

Diocese of Westminster Safeguarding Implementation and Improvement Plan 2026 – 2029

Westminster Safeguarding Service

Understanding the Implementation and Improvement Plan 2026-2029

The Implementation and Improvement Plan is separated into the 8 standards set out by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), the regulatory body for the Catholic Church within England and Wales.



This Three-Year Implementation and Improvement Plan outlines how the Diocese of Westminster will deliver the 8 National Safeguarding Standards in line with our Diocesan goals to achieve measurable improvements in line with best practice. The goals and priorities within this plan are informed by relevant national standards and guidance, ensuring that improvement activities are aligned with recognised expectations for quality, safety, and service delivery.

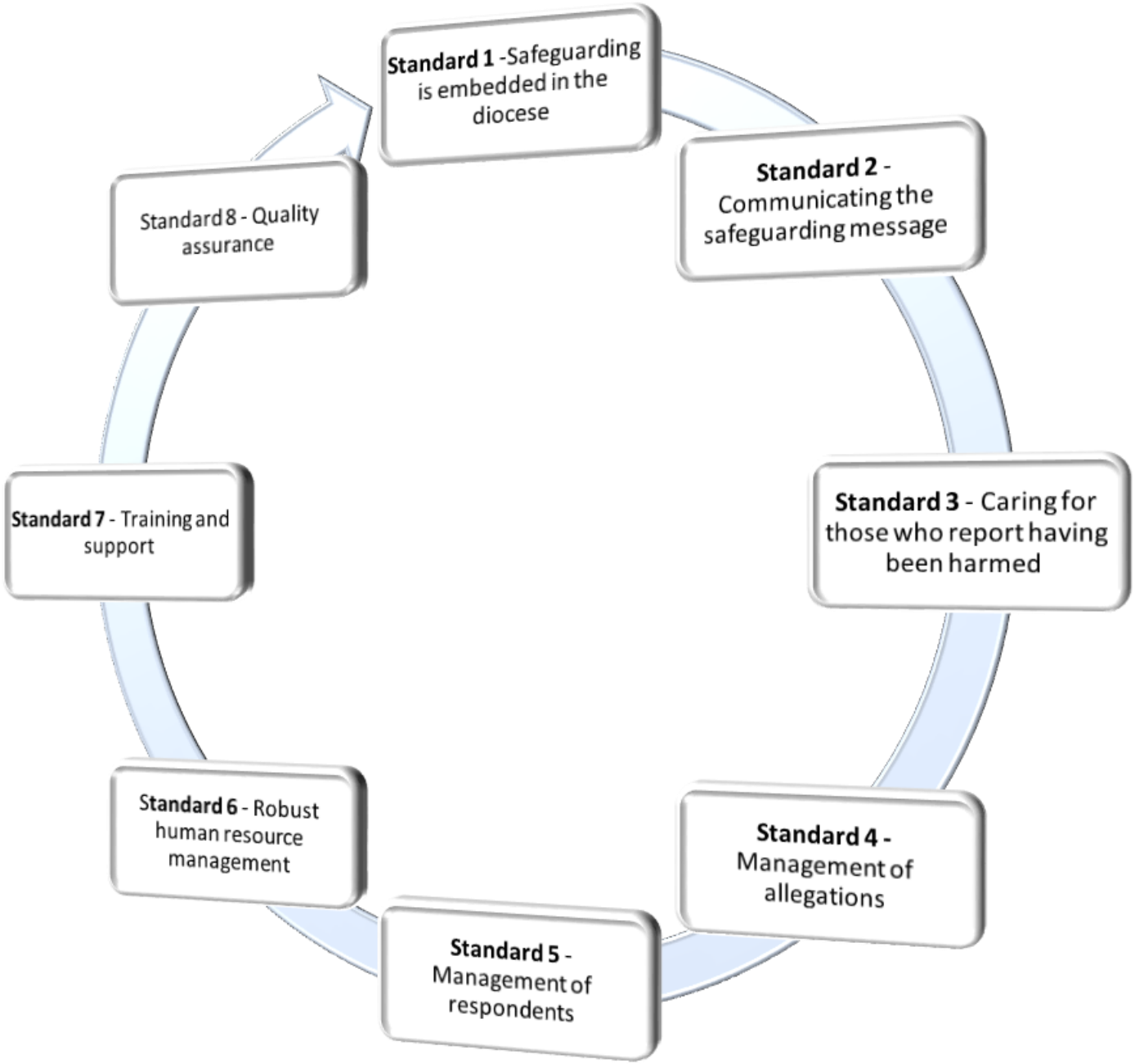


This overarching summary provides a high-level overview of our goals, expected outcomes, and key areas of focus. The Implementation and Improvement Plan underpins the Diocesan Strategic Plan.



