



WESTMINSTER ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESAN TRUSTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

Terms of Reference¹

A vital part of the mission of the Diocese of Westminster (DOW) is working to create a culture and practice of Safeguarding in all our activities and responding well to those who come forward to report having suffered harm. Through its structures, strategy, policies and practice, the Diocese ensures that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The RCDOW Safeguarding Service (SGS) is an operational team of safeguarding professionals and administrative employees, centrally located and part of the Diocese of Westminster curia. The staff team, led by the Head of Safeguarding, is managed by and reports to the Diocesan Chief Operating Officer (COO).

1. Purpose

The purpose of the SGS is:

- 1.1 To lead in the promotion of the culture of safeguarding, working across the Diocese and with the Trust Board, the Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishops and Diocesan Directors, in particular through the operation of safer recruitment practices and support for all those involved in ministry and safeguarding in the diocese;
- 1.2 To ensure open and transparent processes for the receipt and handling of concerns, information and allegations of abuse within the Diocese; responding to, managing and appropriately investigating all such matters;
- 1.3 To co-ordinate, train, promote and support Clergy, curia staff, parish employees and volunteers who work within the Diocese to safeguard and protect from harm or risk of harm those that come into contact with the DOW through its work;
- 1.4 To ensure that those who report allegations of abuse or raise safeguarding concerns and those who are the subject of such concerns or allegations are provided with and / or signposted to appropriate guidance and support;
- 1.5 To identify and disseminate safeguarding learning and continuous improvement opportunities and good practice.

¹ To be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference of the Trustee Safeguarding Committee and those of its Sub-Committees

2. To achieve its purpose, the SGS will ensure that:

2.1 Case management

- 2.1.1 Allegations and referrals to the SGS are appropriately investigated, managed and dealt with fairly, equitably, within appropriate timescales and in accordance with the law, CSSA and Diocesan safeguarding policies, good practice and guidance.
- 2.1.2 Allegations of abuse are reported to Statutory Agencies in accordance with Diocesan policy and within the required timescales, and safeguarding incidents and concerns are referred to Statutory Agencies in accordance with Diocesan policy.
- 2.1.3 There is appropriate and proportionate management across the Diocese of those who minister within the Diocese, those who work for or volunteer within the Diocese and those who attend churches as Parishioners and who may present an ongoing risk to those who come into contact with the Diocese of Westminster.
- 2.1.4 Serious safeguarding incidents / allegations or disclosure of abuse suitable for reporting to the Catholic Insurance Service and / or the Charity Commission for England and Wales are identified and brought to the attention of the COO and the Chair of the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee, to be handled in line with Charity Commission Guidance for charity trustees about Serious Incidents.
- 2.1.5 There are effective and collaborative information sharing relationships with the Vicar General to assist in the appropriate management of risk and operational response where safeguarding allegations have been made against Diocesan Clergy, and also to ensure appropriate support can be provided to respondents.
- 2.1.6 As appropriate, advice, support, guidance or review is sought from the CSSA or other internal / external professional bodies to ensure that case handling, including investigation, is fair, proportionate and necessary, in accordance with existing policy and legislative frameworks.
- 2.1.7 Independent investigation and / or review is commissioned, where necessary, in accordance with Diocesan policy.

2.2 Support, care and advice

- 2.2.1 Support, advice and guidance is provided to Clergy, curia staff, diocesan and parish employees and volunteers to enable them to perform their role and functions safely and to protect people from harm or the risk of harm.
- 2.2.2 Guidance and / or signposting to sources of support is provided to both those who have reported allegations of harm or abuse and those who are the subject of allegations and / or safeguarding concerns.
- 2.2.3 We deliver on our published commitment to survivors and ensure that those who make allegations are received with courtesy, compassion and care.

2.3 Safe Recruitment

2.3.1 Clergy, curia staff, parish employees and volunteers who undertake work across the Diocese have been safely recruited and have the appropriate level of DBS check for the role undertaken.

2.4 Training, learning and continuous improvement

2.4.1 Clergy, curia staff, parish employees and volunteers who undertake work for the Diocese have the appropriate level of safeguarding training and safeguarding refresher training for the role undertaken.

2.4.2 Safeguarding learning and continuous improvement opportunities are identified and disseminated through casework, training and outreach work, in order to provide improved safeguarding, practice and risk management.

2.5 Collaboration

2.5.1 There is full cooperation with the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee in the exercise of its functions and that information on casework and complex safeguarding incidents and the operational work of the SGS is provided to the Diocesan Trustee, the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Committee's constituent committees to enable effective oversight.

2.5.2 Work is undertaken with other diocesan Departments (HR, Evangelical Team, Caritas etc) but also through external multi agency partnership and stakeholder engagement to ensure effective safeguarding of those who work for the Diocese or come into contact with the Diocese through the work that it delivers.

2.5.3 There is full cooperation with any work undertaken by The National Tribunal Service, in so far as it concerns diocesan clergy.

3. The SGS will operate within the existing (and developing) law, policy and practice for:

3.1 DBS and Safe Recruitment

3.2 Training, Learning and Continuous Improvement

3.3 Parish Support and outreach

3.4 Management of concerns and allegations, guidance, policies and good practice

3.5 Victim / survivor management, guidance, signposting and support (including funding for counselling)

3.6 Respondent management, guidance, signposting and support

4. Accountability

The SGS will attend and provide information outlining the SGS performance and outcomes for strategic oversight and assurance to:

- RCDOE Board of Trustees'; and,
- The Trustee's Safeguarding Committee (and, where relevant, its constituent sub committees).

All new cases will be reported to the Chair of the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee, as required by the CSSA.

The SGS will provide monthly information on new safeguarding cases, active cases, cases for closure (including lessons learned in any case) and risk management for strategic support, challenge, oversight and assurance to the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee's Casework Sub Committee.

The SGS will provide monthly oversight on Learning and Continuous improvement for strategic support, challenge, oversight and assurance to the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee's Quality Enhancement and Assurance Sub Committee.

5. Matters reserved to the Trustee

Certain matters will be reserved to the Trustee and not delegated to the Safeguarding Service (or Trustee's Safeguarding Committee). namely:

- Serious incident reporting, as the scope of matters requiring reporting is much wider than safeguarding matters. The Safeguarding Service however has a role in Serious Incident Reporting, particularly around the identification of safeguarding matters to be escalated in accordance with the Diocesan policy on Serious Incident Reporting.
- Approval of new Diocesan policies and procedures. The SGS will however be asked to provide specialist input during the development of policies and procedures.
- The approval of financial budgets. The Safeguarding Service may be asked to take part in the wider budget setting processes and procedures in relation to the Safeguarding Service.
- Service provision complaints (in line with the Diocesan policy).
- Liaison with insurers/solicitors regarding claims. In accordance with Diocesan Policy and procedures, the Safeguarding Service may, however, be required to notify the insurers of incidents and engage with insurers or solicitors as appropriate or as directed.

6. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The SGS shall comply with all legal requirements for data handling, retention and destruction. Where it is necessary to disseminate personal data, those who receive such data shall be required to comply with all such legal requirements.

**Recommended to the Trustee by the Safeguarding Committee
6 March 2025**

**Approved by the WRCDT Board
14 March 2025**

**Review by the WRDCT Board
14 March 2028**