over 9 years.
Redress Schemes (e.g. the RIRB Scheme)	Redress schemes to date have held hearings in private, where hearings are required under the scheme.	Survivors could be questioned where a hearing was held. Other redress schemes are paper-based and do not involve formal evidence.	No	No. Under the RIRB scheme it was not necessary to establish wrongdoing on the part of the Church or State to obtain compensation.	Yes	Variable
Mediation or ADR /Restorative Justice	Private	No	No	No	No. Restorative justice takes place after any criminal prosecution or civil liability is determined. Mediation/ADR takes place after any criminal prosecution.	The timeframe for mediation, depends on the cooperation between the parties and the issues being dealt with. A period of between 3 months and 2 years is suggested by some restorative justice practitioners. Each process relies on the availability of suitably trained personnel.

Appendix 4: National and International Inquiries into Non-recent institutional abuse: Key features (Keenan et al., 2023 p17-18)[37]

Table 1:
National and International Inquiries into Non-recent Institutional Abuses: Key Features (a)

TYPE OF INQUIRY	Mode	Methodology/Terms of Reference	Composition	Legal Powers	Types of Hearing	Reporting Timeframe/ Outcomes	Impact on Policy and Practice
TRIBUNAL OF INQUIRY (ROI)	Statutory	Investigates matters of urgent public importance relating to systemic wrongdoing Function is purely fact-finding and inquisitorial (no power to administer justice) Terms of Reference set by the government	Consists of one or more persons and is usually chaired by a judge or senior lawyer	Can enforce attendance and examination of witnesses (and can apply to the High Court if a person refuses to give evidence) Can compel production of documents Can authorise the legal representation of any person appearing before the Tribunal, or refuse to allow representation Can cross-examine witnesses A statement or admission cannot be used in evidence against a person in criminal proceedings. Sometimes tribunal findings can give rise to an investigation leading to independent criminal or civil proceedings	Sittings usually held in public but can, at Tribunal's discretion, be held in private if it is in the public interest to do so	Timeframe of inquiry stipulated by the government Submits report of findings to government	In many cases, Tribunal is given power to make recommendations with a view to preventing the same problem happening again
COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION (ROI)	Statutory	Investigates matters of significant public concern relating to systemic, rather than individual, wrongdoing Intended to be less expensive and speedier than a tribunal of inquiry, as based on a sample of cases Function is fact-finding and inquisitorial Terms of Reference set by the government	Consists of one or more persons and is usually chaired by a judge or senior lawyer	Seeks voluntary co-operation of witnesses, but has power to compel people to give evidence if necessary Can direct a person to provide documents Legal representation is allowed if Commission is satisfied it is necessary in interests of the investigation and fair procedures Witnesses may be cross-examined if the Commission agrees Evidence given cannot be used in criminal or other proceedings	Hearings normally conducted in private except in exceptional circumstances Less like a court of law than tribunals Private hearings can lead to less scrutiny The Ryan Commission is bespoke but had all the powers of a tribunal Two Commissions (Ryan and Mother and Baby Homes Commissions) comprised 2 separate committees: Confidential Committee and Investigative Committee. Confidential Committee (private sessions with a 'story telling' or narrative function) heard victims'/survivors' accounts in a confidential and sympathetic setting, with testimony not being contested. Investigative Committee (public and private hearings) drew on contested evidence	Terms of reference must be accompanied by statements setting out expected time and costs Submits a final report of its findings to a specified Minister Minister may request interim reports on general progress of investigation or on a particular aspect Provisions for people named in report to challenge the findings in relation to them	Report may make recommendations as required by terms of reference If no specific remit to make recommendations, the report may express views on matters of significance

17 Non-recent Institutional Abuses and Inquiries: Truth, Acknowledgement, Accountability and Procedural Justice

Table 1:

National and International Inquiries into Non-recent Institutional Abuses: Key Features (b)

TYPE OF INQUIRY	Mode	Methodology/Terms of Reference	Composition	Legal Powers	Types of Hearing	Reporting Timeframe/ Outcomes	Impact on Policy and Practice
PUBLIC INQUIRY (NI)	Statutory	Investigates matters of public concern relating to systemic wrongdoing No power to determine liability or punish any person Fact-finding or inquisitorial function Similar to the Tribunal of Inquiry in ROI Differs from the Commission of Investigation in ROI regarding the public inquiry's legal power to compel witnesses and documentation Terms of Reference set by the government	Consists of one or more persons and is usually chaired by a judge or senior lawyer	Power to compel attendance of witnesses Power to compel production of documents Legal sanctions for non-compliance, including imprisonment, fine or both Core participants are entitled to legal representation The Inquiry legal team can question witnesses at hearings. No victims or survivors are cross-examined except with permission of the Chairman No legal power to find anyone guilty of criminal offence. If information received that a crime has been committed, details are passed to police	Presumption that hearings are public, but can be private Private hearings can be used for victims/survivors to give their accounts in a confidential setting	Timeframe of inquiry stipulated by the government Submits report of findings to the government	Report may make recommendations as required by terms of reference
NON-STATUTORY INQUIRY (ROI and NI)	Non-statutory	Established into a matter of public importance Greater flexibility on procedure to enable a less formal and adversarial form of inquiry than a statutory inquiry Fact-finding or inquisitorial function Terms of Reference set by the government	Can be chaired by persons with different types of expertise to a judge	No power to compel witnesses to give evidence No power to compel witnesses to produce evidence relevant to Inquiry's work Lack of legal powers to compel witnesses and documents means greater risk that uncooperative witnesses or core participants will impede Inquiry's progress Witnesses can be cross-examined	Hearings can be public or private	Timeframe of inquiry stipulated by the government Submits report to government	Report can make recommendations relating to Inquiry terms of reference
ROYAL COMMISSION (Australia)	Statutory	Established as an investigation, independent of government, into a matter of great importance relating to systemic wrongdoing Fact-finding or inquisitorial function Similar in function to public inquiry, tribunal of inquiry or commission of investigation. Royal Commissions in Australia have statutory powers similar to those of UK public inquiries Royal Commissions usually involve research into an issue, consultations with experts within and outside government, and public consultations Terms of Reference set by the government	Chaired by one or more figures such as a judge, with commissioners appointed by government	Power to compel witnesses Power to compel production of documentation Power to cross examine witnesses Legal representation of witnesses is allowed Power to forward evidence to police	Hearings can be public or private	Timeframe of inquiry stipulated by the government Inquiry submits report to government	Report can make legal and policy recommendations

Appendix 5: Key Principles and recommendations (Keenan et al., 2023, p52-53) [38]

