

Priestly Fraternity of St Peter

Baseline Audit Report
November 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 This report is a baseline audit of the safeguarding arrangements for the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter¹ (hereafter referred to as FSSP). This audit has been undertaken as part of the CSSA programme of baseline audits for Religious Life Groups (RLGs) in England and Wales.

1.2 The FSSP is a Clerical Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical right founded by Pope St John Paul II in 1988. The mission of the Fraternity is two-fold. Firstly, the formation and sanctification of priests and secondly, the pastoral deployment of the priests in the service of the Church (currently serving in 129 dioceses on five continents). The Fraternity's priests are devoted exclusively to the Traditional Liturgy of the Roman Rite. With the approval of the Holy See and the permission of local bishops, the Fraternity's priests provide for the full sacramental life of the faithful.²

1.3 The FSSP has been active in the UK since 1998. St John Fisher House in the Diocese of Portsmouth was canonically erected on 1 August 2010, St Cuthbert's House in the Archdiocese of Edinburgh on 8 January 2011, and Most Pure Heart of Mary House in the Archdiocese of Liverpool on 26 December 2015, now owned by FSSP, having been gifted by Ampleforth Abbey.

1.4 FSSP have three bases of operation, in Reading, Bedford (and its satellite base in Chesham Bois) and Warrington, with a total of six permanent priests in active ministry, one visiting retired priest from the Archdiocese of Liverpool and another who currently lives outside the community due to health issues. FSSP owns a house in Reading, which is the base for pastoral activities, they also use a local church approximately thirty minutes' walk from the town centre for Masses. The Reading apostolate was made into a parish in 2018 by the Bishop of Portsmouth. The age profile of Mass attendees in Reading and Bedford is predominantly made up of "young families, children and young adults," the demographic profile is more mixed in Warrington. FSSP run two youth camps annually for up to thirty-five young people

¹ The Priestly Fraternity of St Peter is a registered charity, name Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Petri Limited, number 1129964.

² Information taken from www.fssp.org.uk.

on each, at Savio House, a Salesian retreat centre in Bollington. These camps are currently managed by a Youth Camp Director, (a senior seminarian) who is responsible for the recruitment and selection of volunteers and the day to day running of the camps, in conjunction with the safeguarding lead. Across the three apostolates, FSSP's public ministry involves the provision of chaplaincy masses, men's group, ladies' groups, sacramental preparation, young adults' groups, family catechism days, and supporting home education groups. There are sixty-nine volunteers³ and three part time administrators (one of whom is the safeguarding representative in Warrington).

1.5 This audit seeks to assess the effectiveness of current safeguarding arrangements, by considering practice over the last twelve months. The scope of this audit covers practice across England and Wales, it does not consider practice of FSSP in Scotland. The CSSA has categorised RLGs on a scale from Level 1 (a small community with minimal outreach and no known safeguarding concerns), Level 2 (a medium sized community with some outreach with vulnerable populations and/or providing some diocesan activities, such as a Parish Priest), to Level 3 (a large community and/or one with significant outreach with vulnerable populations and/or a disproportionately high number of open safeguarding cases). The FSSP were assigned to a Level 2 audit.

1.6 The CSSA recognises the rich diversity of the Religious and acknowledges that the Religious Life Groups within any category may vary significantly in terms of size, ministry, and safeguarding practice. Consequently, CSSA analysts may use professional judgement to ensure that Religious Life Groups are graded against the national standards in such a way that reflects their uniqueness.

2. Methodology

³ This total excludes volunteers in non-DBS eligible roles (e.g. church cleaners, flower arrangers).

2.1 The CSSA analyst initially contacted the Safeguarding Lead on 2 May 2025 to advise of their intention to conduct a safeguarding audit during the week of 18 July. Following a change in the assigned analyst, further contact was made on 9 May to confirm this update, and a revised date of 18 August was subsequently arranged.

2.2 FSSP were requested to complete a Level 2 audit self-assessment tool providing information on their adherence to the eight National Safeguarding Standards and progress in the overall implementation of the standards. The self-assessment was returned on 21 July along with supporting evidence, as listed in the Appendix section of this report. Additional evidence was provided after this date, with the final submission received on 15 August.

2.3 Information from the self-assessment and supporting evidence provided by FSSP was reviewed by the CSSA analyst and was assessed against the Level 2 Maturity Matrix to arrive at ratings for each standard and a combined overall grade.

2.4.1 Audit interviews were undertaken in-person on 19 August at St. Mary's Priory in Warrington with:

- The Safeguarding Lead (who also holds the role of bursar, trustee and Shrine Rector).
- Five members of FSSP (two of whom were online).

