

STANDARD 8: Quality assurance in Safeguarding

We deploy effective planning processes annually to monitor, review, self-evaluate and report on our Safeguarding practices and compliance with these Safeguarding standards. The Independent Review Group (IRG) externally monitors and reports on our compliance with these Safeguarding standards.

8.1 Parishes regularly monitor and review their Safeguarding arrangements.

8.1.1 In each parish, the Parish Priest and Safeguarding Co-ordinator must meet regularly to discuss on-going issues relating to Safeguarding, such as numbers of volunteers, training undertaken etc. They must also highlight the importance of parish Safeguarding arrangements in parish communications: posters, weekly bulletins, website etc.

8.2 Parishes self-evaluate their Safeguarding practice by completing an annual Audit and devising a Safeguarding action plan.

- 8.2.1 Each parish is required to complete an Audit that is issued by the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service annually. The data provided on the completed form indicates compliance with the standards set out in this Instruction, in terms of safe recruitment of volunteer Safeguarding personnel, participation in training courses, as well as preventative work.
- 8.2.2 The Parish Priest and Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, with advice from the Diocese where required, must prepare a *Safeguarding Action Plan* to address any areas of improvement that have been identified in the audit, including further training. To facilitate this, template planning forms, including on-line formats will be provided.
- 8.2.3 Each year the Parish Priest and/or Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator must address the parish community³⁷ on some aspect of Safeguarding, both to highlight the work being done and to alert the community to the need for continuing watchfulness.

³⁷ Section C Exemplar Guidance on Safeguarding Statement to Parish

8.3 Dioceses regularly monitor and review their Safeguarding arrangements.

- 8.3.1 In each Diocese, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) must meet at least 4 times per year to discuss on-going issues relating to Safeguarding arrangements in the Diocese. These discussions should consider compliance with Safeguarding training and PVG checks across the Diocese. The Bishop must be kept informed of the outcomes of DSAG meetings.

8.4 Dioceses self-evaluate their Safeguarding practice by completing an annual Audit and devising a Safeguarding action plan

- 8.4.1 Each year, every parish and Diocesan organisation working with vulnerable groups is required to complete a Safeguarding Audit which details the number of allegations received, the numbers participating in training etc., forwarding it to the Diocese for collation into one report for the whole Diocese. The Diocese must forward the statistical section of the Audit to the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service for scrutiny by the Independent Review Group.
- 8.4.2 Having undertaken their own analysis of the Diocesan data emerging from the Audit, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group must prepare a Safeguarding Action Plan to address any areas of improvement required within the Diocese.
- 8.4.3 Each year the Bishop must communicate with the Diocesan community on some aspect of Safeguarding.

8.5 Religious Institutes regularly monitor and review their Safeguarding arrangements.

- 8.5.1 In each Religious Institute the Major Superior must meet regularly with his/her Safeguarding Link Coordinator to discuss on-going issues relating to Safeguarding and to be advised about any relevant matters. These discussions should consider compliance with training and PVG checks involving members of the Religious Congregation working in Scotland.

8.5.2 The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Link Co-ordinator include:

- advising the Major Superior on Safeguarding matters
- ensuring compliance with national Safeguarding standards
- responding to issues emerging from the Safeguarding Audit
- organising training for clergy, religious and Safeguarding volunteers
- liaising with the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service on national developments, resources, legislative changes etc.

8.6 Religious Institutes self-evaluate their Safeguarding practice by completing an annual Audit and devising a Safeguarding action plan.

8.6.1 Each year, in every Religious Institute, the Major Superior must meet with the Safeguarding Link Co-ordinator to complete a Safeguarding Audit which will provide the following information:

- current numbers and locations across Scotland
- numbers in active ministry
- numbers who have received PVG clearance
- numbers who have had Safeguarding training
- number of allegations reported in audit period
- numbers of survivors coming forward and what support was offered to them.

8.6.2 In response to their own analysis of the Audit data, and with the support of analysis received from the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service, each Religious Institute must prepare a Safeguarding Action Plan to address any areas of improvement in Safeguarding practice.

8.6.3 Each year the Major Superior must communicate with the Religious Congregation on the issue of Safeguarding.

8.7 SCSS regularly monitors and reviews its own activities.

8.7.1 The National Co-ordinator must lead SCSS office staff in regular discussions of their own work, using training evaluations emerging from parishes and Dioceses, to check progress against the SCSS strategic plan.

8.8 SCSS self-evaluates its work and completes a 3-year strategic plan.

- 8.8.1 The National Co-ordinator must consult SCSS office staff, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and other appropriate personnel on the contents of a 3-year strategic plan which will guide the work of SCSS. This plan, which should take account of agreed priorities, identified training needs, national guidance and best Safeguarding practice, must be approved by the Bishops' Conference
- 8.8.2 The Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service must receive completed Audit returns from every Diocese, Religious Institute, Retreat Centre, Parish Pilgrimage group which works with vulnerable groups and other organisations such as SPRED, ALMA, Ozanam and Knights of St Columba. The information contained in each report must be analysed by the National Safeguarding Co-ordinator who must provide feedback to each Diocese. This feedback should cover issues such as:
- compliance with Safeguarding Standards
 - responding to allegations
 - responding to survivors
 - risk assessments
 - participation in Safeguarding training.

8.9 The Independent Review Group (IRG) samples completed audits, identifies issues which require to be addressed and publishes an annual report.

- 8.9.1 The function of the Independent Review Group is to provide an independent and objective evaluation of how the Church is implementing its own Safeguarding policies and procedures. Each year it samples the data contained in annual Audits and reviews action plans that have been designed to address specific areas for improvement. The IRG comments on these plans and, where necessary, identifies gaps and recommends additional steps to be taken. In this way, it provides an external evaluation of the self-evaluation and planning of Dioceses, Religious Institutes and SCSS.