Key Principles and Recommendations

- **PROCEDURAL JUSTICE** – for victims/survivors based on the understanding that the lived experiences of justice processes for victims/survivors are just as important and impactful as any eventual outcomes; and for all participants, in an effort to engage affected and responsible parties in a mode of inquiry informed by truth-telling, finding answers to questions and developing meaningful and intelligible explanations.
- **A VICTIM-CENTRIC APPROACH** – there is a fundamental need to recognise the wide-ranging interests and views among a diverse group of victims/survivors and prioritise taking account of the range of individual experiences and needs recognising victims/survivors as the experts in their own experiences.
- **COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION** – Victims/survivors, representatives of other parties with primary interest in the topic being investigated, as well as those with legal, social science and other relevant expertise should comprise the panel of commissioners, appointed by open competition.
- **INFORMING VICTIM/SURVIVOR EXPECTATIONS** – governments and other actors involved in providing justice responses must reflect on the rhetoric and claims they make about their proposals to inquire into non-recent institutional abuse. Most justice initiatives are inherently inadequate, and it is only in narrow circumstances that claims to be healing (therapeutic, or comprehensive regarding the truth) can be validated. It is better to avoid over-promising and under-delivering.
- **MODULAR APPROACH** – addressing wide-ranging issues of non-recent institutional abuse can result in a multi-year investigation or inquiry with delayed outcomes. The Australian Royal Commission and other inquiries demonstrate the ability to design an inquiry to address immediate and narrow institutional contexts, and to issue specific interim reports on these topics which also feed into and extend to a broader and more systemic analysis of non-recent abuse issues that offer a more holistic and systemic examination of the issues, causes and contexts.
- **EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENCE** – in light of significant victim/survivor distrust of state-led mechanisms to address the past, and ongoing criticisms of prior approaches, there is a need to demonstrate the effective independence of any further mechanisms. This involves independent staffing, beyond the appointment of any commissioners for the inquiry, rather than seconding staff from a Department that may be under investigation or from other parts of the civil service. An open competition for hiring, and the recruitment of staff with training in trauma sensitivity, human rights law and restorative thinking as well as other relevant disciplines will significantly enhance the credibility and effectiveness of future inquiries.

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- **INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT** – an independent oversight body should be appointed to review the processes and mechanisms in place for any inquiry, irrespective of the mode.
- **'COLLABORATIVE REDRESS'** – every effort should be made to consult as widely as possible with victims/survivors and to ensure their full and meaningful participation in the design and operation of responses. Such approaches should avoid the limitations of the existing ex gratia approaches that fail to engage in effective acknowledgement of past abuses as legal wrongs.
- **TRAUMA AND CARE-INFORMED APPROACHES** – there is a need to develop new forms of truth-telling which offer supportive, trauma-informed, person-centred spaces to hear victim/survivor voices. This also means recognising the need for 'equality of arms' between victims/survivors and the state/church in terms of the provision of tailored support and legal and other resources.
- **A HOLISTIC APPROACH** – it is important that redress is comprehensive and incorporates both material (e.g. compensation; access to medical and other support services) and symbolic forms of reparation (e.g. apology). This also entails designing truth-finding measures to examine the causes, consequences and contexts of abuses as well as provide acknowledgement and accountability to victims/survivors.
- **REMOVING LEGAL BARRIERS** – prior literature recognises that the design of inquiries (including tribunals, commissions of investigation and public inquiries) can be limited in their legal impacts. In addition, non-recent abuses pose particular challenges for the use of ordinary criminal and civil law. Other jurisdictions have engaged in more extensive reform of the statute of limitations, protective cost orders, class actions, funding for civil legal aid, and victim/survivor access to archives. Further reforms and provision of resources should be considered to enable greater victim/survivor access to justice.
- **HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS** – there is a need for a response based on Ireland's national and international legal human rights obligations which recognises and addresses the abuses involved as gross violations of human rights.
- **CONSISTENCY AND FOLLOW-THROUGH** – this is required in relation to the enactment of the recommendations of inquiries or investigatory commissions such as the timely provision of monetary redress and access to personal records. It also necessitates 'joined-up' approaches taken locally, regionally and nationally.

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SECTION 2: Records held by schools

[this Executive Summary and Full report were provided to the Commissioning group in April 2025]

Executive summary

Introduction

This report was produced as an Addendum to the Phase 1 scoping study. The original specification did not include records held by schools. This was identified as an important omission because relevant allegations may be overlooked if the research only focuses on records held by faith organisations and statutory authorities.

It had been raised in the discussions with faith organisations that schools are likely to hold their own records rather than these being held by faith organisations and these were not being examined as part of the research. This was thought to be potentially true for schools run by religious orders, as well as other schools.

This additional scoping research was undertaken to explore whether schools are likely to have records relating to allegations of child abuse associated with faith organisation that are not held by other parties.

This report has been produced as a confidential document for the Commissioning group to detail what we have learned and suggested methodologies that could be used in Phase 2. It can also be shared with the members of the Inter-departmental Working Group. It is not a public facing document beyond these audiences and should be treated as strictly confidential by them. It should be read in conjunction with the Full Report.

This report was peer-reviewed by the Advisory group.

Key findings

The survey was issued to all schools in Northern Ireland. There was a response rate of 15% which is low. However, this is unsurprising given there was no preparatory engagement with schools to raise the profile of the research in advance of the invitation being issued, and the tight deadline set for data collection.

Although the research provides some useful insights into the records held by these schools, there is still an important gap in our understanding of what records the majority of schools in Northern Ireland hold about abuse involving faith organisations.

Nearly half of the schools reported substantial changes to their school structures since 1922, and this may have affected what records were retained over time as well as where they are held.

Similar to the findings of the faith organisation survey reported in the Full report, schools detailed a wide and varied range of connections between faith organisations and school life. These most often included involvement in events and assemblies, faith meetings or services, provision of altar servers and chaplaincy. Many schools said that a faith organisation was involved in the management or administration of their school; for example, as part of the Board of Governors or as Trustees.

A third of responding schools reported that they did not know whether they held any records relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation (47 schools). Some of these respondents said this reflected a lack of knowledge of what records existed from before they had personally joined the schools, or where any records might be located. Respondents said they would need to make further enquiries to be more certain.

Two-thirds of responding schools said no records relating to this type of alleged abuse exist in their school (95 schools).

Two respondents said that their organisation held records relating to allegations of abuse by someone from a faith organisation relating to the time period 1922-2010. One response related to a single school. One respondent made one submission which covered 5 schools active during this time period, but was unable to clarify how many schools the allegations related to without retrieving more detailed records. This was not possible in the timescale available for responding to the survey.

This scoping exercise has therefore identified between 2 and 6 schools connected with recorded allegations of abuse involving a faith organisation. These allegations were described as involving at least 10 perpetrators and up to 60 victims.