2.4.2 Further meetings were held (online) between the period of 20 August – 28 August in chronological order with:

- Safeguarding representatives
- Youth Camp Director
- Trustees

2.5 A tour of the premises was facilitated by the Safeguarding Lead to demonstrate practical safeguarding arrangements.

2.6 Liaison has taken place between the analyst and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)⁴, the Archdiocese of Liverpool, Diocese of Northampton, and Diocese of Portsmouth, regarding their engagement with FSSP and how this meets their safeguarding expectations.

3. Audit grading

3.1 Practice was assessed against the eight national safeguarding standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales⁵ and graded in accordance with the CSSA Maturity Matrix for Level 2 RLGs.

3.2 Potential audit ratings against each standard, and the final overall ratings, are: Below Basic, Basic, Early Progress, Firm Progress, Results Being Achieved, Comprehensive Assurance and Exemplary.

Overall grading	Results Being Achieved
Standard 1 – Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body’s leadership, governance, ministry and culture	Results Being Achieved
Standard 2 – Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message	Firm Progress
Standard 3 – Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed	Firm Progress
Standard 4 – Effective management of allegations and concerns	Results Being Achieved

⁴ The Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) is an independent team of safeguarding professionals offering safeguarding services to the Religious of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

⁵ Full details of the eight standards and underpinning sub standards are available here: The Eight National Safeguarding Standards (www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

Standard 5 - Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)	Results Being Achieved
Standard 6 - Robust human resource management	Results Being Achieved
Standard 7 - Training and support for safeguarding	Results Being Achieved
Standard 8 - Quality assurance and continuous Improvement	Firm Progress

4. Audit findings against each standard

4.1 Standard 1 Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry and culture

Strengths

4.1.1 FSSP recognise the importance of a zero-tolerance approach to all abuse, where every effort must be made to ensure that those entrusted to members are kept safe and protected, whilst recognising that the relationship between the priest and the faithful can be abused. The newly developed Low-Level Concerns Policy aligns with the separate Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, and states that *'FSSP England is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. Following on from the safeguarding reviews in 2020, we are committed to the One Church Approach to safeguarding by implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to victim/survivors promptly and compassionately.'* The policy forms part of a suite of safeguarding policies aimed at creating a safer environment for all with whom FSSP have contact and sets out the procedures to be followed upon receipt of a low-level concern, including those concerns raised regarding members, volunteers or employees and any potential outcomes.

4.1.2 There is a culture of safeguarding within FSSP, which is attributable to the safeguarding lead, (who is also an FSSP priest), due to his commitment to ensuring that each apostolate has an appropriate, suitably trained and experienced safeguarding representative to deliver safeguarding. Volunteer safeguarding representatives demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities in maintaining a safe environment and provided examples of where risks have been mitigated. During the tour, practical safeguarding arrangements were demonstrated, and evidence was observed of the measures taken to promote the safety of both members and visitors. For example, the installation of glass doors has enhanced visibility, to enable a prompt response should any safeguarding concerns be raised or if immediate action were required.

4.1.3 A tour of St Mary's Church enabled the analyst to observe the practical safeguarding measures in place to enhance the safety of the congregation, clergy and volunteers. CCTV has been installed in and around the church to enhance security and provide reassurance, supporting a safe environment for both those ministering and those visiting the church. FSSP members noted that this has increased their confidence while carrying out their roles and has contributed to a wider sense of safety among visitors. These measures were introduced in response to previous incidents involving inappropriate use of the church, as well as separate cases of criminal damage.

4.1.4 There are five trustees currently, three of which are based outside England; the Superior General and another trustee are both based in Switzerland and another who is based in Edinburgh. Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and are clear on the procedures that would be followed for any areas of non-compliance should they arise. Evidence was seen of how safeguarding has been a standing item on the agenda since June 2023; trustees oversee safeguarding actions and their prioritisation, ensuring that those responsible are suitably supported to undertake associated tasks, such as DBS checks, planning of safeguarding training and completion of risk assessments for each apostolate and its associated activities. Trustees are sighted on any safeguarding incidents and agree remedial action. While outside the scope of the audit timeframe, evidence was seen of the ensuing actions that followed an

incident at a youth camp, involving prompt liaison with all relevant agencies and church bodies, resulting in the strengthening of safeguarding processes. FSSP acknowledge that their most complex operations are those involving the youth camps, where safeguarding risks need to be carefully managed. A third-party raised concerns with the Charity Commission in early 2025. However, the Charity Commission closed their enquiries following the receipt of satisfactory assurances from FSSP.