Progress will be monitored through a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) reporting framework at both service and committee, enabling clear oversight of delivery and performance to support independent governance. Detailed analysis, actions, milestones, and operational arrangements are set out in the accompanying Action Plan, which serves as the organisation's internal implementation and monitoring document.

National Standards



Summary of key Safeguarding Implementation Plan outcomes and Key Priorities and end of year outcomes for the Safeguarding Implementation Plan 2026-2029

Area	Diocesan goals	Anticipated outcomes for 2026 onwards	SGS RAG	Sub Cttee RAG	Action Owner
Standard 1 Safeguarding is embedded in Diocese of Westminster	Safeguarding is embedded in the leadership, governance, ministry, and culture of the diocese Robust policies are in place to support safeguarding across the diocese.	• Casework is timely and of a high standard.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding Safeguarding Cttee / Trustees
		• Robust supervision of the safeguarding team			
		• Safeguarding team use their specialist skills in a targeted way ensuring safeguarding is highly effective within the diocese.			
		• Offenders who are known to pose a risk within the church community are subject to a robust risk assessment and have an effective safeguarding plan in place.			
		• Safeguarding risks are identified, prevented, and future risks mitigated against			
		• Information sharing with external agencies is timely, robust and focuses on the safety of the church community and subject.			
		• Develop a culture of reviewing all significant safeguarding issues to mitigate future risk.			
Standard 2 Communicating the safeguarding message	Safeguarding throughout the diocese is driven by a clear and robust communication plan	• The diocese has a written plan detailing how the safeguarding message will be communicated.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding Communication Team
		• The communication plan is visible to all, with safeguarding information freely available			
		• Where English is not the first language, appropriate steps are taken to ensure the safeguarding message is communicated			
		• Establish links with other local organisations to promote a safe community and to share best practice			
Standard 3 Caring for those who report having been harmed	Victims are at the heart of everything we do	• Victim focused approach.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding
		• Safeguarding officers are experienced and appropriately trained.			
		• All clergy trained and confident in dealing with safeguarding matters.			
		• Appropriate information sharing			

Key: **SGS** = RCDOW Safeguarding Service **Sub Ctte** = RCDOW Safeguarding Committee and Sub Committees

Summary of key Safeguarding Implementation Plan outcomes and Key Priorities and end of year outcomes for the Safeguarding Implementation Plan 2026-2029

Standard	Diocesan goals	Anticipated outcomes for 2026 onwards	SGS RAG	Sub Cttee RAG	Action Owner
Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns	The management of allegations is prompt, effective and in line with national practice Embed and enhance the skill base within the safeguarding team. Instil a culture of learning lessons to mitigate future risk	• Casework is timely and of a high standard. • Robust supervision of the safeguarding team • Safeguarding team use their specialist skills in a targeted way ensuring safeguarding is highly effective within the diocese. • Offenders who are known to pose a risk within the church community are subject to a robust risk assessment and have an effective safeguarding plan in place. • Safeguarding risks are identified, prevented, and future risks mitigated against • Information sharing with external agencies is timely, robust and focuses on the safety of the church community and subject. • Develop a culture of reviewing all significant safeguarding issues to mitigate future risk.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding Casework Sub Cttee
Standard 5 Management and support of respondents	The diocese has in place a system of support and monitoring for respondents	• Safeguarding team have the appropriate training and experience • There is appropriate support available for respondents. • Risk assessment / management plans used during investigation are fair and robust. • Ongoing support for those out of ministry • There are clear procedures if case not upheld or found to be false. • Clear procedures for complaints made against a volunteer.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding QA&E Sub Cttee
Standard 6 Robust human resource management	All those working or volunteering within the diocese are subject of robust checks and uphold the Diocesan safeguarding standards	• DBS system is highly effective. • Safer recruitment practices drive recruitment across the diocese • Clear understanding of the volunteer workforce to enable support, training, and effective oversight. • Recruitment and support of PSR's is a priority.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding Human Resources

Summary of key Safeguarding Implementation Plan outcomes and Key Priorities and end of year outcomes for the Safeguarding Implementation Plan 2026-2029