The volume of records held by each respondent's organisation relating to these allegations is up to one filing cabinet. The most likely types of information held are correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf; correspondence with the school's legal advisers, and correspondence with police. Both respondents noted that the faith organisation associated with the accused may also hold information. This may not necessarily be a duplicate of what is held by the school. Schools were not likely to record the outcome of the allegation unless it involved action taken within or by the school.

Schools described factors that may have affected the creation, sharing and keeping of records relevant to allegations involving faith organisations. Common themes included that approaches to record keeping in schools had changed considerably over time; records may have been lost or moved in staffing changes or due to changes in the administrative or management structure of schools; and hard copy records damaged or destroyed (either deliberately or through natural causes). School staff were more confident in speaking about recent records, particularly those relating to the time they personally had been employed at the school, but less sure about older records. The historical nature of some of the allegations means that there may be no personnel in the school with direct experience of earlier time periods who could provide relevant insight.

A clear process will need to be agreed and followed in order to access records in each school. Respondents suggested that clear communication about the purpose and process of the research, requesting access through the Education Authority, GDPR, confidentiality, understanding the purpose of the research, following appropriate data protection processes and having a clear Terms of Reference would all be important and necessary. Several respondents highlighted the need to engage with individual schools by writing to them, writing and meeting with Boards of Governors, Trustees, and CCMS to agree permissions for researchers to access records. A small number of schools suggested that only specific parties such as the Education Authority, PSNI, and individuals who the records relate to should be able to gain access to the records.

Responding schools were asked to describe any concerns they have about this work, or anticipated barriers to engagement with the data collection in Phase 2, and to make suggestions or recommendations for how to take the work forward. The concerns raised were similar to those raised by the faith organisations and statutory authorities detailed in the Full report. Many responding schools said that they had no concerns, or did not see the research as being applicable to them because they did not know of any relevant allegations of abuse involving their school and someone from a faith organisation.

Concerns raised included workload pressures and the time it would take to provide information; concerns that record keeping prior to the 1980's would be of poorer quality than in more recent times; lack of knowledge about what records exist or where they might be stored, lack of organisational memory where there had been changes over time in personnel, organisational structures and moving to different buildings; GDPR concerns and concerns that records had already been destroyed according to the relevant disposal of records schedule.

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, this scoping research has shown that some schools do hold relevant records relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation. It has shown that many schools do not know for certain whether they have records relating to relevant allegations of abuse. It has also shown that there will be similar challenges for schools in providing access to records as those outlined already in the Full report for faith organisations and statutory authorities. The research therefore reinforces the need for further investigation**.**

This additional scoping of schools described in this Addendum has therefore not changed the recommendations originally detailed in the Full report. It reinforces and strengthens these.

Our analysis still leads us to conclude that Phase 2 should not go ahead as originally envisaged. Our key recommendation is that that historical clerical child abuse should be the subject of a Statutory inquiry. The full set of recommendations, as provided in the Full report, has not changed. These are detailed below.

1. **An appropriate legal structure must put in place before Phase 2, or any review of records relating historical clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland progresses any further.** The most effective structure would be a Statutory inquiry.

2. **We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical abuse.** There should be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each.

3. **The Historical Records project is not the first piece of research undertaken into abuses within faith organisations. We need to learn from previous research.** Core considerations include taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach; managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be; engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in and support of the process where possible; and paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes. **It would be useful for the commissioners involved in ongoing research projects and inquiries around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken.** This could be done in a closed reflective session under Chatham House rules.

4. **In commissioning research, it is important to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and of the likely time commitment involved. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process.**

5. **Phase 2 should have clear Terms of Reference which set the research in its policy context. These should clarify the purpose of the research, the policy decisions or actions it will influence, and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda.**

6. **Steps should be taken to ensure that Phase 2 is closely aligned with any oral history work undertaken with survivors.** Without close collaboration, it will be difficult to understand how individual allegations were addressed in practice, or to understand the extent of allegations of abuse.

7. **Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset.**

Full report

Introduction

Purpose of this school scoping report

This report has been produced as an Addendum to the Phase 1 scoping study. The original specification did not include records held by schools. This was identified as an important omission because relevant allegations may be overlooked if the research only focuses on records held by faith organisations and statutory authorities.

It had been raised in the discussions with faith organisations that schools are likely to hold their own records rather than these being held by faith organisations and these were not being examined as part of the research. This was thought to be potentially true for schools run by religious orders, as well as other schools. This additional scoping research was undertaken to explore whether schools are likely to have records relating to allegations of child abuse associated with faith organisation that are not held by other parties.

This report has been produced as a confidential document for the Commissioning group to detail what we have learned and suggested methodologies that could be used in Phase 2. It can also be shared with the members of the Inter-departmental Working Group. It is not a public facing document beyond these audiences and should be treated as strictly confidential by them. It should be read in conjunction with the Full Report.

It should be noted that this Addendum report has not yet been peer-reviewed by the Advisory group. This will happen during May 2025, and we will advise the Commissioning group of any amendments as soon as possible.

Methodology

This additional scoping involved:

- **A detailed online survey of schools** concerning:
    - What types of connections they had with faith organisations
    - What records are held pertaining to allegations of abuse, what condition these are in and where they are located.
    - Estimates of the number of allegations, potential perpetrators and potential victims.

The research for this school scoping survey was undertaken in 2025. The methodology and how best to engage schools was discussed with DE and education representatives (Appendix 1). They provided feedback on the approach, timing and design of the questionnaire. The Advisory group also provided feedback on the draft questionnaire.

In early 2025, negotiations were underway regarding staff pay and conditions, and schools were involved in taking action 'short of a strike'. Consequently, we issued the online questionnaire at the end of March 2025 with a 2-week window for completion. It was not possible to keep the survey open for longer as this report had to be produced for the Commissioning group by 28th April 2025.

Insights provided by the online scoping survey of schools

Who responded to the survey?

The invitation to participate in the survey was issued by TEO to 1116 schools, identified by TEO from a DE database. By 17th April 2025, 209 responses had been received representing 216 schools: 74% (n=155) complete and 26% (n=54) incomplete. Some responses covered more than one school (e.g.

one Trust submitted one response with respect to the records they hold in respect of 8 schools, 5 of which were operational between 1922-2010).

The survey was issued to all schools in Northern Ireland. There was a response rate of 15% which is low, but unsurprising given the rapid turnaround of the data collection.

Responses were received from every type of school (Table 1).

Table 1: Types of school that responded to the questionnaire

Type of school	Yes (total n=155)
Controlled school	35% (n=54)
Controlled integrated	4% (n=6)
Maintained school	45% (n=70)
Grant Maintained Integrated	5% (n=8)
Irish-medium school	4% (n=6)
Other maintained school	1% (n=1)
Voluntary (grammar)	10% (n=15)

How have schools in Ireland changed over time between 1922 and 2010?