4.1.5 FSSP have a comprehensive suite of risk assessments combining health and safety and safeguarding risks associated with their ministries and each location where they are provided. These assessments identify the risks, to whom, the level of risk and measures to be taken to mitigate them. They provide details of who holds responsibility and the dates of when the risk has been identified and addressed. While no evidence was seen, the analyst heard how the decision was made to not allow a third-party organisation to use FSSP facilities, due to them not having the necessary safeguarding governance and structures in place at that time. This demonstrates informed and robust decision making to safeguard FSSP's facilities and community.

4.1.6 The Integrity in Ministry⁶ standards have been provided to all members and discussions with them confirm that they have been read and understood and embedded in practice. Members expressed their appreciation of the document, recognising its value in promoting healthy boundaries and ensuring a balanced approach to the needs of both victims and those Religious of whom an allegation has been made against. Given the small community context of FSSP, members outlined how pastoral matters are addressed collectively, providing an informal mechanism for mutual accountability and "keeping each other in check". During discussions, an example of this was provided, where an error in recording of an altar server's attendance was identified, challenged and subsequently corrected.

⁶ 'Integrity in Ministry is a code of conduct for Religious engaged in ministry in the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It has been written for the guidance of those in ministry and for the information of those people with and among whom Religious exercise their ministry.

4.1.7 There has been extensive engagement with RLSS for the purpose of strengthening FSSP safeguarding arrangements. This has included the review of policies and procedures, risk assessments (as referenced in 4.1.4) and routine consultation around DBS eligibility and checking. The safeguarding lead acknowledges the reliance on this advice and support as an important means of informing FSSP's safeguarding practice.

Areas for development

4.1.8 There is currently no safeguarding action plan in place, that sets out the actions that are required to support FSSP's compliance against the national safeguarding standards. Using the recommendations from this audit, one should be developed, detailing who is responsible for implementing each agreed action against the appropriate timescales for completion. The action plan should be regularly reviewed by trustees, to support the tracking and monitoring of progress against the standards, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

Graded: Results Being Achieved

4.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

Strengths

4.2.1 FSSP have a public facing website where a prominent 'Safeguarding' section is accessible from the home page. The following statement is included, *'FSSP is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry within the church. This commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church's common belief in the preciousness, dignity and uniqueness of every human life. Following the safeguarding review of the Catholic Church in England and Wales conducted in 2020, we are committed to the One Church Approach to safeguarding and implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to victims/survivors promptly and compassionately. Through our ministerial activities, we seek to embed a culture where all those within our*

parishes and church communities, or those participating in our pastoral activities are safe from harm and abuse.” Furthermore, the page includes details of the safeguarding lead and safeguarding representatives, as well as information about other relevant services (RLSS, Safe Spaces⁷, NSPCC, Childline, Age UK, police and local social services). By publishing these details, anyone who wishes to come forward to report harm or seek support knows exactly who to contact within FSSP and beyond.

4.2.2 A ‘Safeguarding Matters’ display is situated in a community space in St Mary’s Church and includes the provision of key contacts, a Safe Spaces poster, details of the Warrington safeguarding representative’s role, a ‘Safeguarding Policy statement’ and contact details for a domestic abuse service. Additional information pertaining health and safety notices are included on this display as FSSP recognise the close relationship between the two in maintaining a safe environment. Throughout St Mary’s, consistent messages (signs) were observed, reinforcing the need for children to be accompanied to the toilet. It was reported that since these messages have been displayed, there has been a reduction in the number of children seen unaccompanied, suggesting that the messages are effective and that any associated risk is reduced.

4.2.3 Evidence was provided demonstrating that specific safeguarding messages are being actively communicated to the relevant audience. For example, ahead of the Summer 2025 Youth Camp, parents and carers were emailed confirmation of the safeguarding contacts and informed that, in accordance with national policy, all volunteers facilitating the group are vetted and suitably trained in safeguarding. Additionally, a bulletin produced for Reading parishioners includes clear safeguarding reminders, emphasising the importance of privacy and awareness of safeguarding risks. It reinforces key messages around the need for parents and carers to supervise their children within church grounds and car park, the

⁷ Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe support for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with the Church.

prohibition of photography and recording and the provision of safeguarding contact details.

Areas for development

4.2.4 The information on public display (in Warrington), is largely consistent with the safeguarding page of the website, however, FSSP may want to review the page to ensure that it provides the same level of details as that presented publicly (for example, a description of the role of the safeguarding representative, Safe Spaces poster, domestic abuse information). For other parishes served by FSSP without noticeboards, where newsletters or bulletins are utilised, assurances should be sought to ensure that safeguarding messages are consistently communicated and promoted.

