

Summary of the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee meeting on 3 July 2025

CSSA engagement

To foster closer relations, the new Chair of the CSSA would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee (TSC).

Changes to the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) remit

It was noted that with the creation of the Strategic Council for Catholic Safeguarding (SCCS), the CSSA's remit had now contracted, leaving it with the functions of auditing, reviewing and monitoring safeguarding in church bodies. It was agreed that there was need to understand the arrangements with regard to newly formed SCCS, which, although it had met twice, had not yet issued a written report.

A need to resolve the mismatch between the CSSA inspection framework, which allowed for notice being given before an inspection, and the contract between Diocese and CSSA, which provided for 'unscheduled safeguarding reviews of the Church Body in response to specific concerns ...', was identified at the meeting.

It was noted that a CSSA audit of casework was underway. Work continued on implementing the recommendations of the CSSA's baseline Audit, and the CSSA had access to the Diocesan Action Plan and supporting evidence.

Religious Life Safeguarding Service remit (RLSS)

Given the lack of clarity, it was agreed that the CSSA would be asked to define the role of the RLSS.

Umbrella Body Agreements – Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application processing

Despite a meeting between the CSSA and representatives of the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) and agreements reached at that meeting, concerns remained that Dioceses were not privy to details of SVP risk management activity in relation to a blemished DBS or where an SVP member was subject to a concern. This absence of transparency was held to amount to a serious incident, and there was agreement that CSSA actions should be guided by this assessment.

Ethnic Chaplaincies

Work was underway with Deacon Adrian Cullen, who was responsible for oversight of Ethnic Chaplaincies, to ensure that: (i) where a chaplaincy worked in a Westminster parish but was aligned with another diocese, there was clarity re lines of responsibility with regard to DBS checks and (ii) each chaplaincy had a Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) in place.

The Head of Safeguarding would be meeting with the Polish Catholic Mission PSR to ensure that expectations were fully understood.

Hope for Healing Service 2026

It was agreed that a Hope for Healing Service would be held annually.

Companion Priests scheme

It was noted that the first full meeting of the volunteer priests who would 'accompany' respondent priests subject to an allegation had taken place. Companion priests would solely have a support function and would neither have case involvement nor hear the confessions of respondent priests.

Parish Audit survey

It was agreed that the new Parish Audit survey, designed to better understand how safeguarding was practised at parish level and to identify gaps in order to improve support, would be circulated with *Ad Clerum* in early September.

Safeguarding Service

DBS processing: the number of clergy without a DBS had fallen from 22 to 19 and the number who were 'out of scope' and not responding to emails had also fallen. DBS counter signatory delays were down to zero.

Parish Reports: A need to encourage a better response rate was identified and this would be raised with area Deans.

Policy and Guidance

The TSC approved the following for recommendation to the Trustee:

1. Safeguarding Policy: with minor amendments and changes to language;
2. Whistleblowing Policy: developed in collaboration with the HR Department and approved by the HR Committee; and
3. Lourdes Pilgrimage Safeguarding Policies: ratified by the Lourdes Pilgrimage Review Committee and approved with minor amendments.

It was noted that the following leaflets had been updated to improve local and Diocesan support and signposting: '[Hurt by Abuse](#)' and '[Respond, Listen Support](#)'.

The [Commitment to Victims and Survivors](#) document had been revised and refreshed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 2 October 2025.