Schools were asked whether there had been any substantial change to their school structure since 1922. Just over half of the schools said nothing had changed (54%, n=75). The most common change reported was that the school had merged with another school (23%, n=32) or changed its name (18%, n=25) (Table 2). 75 respondents provided additional information about the change with some providing the old and new names of the merged schools in the space for additional comments.

Table 2: Substantial changes in school structure since 1922

Has the school's structure changed substantially since 1922?	Yes (total n=140)
Nothing has changed	54% (n=75)
The school changed its name	18% (n=25)
The school merged with another school	23% (n=32)
The type of school changed (e.g., in terms of whether it was controlled, maintained, independent etc.)	4% (n=6)
The school changed its working relationship with a faith organisation	4% (n=6)
The school ceased to exist	4% (n=5)
Something else substantial changed about the school	16% (n=22)

93% of the respondents (n=144) said that their school was active in Northern Ireland during the period of 1922-2010. 7% (n=11) were not active (i.e. these are likely to have been founded after 2010).

Activities involving faith organisations during 1922-2010

Schools were asked about links with faith organisations and how likely their students were to have participated in a range of activities (identified in Table 3 below) involving faith organisations between 1922-2010.

The most common types of activities faith organisations were involved in were events or assemblies with visiting religious speakers (77%, n=111), or church or faith meetings and services (73%, n=105) (Table 3). Around a third of the schools that responded were involved in providing altar servers (37%, n=53), and in chaplaincy (35%, n=50).

Table 3: Types of activities which faith organisations were involved with between 1922 and 2010

Type of activity	Yes	No	We don't know	Total
Church or faith meetings and services	73% (n=105)	17% (n=26)	10% (n=14)	n=144
Youth trips or exchanges involving a faith organisation	22% (n=31)	50% (n=72)	28% (n=41)	n=144
Cross-community initiatives involving a faith organisation	28% (n=40)	45% (n=65)	27% (n=39)	n=144
Hosting a faith organisation to do some other type of activities with the young people, e.g., youth groups or holiday camps	24% (n=34)	49% (n=70)	28% (n=40)	n=144
Sports training involving someone from a faith organisation	11% (n=16)	60% (n=86)	29% (n=42)	n=144
Choir and music involving someone from a faith organisation	37% (n=53)	55% (n=72)	13% (n=19)	n=144
Providing altar servers	37% (n=53)	50% (n=72)	13% (n=19)	n=144
Drama or debating with someone from a faith organisation	6% (n=8)	65% (n=93)	30% (n=43)	n=144
Events or assemblies with visiting religious speakers	77% (n=111)	12% (n=17)	11% (n=16)	n=144
Chaplaincy	35% (n=50)	48% (n=69)	17% (n=25)	n=144
Tutoring with someone from a faith organisation	6% (n=8)	66% (n=95)	28% (n=41)	n=144
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	10% (n=15)	66% (n=95)	24% (n=34)	n=144

Fourteen respondents provided more information and comments included:

"All our primary schools, as Catholic primary schools will have close involvement with local parishes in preparation for church sacraments, namely First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation. All our schools, both primary and post-primary will have a school mass at the opening of the school year and will have a number of services involving clergy during the school year. Our post-primary schools take part in John Paul II Award schemes within their local parishes. Schools may facilitate the initial information session."

"Our schools will take part in Shared Education events (Cross-community initiatives) which often will include members of other faith organisations."

"With the young people, [we] run youth groups or summer camps. Two of our schools [named] have students who take part in summer activity camps as camp leaders. These day-time summer camps offer activities to younger local children who would not have the opportunity to have a holiday during the summer months. These are non-residential and are operated by a ministry associated with the [named faith organisation]."

"Three of our post-primary schools have been involved in African Immersion Programmes in Zambia. This will involve staying in residential ministries operated by other organisations including faith organisations."

"Tutoring was a 'Scripture union club' that operated for a period."

"Any assemblies taken by external speakers are always supervised by Senior Staff and we research the organisation to assess their suitability before they are invited in."

"These answers are based upon the children's participation in school hours."

Schools were asked whether a faith organisation was involved in the management or administration of their school at any stage between 1922-2010. Two-thirds of respondents said 'yes' (65%, n=94). A quarter said 'no' (24%, n=35) and 10% did not know. 89 respondents provided further information and this was often to note involvement in the Board of Governors of the school or as Trustees.

10% of the respondents (n=15) said that their school was residential at some stage between 1922-2010. 84% (n=121) said their school was not residential and 6% (n=8) did not know. One respondent said that their school was included in the previous HIAI research.

Existence of records relating to abuse involving someone from a faith organisation alleged to have occurred between 1922-2010

More than two-thirds (66%, n=95) said no records existed and 33% (n=47) did not know. 17 people provided additional information. This was often to highlight their uncertainty as to whether records existed and that they would need to make additional enquiries to be more certain. Comments included:

"I would have to make contact with the previous principal."

"We are currently undertaking a past case review, and have no reason to believe at this time that there have been any allegations of child abuse that involved someone from a faith organisation. However, until such time as we have completed the full exercise we cannot say this for certain."

"I don't think so, but I don't know for sure."

Two respondents (1%, n=2) said that there were records relating to allegations of abuse by someone from a faith organisation existing for the time period 1922-2010. One of these two respondents made one submission which covered 5 schools active during this time period, but was not able to clarify how many schools the allegations related to without retrieving more detailed records. This was not possible in the timescale available for completing the research.

This scoping exercise has therefore identified between 2 and 6 schools connected with recorded allegations of abuse involving a faith organisation. This respondent described the records held in their regional office so there may also be additional records held in the schools and by the faith organisation itself.

Only the two respondents who identified potential records had to complete the section relating to the type of information these were likely to contain.

In terms of where records are held, the most likely place was in hard copy in a regional office (100%, n=2) or stored electronically at the school (50%, n=1) (Table 4).

Table 4: Location of records were held

Locations of records	Responses
Not applicable - there are no records held anywhere	0% (n=0)
In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7	100% (n=2)
In hard copy in a diocesan or central church or faith organisation office	50% (n=1)
Stored electronically by your faith organisation	0% (n=0)
Stored by another organisation	0% (n=0)
Archived in PRONI	0% (n=0)
Other	0% (n=0)
Total Respondents: n=2	

The respondent completing the questionnaire on behalf of a single school said the relevant records relate to 2002-2010.

The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools was unable to provide details of the time periods the records related to.

Records were held in both hard copy and electronic formats and described as being in good condition (easily legible).

Volume of records

The volume of records relating to allegations of abuse does not seem to be large (Table 5). The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools described the records held in the regional office as being less than 1 box file of information:

> *"5 A4 pages noting date, reference and actions plus scans of letters make up 1 box file of correspondence."*

As noted above, this respondent noted that more information would be held by the faith organisation.

The other respondent estimated the information held in their school would be between 2-4 filing cabinet drawers of information relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation.