4.2.5 Some good examples were seen of how safeguarding messages are being communicated, however, FSSP serve by and large a younger congregation, therefore may wish to consider the methods used to communicate with children, young people and their families, to ensure that they are appropriate for their age, understanding and experience. Young and older people often expect digital communications as part of their interactions; however, it is important to acknowledge that these methods require careful monitoring and oversight to ensure that all parties are suitably safeguarded. Using social media platforms (eg the FSSP Facebook page) for any audience can enhance engagement, but it is essential to have robust measures in place to safeguard members of FSSP, children and adults against potential risks associated with its use.

4.2.6 There is currently no communication plan in place, therefore, one should be developed that details how safeguarding messages will be shared, with whom and through which methods. The plan could be incorporated into the Safeguarding Policy or safeguarding action plan and should aim to ensure that safeguarding communications are effective, consistent and accessible to all relevant audiences, including children, young people, adults, volunteers and the wider public. Consideration should also be given to engaging key people and using their feedback to inform and strengthen practice in this area.

Graded: Firm Progress

4.3 Standard 3 Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed

Strengths

4.3.1 FSSP England's Safeguarding Policy applies to all clergy, seminarians, lay volunteers or employees, regardless of their role or the activities they undertake. It sets out the practical steps to be taken should a safeguarding issue be raised, including the need to pass concerns on to RLSS along with any associated records. Within the policy, FSSP acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the individual raising the concern is kept informed of next steps, indicative timescales, and is suitably supported by clergy, staff and volunteers or external bodies, where necessary.

4.3.2 To date, no disclosures of harm or abuse have been received by anyone within FSSP, however, discussions during interviews demonstrated an understanding of the need for a personalised, pastoral approach to be provided. In addition, there was a clear readiness to refer and signpost any individual who has experienced harm or abuse within the Church, to independent services, eg Safe Spaces, MIND⁸. The safeguarding lead advised that, in the event of anyone requiring therapeutic support, this would be provided in conjunction with RLSS whose advice would be sought as to the most appropriate service.

4.3.3 Every member of FSSP has undertaken up to date safeguarding training via RLSS, CSSA or other organisations, as appropriate to their role. Evidence of extended training being completed was additionally seen around topics including understanding self-harm, social media and safeguarding. This will ensure that

⁸ MIND is a charity that provides information and support to people with mental health problems.

members are well placed to be able to identify and respond to any safeguarding concerns should they arise in the future.

4.3.4 While beyond the scope of this audit timeframe and outside of the UK, the Superior General described how he has met with a survivor previously and offered counselling, in recognition of the grief and distress that had been caused. It was confirmed that this practice will remain in place for any survivor who comes forward to report harm, and that it is important that they feel confident that they will be treated with sensitivity and offered suitable support.

Areas for development

4.3.5 As referenced in standard 2, when seeking assurances that safeguarding messages are consistently promoted, this should include details of support services available, in line with FSSP's website. This will enable anyone wishing to report harm or abuse to contact services independently if they wish to.

4.3.6 Although FSSP have not had direct experience of engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed, the safeguarding lead and other trustees may wish to consider how they could learn from the experiences of those to whom a safeguarding service is provided, by way of seeking assurance that their needs are being or have been appropriately met. This may be achieved by engaging with support services signposted or referred to, or liaison with other religious life groups and diocesan safeguarding teams who have direct experience in supporting survivors.

Graded: Firm Progress

4.4 Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns

Strengths

4.4.1 The trustees have adopted RLSS template policies and practice guidance, regarding receiving and recording disclosures of abuse. These have been shared

with members, volunteers and employees and have been made available via Dropbox⁹, should they need to be viewed at any point. Interviewees demonstrated a consistent understanding of responded to, including a recognition of the importance of creating an environment conducive to receiving allegations and concerns. For example, in a location where the individual can effectively be listened to. Several interviewees described key messages from their safeguarding training, including how they would not record information at the same time at receiving an allegation or concern but would do so after the conversation had ended. Interviewees were able to distinguish between low-level concerns, and those more serious situations where statutory authority intervention would be required.

4.4.2 FSSP do not have any open safeguarding cases currently, however, a diocese raised a concern regarding a member with RLSS in 2024. An assessment was made by RLSS that the matter was a conduct concern rather than a safeguarding concern, therefore should be dealt with by FSSP in accordance with their own internal conduct policies and procedures. All records pertaining to this matter are held by the Superior General.