Table 5: Volume of records relating to 1922-2010

Quantity of information	Number of respondents (total n=2)
No information	0% (n=0)
Less than 1 box file of information	50% (n=1)
1-3 box files of information	0% (n=0)
1 filing cabinet drawer (4 box files)	0% (n=0)
2-4 filing cabinet drawers	50% (n=1)
2 filing cabinets	0% (n=0)

Number of allegations relating to 1922-2010

Number of perpetrators

The respondent describing one school estimated there were between 1-10 perpetrators (n=1).

The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools said that there were between 11 and 20 individuals accused of perpetrating abuse. They provided additional information:

"16 (4 of the allegations have been made against lay teachers)."

Number of alleged victims

The respondent describing one school estimated there were between 1-10 alleged victims (n=1).

The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools said that there were between 51 and 60 individual alleged victims. They provided additional information:

"56."

How many allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation?

The respondent describing one school said between 1-10 allegations were notified to someone more senior within their school.

The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools said they could not provide an estimate as to how many were notified to someone more senior within the school. They explained:

"*We don't know as there is nothing to show this in our records held."*

The respondent describing one school said between 1-10 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation.

The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools said between 51-60 allegations were notified to someone more senior within the faith organisation. They provided additional information:

"56."

How many allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings?

The respondent describing one school said between 1-10 allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings.

The respondent providing the collective response for the 5 schools said they could not provide an estimate and provided additional information:

"We don't know and would not hold any such details."

One respondent (n=1) said it was not possible that abuses may have been disclosed to their organisation that were not documented in their records. The other respondent said they did not know (n=1).

Type of information that is likely to exist in records

The type of information that is likely to exist in the school records is shown below in Table 6. The most likely types of information to exist included correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf, correspondence with the school's legal advisers, and correspondence with police.

Table 6: Type of information relating to allegations of abuse

Type of information relating to allegations of abuse	Very likely to exist	Possibly exist	Not at all likely to exist	We don't know	Total
Correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf	100% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	n=2
Correspondence with the school's legal advisors	100% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	n=2
Correspondence with the faith organisation's legal advisors	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Correspondence with a faith organisation's insurers	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	100% (n=2)	n=2
Minutes of relevant meetings and hearings	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Accused individuals' personnel files	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Records of the faith organisation's internal courts or dispute resolution processes	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Correspondence with police	100% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	n=2
Correspondence with welfare organisations or social services	100% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	n=2
Correspondence with court officials	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Correspondence with government departments	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Correspondence with the faith organisation's local, regional or national authorities	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	100% (n=2)	n=2
Correspondence with the faith organisation's authorities abroad	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	n=2

Both respondents provided more information about the type of records held:

> *"Solicitors letters, emails and action taken. Copies of such correspondence are kept with a list of actions in acknowledging receipt and passing on the allegation to the appropriate body."*

> *"In most cases that I am aware of, the organisation, i.e. the school managed by [the faith organisation] retained records of processes dealing with such allegations at least from the late 1990s, early noughties onwards."*

Are records kept of specific details relating to the perpetrator, victim and incident?

Details such as the name of the person accused of perpetrating the abuse were most likely to be recorded (n=2) as well as the name of the name of the alleged victim. Date of birth was less likely to be recorded for the alleged perpetrator or victim, and records were unlikely to state whether the person accused of perpetrating the abuse was living or deceased (Table 7).

Table 7: Likelihood of certain types of information being recorded

Type of information recorded	Yes, in every case	Sometimes but not always	Not likely to have been recorded	We don't know	Total
The name of the person who said they were abused	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	n=2
The date of birth of the person who said they were abused	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	n=2
The name of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	100% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	n=2
The date of birth of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	n=2
Whether the person accused of perpetrating abuse is living or deceased	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	n=2
Role of the alleged perpetrator (e.g., whether they were paid staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2

One respondent said the type of abuse could not be ascertained from the description in the records but the information may be detailed in a written description rather than clearly categorised (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse) (Table 8).

The other respondent did not know how easy it would be to categorise the abuse and provided the following comment to explain their answer:

"We don't know aside from details contained within solicitors' letters."

Table 8: How easy would it be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records relating to 1922-2010

	Yes – the type of abuse is likely to be clearly categorised in the record	Yes – the information may be detailed in a written description rather than	No – this is unlikely to be recorded for this time period	We don't know	Total number of responses

		clearly categorised			
How easily it would be to categorise the type of abuse from the description in the records (e.g., whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2

One respondent (n=1) said the outcome for each allegation was likely to be recorded (Table 9). This included whether an internal investigation took place, any decision made by any internal investigation (e.g., whether allegation was upheld), actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused, and policy or practice changes within the organisation.

One respondent said that the outcome of civil proceedings or criminal proceedings was not likely to be recorded very often.

Respondents provided the following additional information:

"Disciplinary action against a member of the organisation and engagement with experts beyond the organisation to guide and support the school in dealing with the matter."

"None. [We] will assist in referring historical claims to former Trustees and other relevant bodies, such as the Department of Education or local authorities, to ensure they are appropriately addressed and [we have] no role beyond this."

Table 9: *Likelihood of the outcome of an allegation being recorded in 1922-2010*

Likelihood of the outcome being described in the records	**Not likely to be recorded very often**	**May be recorded for some records but not for all**	**Likely to be recorded for most cases**	**We don't know**	**Total**
Whether an internal investigation took place	3% (n=3)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	95% (n=99)	n=2
Decision made by any internal investigation (e.g. whether allegation was upheld)	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	96% (n=100)	n=2
Allegation withdrawn	4% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	96% (n=100)	n=2
Apology made to the victim	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	1% (n=1)	96% (n=100)	n=2
Financial payment to the	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	100% (n=2)	n=2

alleged victim with or without civil proceedings					
Disciplinary actions for accused	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Civil proceedings	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Criminal proceedings	50% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	n=2
Policy or practice changes within the faith organisation	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=1)	50% (n=1)	n=2

Final section of the online survey

The last open-ended questions in the survey allowed respondents to provide more information about record keeping within their setting, as well as any important changes to record keeping practice, and concerns or suggestions they had for taking the research forward. 92 respondents provided information in this section.

Respondents were asked in an open-ended question to describe any important factors that may have affected the creation, sharing and keeping of records relevant to allegations involving faith organisations by their school. Common themes included that approaches to record keeping in schools had changed considerably over time; records may have been lost in staffing changes or due to changes in the administrative or management structure of schools, and hard copy records may have been damaged or destroyed. School staff were more confident speaking about recent records, particularly those relating to their period of tenure at the school, but were less sure about what might exist with respect to older records. The historical nature of some of the allegations means that there are no personnel in the school from that time period to provide insight. Examples of the comments under each theme are provided below.

Schools now follow guidelines issued by DE, but this was only put in place part way through the time period of interest:

"Records have been kept after this was mandatory in schools."

"I am surmising here but an official process of recording such information was not in place (I am referring to 30+ years ago)."

"Since the introduction of EA record keeping circulars, all records are held securely. Unsure about legacy data - the school is in operation for 50 years. Highly unlikely to have allegations involving faith organisations as no one has unsupervised access to the children in our school and representatives of faith organisations attend by invite only."

"Our retention has been longer than the DE standard policy."

Records may have been lost during staffing changes, e.g. principals who were departing from a school may have removed written records:

"Prior to the more robust direction and systems in place stemming from the Department of Education's Circulars and training, here may have been a lot of personal discretion used by an outgoing Principal in removing any written notes or records on their departure from the school so that subsequent Principals may have anecdotal information, but no written records remain. processes in schools have changed quite significantly over the last 20-30 years and there are clear obligations and systems in place now for school leaders to ensure records of allegations and any follow-up processes and decisions etc are carefully retained for the specified period of time."

"Any records may have been moved to be stored within the Parish or Diocese. Given changes in school leadership between 1922 and 2010, if there were any records, these may have been moved to ensure confidentiality??"

There may have been changes in the administrative or management structure of schools such as merging with other schools, moving to new building, or transfer of trusteeship from a religious Order to parish:

"School amalgamated from 3 rural schools. A large principal turnover over a ten-year period with very little record keeping during this time. Due to Church not being involved in school life apart from assemblies or carol services held in Church, no child would be unsupervised at any point."

"I have been Principal since 2012 and have been no allegations during this time. The school has moved building and gone through two amalgamations during its life."

Hard copy records may have been physically damaged:

"Previous records were affected by a leak in the secure document store."

"All records were paper based and keeping a copy of records from a long period ago may prove difficult."

School staff were more confident speaking about recent records, particularly those relating to their period of tenure at the school, but less sure about what might exist with respect to older records:

"Old records may be stored in the attic space in school unsure as I have never been into it and would be unsure as to the condition of these records."

"I have been principal of school for 10 years. I am not aware of any recent or historical allegations in this time frame. We have a storage room full of old school records. I would not know the content of all of those records stored. We have removed a lot of dated records which are past the time frames periodically. These are reports and school academic records. There are child protection records."

"We have records from the school opened in 1995. I am unsure what happened to the records from the two previous schools as I did not work here at that time."

"Since my arrival as Principal in 2007, I can account for all child protection records in the school especially as I am the designated teacher. However, prior to that date of arrival I cannot account nor be held responsible for any CP type records. I was not provided with any and did not inherit any. The school had diminished in size, was earmarked for potential closure and the previous principal was retired when I commenced."

"I have no records in the school of very much prior to my arrival in 2007. No records were found on premises from 1935 to 2007 other than attendance registers which we have all the way back to 1935. But no staff hard copy records. Everything since electronic record keeping on SIMS is available since schools commenced using SIMS, but I have no idea how schools were required to keep records before this. I was not trained in anything prior to this and have no working knowledge from 1930s to 2000s."

The historical nature of some of the allegations means that there are no personnel in the school from that time period to provide insight:

"Some cases predate the actual creation of the current school itself and may relate to schools which have since closed. Allegations predate most if not all the personnel in the current schools."

In terms of the process that would need to be followed to access records from each of these time periods, 92 people provided suggestions. The common themes are detailed below. Respondents suggested that clear communication about the purpose and process of the research, requesting access through the Education Authority, GDPR, confidentiality, understanding the purpose of the research, following appropriate data protection processes and having a clear Terms of Reference would all be important and necessary. Several respondents highlighted the need to engage with individual schools by writing to them, writing and meeting with Boards of Governors, Trustees, and CCMS to agree permissions for researchers to access records. A small number of schools suggested that only specific parties such as the Education Authority, PSNI, and individuals who the records relate to should be able to gain access to the records. Examples of comments are given below.

Appropriate processes around access and confidentiality will need to be followed:

"All records are held securely according to DE and EA protocols. Records are available by request from EA Information Governance. The school has strict GDPR protocols, but all records are available if access is allowed e.g. police / courts; social services requests."

"FOI request."

Some respondents were concerned about consequences of revealing information.

"Write to schools individually and ask them to record what materials they hold in their possession and to quantify it prior to its release. Perhaps a pre-release check list to be completed and returned first and with sufficient timescales to allow school personnel to locate and copy in a suitable format for release. All schools will of course seek DE assurance that they are indemnified should there be any consequences for the school in revealing such materials."

"I am concerned that school could be involved in a previously unknown case and that there are [no] records as no allegations were made at the time."

Several highlighted that it may be time consuming to identify relevant records as it would involve manual searching through files which may be located in several locations:

"There is no easily accessible way to identify access records of this nature, as so many other records are held. Names and dates have been recorded on a digital format to record related to CP storage boxes and documents held in school storage. I would imagine this is where that might be held, but I am unaware of any actual allegations."

"A search would be made of the records held in the strongroom."

"Check through all paper records which are in long term storage."

“We would check for records on our systems and in the archive.”

“All paper records are stored in the school attic.”

“Records from the past 13 years (since amalgamation in 2012) are stored in school. Previous records may be in EA storage.”

“Reading through records in our records store. Searching through our School information database on SIMS Searching through our other computerised records.”

“Contact school prior to arrival to have records at hand and try and locate older records.”

Appropriate advice and permissions will need to be sought from a variety of stakeholders, not just individual schools. This may include CCMS, Trustees, faith organisations, Education Authority, Board of Governors, and Designated person for child protection:

“It is my understanding the CCMS/Trustees deal with any allegations of historical abuse.”

“Contact CCMS for further information and guidance.”

“Contact [the faith organisations] directly.”

“Written legal request to EA Information Governance dept. to seek release of school held documentation.”

“A freedom of information request to the school Board of Governors, “

“We would need a request in writing, and we would seek advice from our employing authority.”

“The Designated Person for Child Protection would need to be involved in providing access.”

“In accordance with the DPA 2018 and GDPR, each school is a data controller in respect of the personal data it processes and is therefore responsible for its compliance with the legislation.”

“The College has a GDPR Policy - in the case where is a request for records the college would liaise with the Education Authority’s Information Governance team.

“We [can] facilitate the applicant in passing the allegation on to the appropriate organisation including the [faith organisation], any access of detailed records involving allegations of abuse would need to be made directly to the [faith organisation].”

Suggestions were also made about who should actually access the records for Phase 2, including the Education Authority, PSNI, and the individuals who the record relates to:

“Education Authority to be informed. Education Authority to access records”

“PSNI request. Someone asking for their own records”

“Having an individual search through records particularly to a time when the individuals may not have worked in the school and would not know where records are or to whom they pertain.”