4.4.3 A Safeguarding Report Form is in place and to be used to record details of any allegations and concerns. This form has been shared with the safeguarding representatives, with clear instructions stating that once completed, it should be sent to the safeguarding lead who will liaise with RLSS and other agencies, as necessary. In preparation for receiving allegations and concerns, FSSP have recently commissioned iKnowChurch¹⁰, safeguarding management software, designed to help organisations manage safeguarding effectively and safely. The system allows for different levels of access for users, granting specific permissions to view, edit or manage information. This will allow the safeguarding lead to customise access for individual users across FSSP as relevant to their roles, which will seek to ensure an appropriate level of security and confidentiality is maintained, in accordance with GDPR requirements.

⁹ Dropbox is an online platform used to store, share and collaborate on files, folders and documents.

¹⁰ [iKnow Church - Church Management Software](#)

4.4.4 FSSP have had experience in managing and responding to a safeguarding incident (as referenced in standard one). Evidence was seen of the group proactively requesting a review by RLSS of their safeguarding documentation and associated procedures. The outcome of this review confirmed that the documentation was “very comprehensive and fit for purpose.” In addition, some practical measures were recommended to further strengthen safeguarding arrangements for both volunteers and young people that have since been put into place. This demonstrates a proactive approach being taken by the safeguarding lead to reduce risks.

Areas for development

4.4.5 Both the Safeguarding Policy and Low-Level Concern Policy are accessible to members, volunteers and employees; however, they have not been made publicly available. FSSP should make them available via the safeguarding page of their website by way of demonstrating their commitment to safeguarding and the processes to be followed in the event of receiving an allegation or concern. The Safeguarding Policy provides detail on the recording and storage of safeguarding concerns and case files, which is in line with what should be included in a privacy notice. For additional transparency (and to coincide with the implementation of iKnow), leaders should review the existing Privacy Policy (situated on the bottom of the home page of their website), dated 2018, to ensure it includes accessible, easy to read information on people’s rights, including the right to withdraw consent, where there is a lawful basis and how to submit a data subject access request. These elements are essential in ensuring that any individual who receive a safeguarding service understands how their personal data is collected, used and protected.

Graded: Results Being Achieved

4.5 Standard 5 Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)

Strengths

4.5.1 FSSP currently have one safety management plan, which was put into place three months prior to the audit taking place. The creation of this plan was initially initiated by the safeguarding lead, and subsequently completed by RLSS, who holds joint responsibility for its ongoing management. Evidence was seen of involvement of the police and diocesan safeguarding officer, who contributed to discussions around the specific details of the case, which informed the *'specific details and types of restrictions section of the plan.'* Within the plan, there is a section that details the support and care arrangements to be provided, by whom, their contact details, role and nature of support and frequency of support. The safeguarding lead is recorded as the person providing *'support and care arrangements'* and responsible for identifying appropriate supervision within FSSP. At the time of the audit, the safeguarding lead advised the analyst that since the implementation of the safety management plan, a change in circumstances necessitated the sharing of the safety management plan with another Church body, which the respondent was informed of. This demonstrates an awareness of the need for prompt, clear and transparent communication with all relevant parties to ensure continuity of risk management and the need for confidentiality.

4.5.2 During interviews, members demonstrated an understanding of the procedures that would be followed if they were to become the subject of an allegation, for example, the voluntary removal from ministry. They described that if any concern was raised regarding the safeguarding lead, contact would be made with RLSS, for their advice and support. Members referred to the newly developed Code of Conduct and highlighted their responsibilities for reporting any allegations made against them.

4.5.3 In practice, if an allegation were to be made against a member of FSSP, contact would be made by the safeguarding lead with RLSS and the Superior General, to establish next steps, as appropriate to the nature of the allegation and associated risk. If a removal from public ministry was required, this would be facilitated and accommodation sought to a location where no public ministry takes place. Trustees acknowledge that while the FSSP community is very small,

they would have sufficient resilience to provide another member to take on any ministry. Trustees understand their responsibility to work collaboratively with RLSS, dioceses and any other relevant services or authorities in managing any allegations. A trustee shared experience of providing spiritual support to someone subject to an allegation, outside of FSSP UK, noting the importance of ensuring members are suitably supported, whether that be pastorally and/or financially, given the likely impact on their well-being.

4.5.4 There has not been a need for FSSP to seek any legal or canonical advice, however, should the need arise, contact would be made with a diocese to seek their advice and recommendations. The safeguarding lead advised that the FSSP superiors would be called upon for a comparison of practice to ensure that the most appropriate legal and/or canonical advice and representation is secured.

Areas for development

4.5.5 To further support members' understanding of the procedures to be followed in the event of them becoming the subject of an allegation, the safeguarding lead should share the CSSAs *'Guide for Clergy and Religious, if you are the subject of an allegation of abuse'* (or suitable equivalent). This leaflet provides detail around the management of allegations process, outcomes of statutory enquiries and investigations, internal church processes, record keeping and information sharing, provision of support. Additionally, the safeguarding lead and trustees should familiar themselves with the practice guidance *'responsibilities of diocese and religious orders towards clergy and religious against whom allegations have been made.'*¹¹

Graded: Results Being Achieved

4.6 Standard 6 Robust human resource management

¹¹ [CSSA Practice Guidance](#)

Strengths

4.6.1 FSSP's procedures for safer recruitment are included in the Safeguarding Policy and state that the group will ensure that clergy, staff, volunteers and anyone else deemed necessary are subject to DBS checks in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements. Evidence was seen that demonstrates excellent compliance with DBS and overseas checks for members and other volunteers across FSSP, despite a small number of volunteers being in roles where checks would not be expected, (eg parents involved in a parent and toddler group). Out of sixty-nine volunteers, all have an up to date DBS, except for four, whose applications were in process at the time of the audit. This is attributed to the efforts made by the safeguarding lead and safeguarding representatives to ensure that checks are completed promptly, to facilitate volunteers taking up roles. Comprehensive records are maintained by the administrator (who is also the safeguarding representative in Warrington), and evidence was seen on the details recorded regarding DBS checks, including the applicant's certificate number, date of issue and expiration dates. It is anticipated that this information will, in time, be stored on iKnowChurch, which will assist with the tracking of DBS checks, safeguarding training and other tasks associated with any future safeguarding cases.

4.6.2 Evidence was seen of the safeguarding lead responding to a blemished DBS, where the applicant's certificate was followed up to determine the nature of the blemish. This information was reviewed and the decision on suitability was made accordingly.

4.6.3 For any new member wishing to pursue a vocation with FSSP, checks are completed to assist with establishing their suitability, including overseas police checks, DBS and the completion of safeguarding training. The latest member of FSSP joined in 2024 from overseas and was subject to a European police check and safeguarding training, both of which were completed prior to the commencement of any active ministry. A DBS check was subsequently completed in April 2025. In the self-assessment, the safeguarding lead reports that regular discussions take place with new members' ministry to ensure they are suitably supported in their roles. During interview with the safeguarding representatives, the analyst heard

that in response to recognising the cultural differences in approaches to safeguarding particularly for overseas members, this is addressed by sharing what constitutes safe practice.

4.6.4 The responsibility for safer recruitment processes on an apostolate level is held by the safeguarding lead, while trustees have oversight of the processes for anyone wishing to explore a vocation with FSSP. During interview, they described that a central file is held by the Superior General and includes information as sought from the seminary rector, including any known behavioural or conduct issues that are likely to impact the ability to minister safely. This information is used to inform decision making as to the suitability of that individual to pursue a vocation with the fraternity.

4.6.5 The analyst heard from the safeguarding lead that prior to the audit, conversations held with new members highlighted the need to develop a formal induction process for all roles. An induction document has since been developed by the safeguarding lead, to be used for all new clergy, employees and volunteers, and there is an expectation that the document is signed by the person conducting the induction and the person receiving it. The safeguarding lead and other trustees may want to consider rolling this out to existing clergy, employees and volunteers across FSSP, to which sufficient resources and time will need to be allocated.

4.6.6 Both the Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policies have been made publicly available via the 'contact us' page of FSSP's website. FSSP state that *"complaints will be viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who has made the complaint."* This statement provides a strong message to anyone considering making a complaint, that they will be taken seriously and that their complaint will be used to inform practice. Further evidence was seen of these policies being promoted amongst members and safeguarding representatives. To date, neither policy has been formally applied, however, in liaison with two dioceses, both provided the analyst with details of FSSP's responses to complaints made to their respective diocese, demonstrating that FSSP's practice in relation to complaints is consistent with the message on their website.

Areas for development

4.6.7 Some recruitment processes need strengthening further, for example, for youth camp volunteers. Despite needing a current DBS (or overseas check for visiting seminarians) and up to date safeguarding training, before being able to volunteer, references are not routinely sought beyond seminarian volunteers¹². This is not in line with the Safeguarding Policy, where it states that *'appointment to a role will not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS check has been received and previous employment references confirmed as being acceptable.'* FSSP should review their processes to include the seeking of references, to assist them in identifying any potential concerns early and in assessing a person's suitability for a specific role. Given their overall legal accountability, trustees should review whether they are suitably informed about all aspects of safer recruitment, including at a volunteer level.