In the final question, respondents were asked to describe any concerns they have about this work, or barriers to engagement with the data collection in Phase 2 they could anticipate, and their suggestions or recommendations for how this work can be undertaken. In terms of concerns about the work or anticipated barriers to engagement, 48 respondents provided further information.

The concerns raised were similar to those of the faith organisations and statutory authorities detailed in the Full report. Many said that they had no concerns, or did not see the research has being applicable to them because they did not know of any allegations of abuse involving their school and someone from a faith organisation.

Concerns raised included workload pressures and the time it would take to provide information, concerns that record keeping prior to the 1980's would be of poorer quality than in more recent times; lack of knowledge about what records exist or where they might be stored; lack of organisational memory where there had been changes over time in personnel, organisational structures and moving to different buildings; compliance with GDPR and the relevant disposal of records schedule. These common themes are illustrated by the comments below.

People value the work being done:

"For such an important enquiry I think individuals would try to assist to the best of their ability given the proper resources to do so."

"I do not believe any barriers should be in place in accessing truth."

There is a need to take a trauma-informed and victim-centred approach:

"Continuity ensuring that abuse information is shared and that child safety is at the heart of any decision."

A robust engagement and access process will need to be developed which takes account of the school environment:

1. *" 'Live' issues that are currently being dealt with under a defined and recognised process, e.g. school's Disciplinary Policy or indeed a legal process, are unlikely to be released at least until a full and final decision has been reached in dealing with the allegation.*
2. *Only one or two individual staff members are likely to have the knowledge of and access to such materials and these are likely to be the Principal and a Vice Principal. If there is a lot of material, collection and copying of same could be arduous and time-consuming task so sufficient time would need to be built into the process*
3. *Personnel who represent your organisation would need to be available to attend Boards of Governors meetings and/or to liaise with a school's legal representatives so as to provide all of the necessary undertakings and assurances such a retrieval exercise would necessitate. These would need to be well trained personnel who also understand the culture of schools and how they operate*
4. *It is right and proper that such a database of information on allegations of abuse is recorded and maintained, and such materials should in future be made available to the courts should a claimant come forward and thus provide important records for clarification of such allegations."*

Requirements for record keeping in schools have changed over time:

"Significant time has passed and staff have changed during the scope of this period/study. More consistent record keeping is a relatively recent requirement."

"Records are only kept for so many years - you might not get evidence from old data? I think, going forward, you need to consider where this type of abuse (faith related) should be recorded."

"When I started teaching record keeping was not as rigorous as it is now and so a lot of allegations may not have physical records."

"Record keeping from 1922 right up to the early 1970's would be a concern as many of the faith based organizations no longer have a part to play in the management of the schools."

"It would be my personal and professional view that all records of a Safeguarding / Child Protection nature would be recoverable through the appropriate channels. Individual Child Records of a Safeguarding nature are required to be held for 30 years plus the age of the child meaning that legacy records of this duration in any school are likely to have been destroyed in keeping with the Disposal of Records Schedule."

School staff do not always know what records may exist or where they may be located, particularly those relating to earlier time periods:

"There are no records held in school regarding any allegations of abuse, so I am not sure if they actually exist. The religious order that built the school and had a principal until 2002 have other storage processes, I would imagine."

"Challenges are presented in terms of the dates. I've been in post since 2023, so my knowledge of the time period is very limited."

"No concerns regarding this vital work. Problems may arise when trying to locate school information from 1900 onwards as pre 1980 I am unsure as to where records and important documentation is held."

"Barriers include: change of personnel; death of previous principals/senior management; wider absence of robust records for 1922+ due to lack of guidance."

The time-consuming and burdensome nature of the work should not be underestimated:

"Workload and time taken to complete the survey."

"This would be another extensive piece of work to add to an already heavy workload, however it may well be very important."

"Reading through all long-term record storage will be very time consuming. We have a lot of Child Protection records and it may be difficult to know if a person mentioned in any of the older records has an affiliation to a church if their title does not clearly state Rev. In order to complete this exercise fully, we would require the list of all names of staff connected to a faith organisation, including 'known by' names in the case of those who have given up their names."

"The period of time means lots of records to be looked through. The main barrier will be the time involved to conduct an exhaustive search."

Summary

The research undertaken in Phase 1 during 2024 (and described in the Full report) highlighted an important gap in the original project specification. It was raised in the discussions with faith organisations that schools are likely to hold their own records rather than these being held by faith organisations and these were not being examined as part of the research. This was thought to be potentially true for schools run by religious orders, as well as other schools. This additional scoping research was undertaken to explore whether schools are likely to have records relating to allegations of child abuse associated with faith organisation that are not held by other parties.

The survey was issued to all schools in Northern Ireland. There was a response rate of 15% which is low, but unsurprising given there was no preparatory engagement done with schools to raise the profile of the research in advance of the invitation being issued, and the rapid turnaround of the data collection.

Although the research provides some useful insights into the records held by these schools, there is still an important gap in our understanding of what records and insights the majority of schools in Northern Ireland hold about abuse involving faith organisations.

Nearly half of the schools reported substantial changes to their school structures since 1922 and this may have affected what records were retained over time as well as where they are located.

Similar to the findings of the faith organisation survey reported in the Full report, schools detailed a wide and varied range of ways in which faith organisations were connected to school life. These most often included involvement in events and assemblies, faith meetings or services, providing altar services and chaplaincy. Many schools said that a faith organisation was involved in the management or administration of their school such as being part of the Board of Governors or as Trustees.

With respect to whether any records relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation existed, a third of schools did not know (47 schools). Often this reflected a lack of knowledge of what records existed from before their tenure, or where these might be located. School staff said they would need to make further enquiries to be more certain.

Two-thirds of the schools said no records relating to this type of alleged abuse exist in their school (95 schools).

Two respondents said that there were records relating to allegations of abuse by someone from a faith organisation existing for the time period 1922-2010. One of these respondents made one submission which covered 5 schools active during this time period, but was not able to clarify how many schools the allegations related to without retrieving more detailed records. This was not possible in the timescale available for completing the research.

This scoping exercise has therefore identified between 2 and 6 schools connected with recorded allegations of abuse involving a faith organisation. These allegations were described as involving to at least 10 perpetrators and up to 60 victims.

The volume of information held in each location relating to these allegations is up to a filing cabinet. The most likely types of information to exist included correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf, correspondence with the school's legal advisers, and correspondence with police. The faith organisation was noted as being likely to also hold information, although this may not necessarily be a duplicate of what is held by the school. Schools

were not likely to record the outcome of the allegation unless it involved action taken within or by the school.