4.6.8 The Safeguarding Policy has been shared and is easily accessible, however, no request has been made for employees to sign to say they have been provided with a copy and understand all relevant policy and procedures and have had their responsibilities highlighted. Paragraph 9.4 of the policy explicitly refers this being applicable to new employees, however, the safeguarding lead should seek confirmation that policies have been read and understood not only from new employees but also from existing ones, members and volunteers and any other individuals who may be required to apply or adhere to the policy. This will provide assurance that all relevant parties are aware of their responsibilities.

Graded: Results Being Achieved

4.7 Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding

Strengths

¹² A Testimonial of Suitability confirms that the seminarian is in good standing, and that there are no concerns, allegations or criminal convictions (eg relating to any misconduct with children or vulnerable adults).

4.7.1 Evidence seen and discussions held as part of the audit demonstrate that significant effort is made to ensure that members and volunteers avail themselves to safeguarding training before commencing their roles. Training records are maintained by the administrator and provide comprehensive information on safeguarding training completed by members and volunteers across the three apostolates, including the renewal dates, upon proof of the training certificate. The safeguarding lead has undertaken additional training that exceeds the minimum standards as set out in FSSP's Safeguarding Policy. Together, with a background in housing and social care, he is well placed to fulfil the requirements of the role and lead on safeguarding across FSSP UK.

4.7.2 Out of five trustees, two are based in England and have completed trustee training with RLSS during 2024.

4.7.3 Safeguarding representatives play an important role in supporting the safeguarding lead to deliver effective safeguarding across FSSP. They have a strong understanding of the expectations of their roles and how they contribute to creating a safe environment, which is attributed to them being recruited to the role based on their professional backgrounds (in psychotherapy, police and education). All three safeguarding representatives reported having a positive relationship with the safeguarding lead, whom they feel very well supported by. This, coupled with the training they have received puts them in a good position to be able to meet the demands of the role.

4.7.4 Training records held for youth camp volunteers confirm that alongside safeguarding training, additional training is sought on first aid, which meets the expectations set out in the statutory guidance for out of school settings.¹³

4.7.5 There have not been any failures to comply with training requirements, which the safeguarding lead attributes to FSSP being a small community in which training expectations are made clear. Trustees advised that any failures to comply with training will be addressed promptly, for example, for members, this may involve the

¹³ [After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition - safeguarding guidance for providers](#)

temporary removal of ministry. For volunteers, they would be expected to step down from their voluntary role until compliance is met.

Areas for Development

4.7.6 Interviews with members and safeguarding representatives highlighted a need for further training to be sought around mental health and spiritual abuse. The safeguarding lead should produce a formal analysis to establish the training needs of members, safeguarding representatives, and youth camp volunteers, as appropriate to their ministries and roles.

4.7.7 The remaining three trustees should ensure that they are suitably trained to ensure a consistent understanding of the governance, finance and safeguarding compliance expectations associated with operating as a charity in England and Wales.

4.7.8 There are currently no formal mechanisms in place for seeking feedback from training and measuring its effectiveness. Informal conversations are reportedly held, however, there is no evidence that this feedback has led to any changes to practice. Providing opportunities for critical reflection is important, individually and as a group, as it will allow members to share their experiences, learn from them and consider what further support they may need to develop their safeguarding practice.

Graded: Results Being Achieved

4.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Strengths

4.8.1 Evidence reviewed as part of this audit and liaison with RLSS and other church bodies demonstrates a tangible commitment from FSSP to ensure compliance against the safeguarding standards. The strong links established with RLSS have facilitated several reviews of safeguarding documentation, policies and procedures, and risk assessments. Any advice given or amendments suggested to

documents are received and promptly acted upon and have secured improvements to FSSP's safeguarding policy and practice.

4.8.2 Although no evidence was seen, an example of good practice was shared whereby in one of the apostolates, a meeting has previously been convened to discuss 'best practice' in relation to health and safety and safeguarding. These meetings will be planned regularly and will be documented. By adopting this process consistently across all apostolates, this supports a more cohesive approach to the sharing of good practice and promotes continuous improvement.

Areas for Development

4.8.3 Consideration is currently being given to the development of a safeguarding action plan, which will be informed by the recommendations arising from this audit. The plan should clearly outline what actions are required to achieve each of the eight national safeguarding standards, who will be responsible for each action and their associated timescales. Trustees should seek to regularly review the plan, as appropriate, by way of monitoring progress against the recommendations.

4.8.4 The safeguarding lead acknowledges a lack of experience with victim-survivors, therefore, to enhance practice in this area, FSSP should seek to reflect on any learning from training and the experience of other religious life groups or diocesan safeguarding teams with experience of engaging and listening to those who report harm.

4.8.5 Although no evidence was seen, an example of good practice was shared whereby in one of the apostolates, a meeting has previously been convened to discuss 'best practice' in relation to health and safety and safeguarding. These meetings will be planned regularly and will be documented. By adopting this process consistently across all apostolates, this supports a more cohesive approach to the sharing of good practice and promotes continuous improvement.

Graded: Firm Progress

5. Summary of overall findings

5.1. FSSP have consistently demonstrated their commitment to ensuring compliance against the national safeguarding standards and of continuous improvement through the establishing of strong links developed with RLSS and other church bodies. These links have led to measurable improvements to policy, procedure and practice which have contributed to safer environments being created across FSSP locations and specific activities.

5.2 It is acknowledged that members have limited experience of supporting those who report harm; therefore, efforts should now be made to develop a communication plan that details how messages are consistently and clearly delivered to encourage anyone to come forward to report harm. In preparation for engaging with and caring for those who report harm, FSSP should seek to learn from the experiences of other religious life groups and/ or diocesan safeguarding teams to inform practice and to provide assurances that their responses are appropriately trauma-informed, and in line with safeguarding policies.

5.3 The comprehensive suite of policies and procedures developed by FSSP underpin safeguarding practice. Together with the training completed by members, employees and volunteers, this ensures that they are suitably prepared to follow the processes in the event of an allegation or concern being raised, with the required knowledge and confidence.

5.4 FSSP should now seek to develop a safeguarding action plan, using the recommendations from this audit. This will build on existing good practice evident in their overall rating of Results Being Achieved, while driving further improvements.

6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

Within 3 months

- To develop a safeguarding action plan using the recommendations from this audit.

- To make the Safeguarding and Low-Level Concerns Policies publicly available on the website.
- To seek written confirmation that all safeguarding policies have been read by members, employees and volunteers, in line with paragraph 9.4 of the Safeguarding Policy.

Within 6 months

- To develop a Communication Plan that sets out how safeguarding messages will be communicated. This plan could be incorporated into the Safeguarding Policy or a safeguarding action plan and should include how FSSP will engage with key people for their feedback on the effectiveness of safeguarding communications, as relevant to the audience.
- To ensure that the information pertaining support services on FSSP's website is consistent with that on public display and available across each apostolate.
- To review and strengthen existing procedures for the recruitment of volunteers, to ensure a level of robustness when determining the suitability of an individual.
- To identify other religious life groups or diocesan safeguarding teams that have experience of engaging those who report harm. For mechanisms to be developed to ensure that any learning is disseminated widely, amongst members, safeguarding representatives and other volunteers, as appropriate.
- For the CSSAs '*Guide to Clergy and Religious, if you are the subject of an allegation of abuse*' (or a suitable equivalent) to be shared amongst members, so that they understand the procedures that would be followed, in the event of an allegation being made against them.
- Leaders to consider how best to share best practice across FSSP in relation to safeguarding arrangements, to ensure that a consistent approach is taken.

Within 12 months

- To develop a Training Needs Analysis to assist with the identification of any gaps in training and support for members and safeguarding representatives. (The analysis should include training already identified as part of this audit, in mental health and spiritual abuse).
- To seek specific trustee training for the three remaining trustees.
- To update the Privacy Policy, as currently promoted on the website, to ensure that any individual receiving a safeguarding service understands how their personal information is collected, used and protected.

7. Arrangements for follow-up

7.1 In line with the audit pathway, having received an overall rating of Results Being Achieved, the minimum period for the FSSP's next safeguarding audit will be two years, subject to there being no indications of increased risk.

8. Appendix

- Clergy and reps DBS List
- Clergy and reps training certificates
- Code of Conduct
- Correspondence regarding safety management plan
- Correspondence with DBS applicant
- DBS and training log
- DBS job roles
- DBS renewal dates
- Examples of bulletins
- Examples of newsletters
- Extracts from trustee meeting minutes
- Induction form

- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Example of parents' information email
- Promotion of Complaints and Whistleblowing Policies
- Risk assessments
- Role descriptions
- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding posters
- Safeguarding report form
- Safeguarding training certificates
- Safety management plan
- Testimonial of suitability
- Youth camp paperwork