Schools described factors that may have affected the creation, sharing and keeping of records relevant to allegations involving faith organisations. Common themes included that approaches to record keeping in schools had changed considerably over time, records may have been lost in staffing changes or due to changes in the administrative or management structure of schools, and hard copy records damaged or destroyed (either deliberately or through natural causes). School staff were more confident speaking about recent records, particularly those relating to their period of tenure at the school, but less sure about what might exist with respect to older records. The historical nature of some of the allegations means that there may be no personnel in the school from that earlier time periods to provide insight.

A clear process will need to be followed in order to access records in each school. Communication and requesting access through the Education Authority, GDPR, confidentiality, understanding the purpose of the research, following appropriate data protection processes and having a clear Terms of Reference were all seen as important and necessary. Several respondents highlighted the need to formally engage with individual schools, Boards of Governors, Trustees, CCMS to agree permissions. Some suggested that only specific parties such as the Education Authority, PSNI, and individuals who the records relate to should gain access to the records.

Respondents were asked to describe any concerns they have about this work, or barriers to engagement with the data collection in Phase 2 they could anticipate, and their suggestions or recommendations for how this work can be undertaken. The concerns raised were similar to those of the faith organisations and statutory authorities detailed in the Full report. Many said that they had no concerns, or did not see the research has being applicable to them because they did not know of any allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation.

Concerns raised included workload pressures and the time it would take to provide information, concerns that record keeping prior to the 1980's would be of poorer quality than in more recent times, lack of knowledge about what records exist or where they might be stored, lack of organisational memory where there had been changes over time in personnel, organisational structures and moving to different buildings, GDPR and records having been destroyed according to the disposal of records schedule.

The scoping research reinforces the need for further investigation**. The full report included the following recommendation:**
Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset. This scoping research as described in this Addendum shows this recommendation still stands.

If schools are to be included in the research (since they were not included in the previous HIAI work), it will be necessary to clearly specify what exactly defines a school as having a connection with a faith organisation. For example, if the Board of Governors is the employing agent for the school staff, some of the teaching staff have to be trained in ministry by a faith organisation. The eligibility criteria for the inclusion of a school will need to specify this unambiguously so it can be applied equally to all potential institutions. Similar to the definition issues outlined earlier, there would need to be similar clarity required around what the criteria would be for looking at allegations of abuse in any school context.

These issues are very important to consider from a methodological point of view. The key issue relates to whether the starting point for looking at records should be determined by reviewing all the records held by a school or relating to a school in order to identify any allegations of abuse, or whether the starting point is to take an alleged incident of abuse or perpetrator that has been identified elsewhere and then review what information the school may hold relating to this allegation or perpetrator.

In light of the lack of knowledge that many school staff have about what records exist from before their tenure, the most pragmatic approach may be to take a multi-stranded approach to focus on the records held in a smaller number of schools. This could be to:

i) take as a starting point, an alleged incident of abuse or perpetrator that has been identified elsewhere (e.g. through oral narratives or records held, for example, by faith organisation) and then review what records any school associated through direct reference in the allegation may hold either relating to this allegation or perpetrator
ii) review all records held in a school where one or more allegation is known to have been made, or an alleged perpetrator is known to have had some sort of association.

Mary O'Toole and her team recently undertook a non-statutory scoping inquiry into sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by religious orders in Ireland.[222] The inquiry report was published in September 2024.[223] It provides useful insights into how research has been undertaken into schools and proposed methodologies for further Inquiry in the Irish context. However, since this inquiry only considered schools run by Catholic religious orders – so that its scope is much narrower than the Phase 1 research here - it did not encounter some of the complexities around inclusion criteria outlined above. It does, however, provide useful insights into the resources needed to undertake scoping research in a methodologically robust way. Particular attention should also be paid to O'Toole's use of survivor-provided data alongside records, rather than relying on records along.

[222] This includes community schools with religious co-patrons.
[223] Available at https://www.gov.ie/en/education-scoping-inquiry/publications/scoping-inquiry-into-historical-sexual-abuse-in-schools-run-by-religious-orders/. Records are discussed in Volume 2, Chapters 9-11.

Recommendations

In summary, this scoping research has shown that some schools do hold relevant records relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation. It has shown that many schools do not know for certain whether they have records relating to relevant allegations of abuse. It has also shown that there will be similar challenges for schools in providing access to records as those outlined already in the Full report for faith organisations and statutory authorities. The research therefore reinforces the need for further investigation**.**

This additional scoping of schools described in this Addendum has therefore not changed the recommendations originally detailed in the Full report.

Our analysis still leads us to conclude that Phase 2 should not go ahead as originally envisaged. Our key recommendation is that that historical clerical child abuse should be the subject of a Statutory inquiry. The full set of recommendations is provided below.

1. **An appropriate legal structure must put in place before Phase 2, or any review of records relating historical clerical child abuse in Northern Ireland progresses any further.** The most effective structure would be a Statutory inquiry.

2. **We should not create or tolerate a hierarchy of victims and survivors of historical abuse.** There should be parity between the victims and survivors of historical abuse associated with faith organisations outside residential institutions, and those whose abuse has been the focus of the previous work of the HIAI. Equally robust attention needs to be given to each.

3. **The Historical Records project is not the first piece of research undertaken into abuses within faith organisations. We need to learn from previous research.** Core considerations include taking a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach; managing expectations of all involved about what the purpose and anticipated outcomes will be; engaging with the faith organisations to encourage buy-in and support of the process where possible; and paying careful attention to consent and data protection processes. **It would be useful for the commissioners involved in ongoing research projects and inquiries around historical abuse in Northern Ireland to come together with the research teams to discuss mutual learning around how investigations have been commissioned and undertaken.** This could be done in a closed reflective session under Chatham House rules.

4. **In commissioning research, it is important to take account of the complex nature of this type of investigation, and of the likely time commitment involved. Appropriate resources need to be invested in this process.**

5. **Phase 2 should have clear Terms of Reference which set the research in its policy context. These should clarify the purpose of the research, the policy decisions or actions it will influence, and its relationship to TEO's policy agenda.**

6. **Steps should be taken to ensure that Phase 2 is closely aligned with any oral history work undertaken with survivors.** Without close collaboration, it will be difficult to understand how individual allegations were addressed in practice, or to understand the extent of allegations of abuse.

7. **Allegations of abuse connected with faith organisations and schools merit further investigation. A dedicated programme of research should be commissioned. Clear criteria for inclusion in the research project should be defined at the outset.**

Appendix

Appendix 1: Stakeholders

These stakeholders participated in a discussion to develop the engagement strategy for the schools and were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the questionnaire before it was circulated to schools.

Stakeholder group	Name
Controlled Schools Support Council	Jayne Millar
Council for Catholic Maintained schools	Angela Armstrong
Department of Education	Glenda Davies
Department of Education	Claire McClelland
Department of Education	Stephen Wilson
Education Authority	Patricia Cooney
Education Authority	Declan Marlow
Governing Bodies Association	Nuala O'Neill
NI Council for Integrated Education	Sean Pettis

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