Standard	Diocesan goals	Anticipated outcomes for 2026 onwards	SGS RAG	Sub Cttee RAG	Action Owner
Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding	Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role	• Training delivered to clergy, staff, and volunteers. • Quality of training is highly effective and supports safeguarding across the diocese. • Online training packages completed to ensure a minimum standard of safeguarding knowledge across the diocese. • Safeguarding information and advice provided to parishioners. • Bespoke training packages delivered.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding Training Sub Cttee
Standard 8 Quality assurance and continuing improvement	The church body has a mindset of reflection, review, and continuous improvement	• Archbishop Moth has in place arrangements to monitor, ensure, and evaluate compliance with the 8 standards. • A robust 3-year strategic plan is in operation with the resources to achieve it • An annual parish audit is completed with compliance and outcomes scrutinised.			SGS / Head of Safeguarding QA&E Sub Cttee

National Guidance -Standard 1

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

The central importance of respect, trust, and safety always i.e., "safeguarding", is recognised and prioritised in all the decisions and actions of the Church body. Effective safeguarding is embedded in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry, and culture.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

LGC1: Leadership – The Church body will:

- Have a **zero-tolerance approach** to all abuse, recognising the possible escalation of low-level concerns into more serious incidents if not addressed.
- Seek and support the engagement of those who report having been harmed in contacts with personnel of the Church body, listen and respond to them.
- Make publicly available statements of its safeguarding commitments that are displayed within any location e.g. physical and online) that it operates.
- Ensure a culture of safeguarding, as everyone's responsibility and integral to its mission and ministry, is championed by its leadership.

LGC 2: Governance – The Church body's leadership will:

- Establish and regularly update their governance arrangements to ensure that they facilitate the implementation of the safeguarding standards.
- Set out clearly the responsibilities of Bishops/Superiors, Parish Priests and other leaders of ministries and services for safeguarding practice to enable effective adherence to the agreed standards.
- Establish a Safeguarding Implementation Group made up of leaders and professional experts to drive their Safeguarding Implementation Plan and oversee their safeguarding practices.
- **Develop and publish a Safeguarding Implementation Plan** for a period of three years with an annual review and update.
- Provide adequate resources, recruit, and support suitably trained and experienced safeguarding personnel to deliver their safeguarding services at every level including that of the parish and other ministries and services.

LGC: 3: Ministry and Culture – The Church body will:

- Identify, prevent, and mitigate safeguarding risks in its structures, culture, and practice of ministry.
- Regularly support and participate in any safeguarding training that is provided.
- Actively promote the "Caring for Others" pastoral and personal conduct standards agreed by the Bishops Conference in April 2020, and the Integrity in Ministry standards produced by the Conference of Religious.
- Seek to continuously improve its practices by focusing on and learning from the outcomes of its responses to safeguarding cases.

LGC: 4: Ministry and Culture – The Church body's leadership will:

- Encourage and support a culture of transparency through their promotion of the communications standards.
- Adhere to information sharing practices and record creation policies that have been agreed nationally.
- Promote constructive engagement with the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency and SCCS

The following represents evidence that could be used to indicate compliance with this standard:

- Existence of a written safeguarding implementation plan for the Church body.
- Commitment to the Safeguarding Strategic and Implementation Plans being regularly review and amended.
- Definition of the responsibilities of all involved in leadership in the Church body in contributing to effective safeguarding.
- The minutes of leadership meetings containing reference to safeguarding matters being discussed in line with the standards.
- Regular liaison with the CSSA and SCCS and their advice being sought.

National Guidance -Standard 2

Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message	Each Church body proactively communicates the Church's safeguarding message. **The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:** **CSM: 1 The Church body will:** • Have a written plan that describes how it will communicate its safeguarding messages, to whom, and in what manner. • Regularly update its communication plan, taking account of developments in its practice. • Link to other Church bodies and organisations to promote a safer environment within the Church and local community. **CSM: 2 The leadership of the Church body will:** • Actively engage with volunteers, parents, and guardians, adults at risk and children and young people, when deciding how to communicate their safeguarding messages most effectively. • Promote an understanding of their commitment to effective safeguarding amongst those that they serve, and to the wider public. • Demonstrate that they own the safeguarding messages that they produce. **The following represents evidence that would indicate compliance with this standard.** • The existence of a written plan that details the Church body's approach to communicating its safeguarding messages. • Reviews of the communication plan and a timetable for planned revision. • Links with local organisations, voluntary and statutory, that are present within the community. • Reference to safeguarding messages in management and leadership meetings within the Church body. • Existence of posters and other notices containing essential safeguarding information on open display in any premises that the Church body operates within.

National Guidance -Standard 3

Engaging with and Caring for those who report having been harmed

Those that report having suffered harm receive a compassionate, caring and timely response, and are provided with access to appropriate support, advice, and pastoral care.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

EC1: The Church body will:

- Respond to any disclosure of abuse with compassion and care, seeking to provide signposting as appropriate to support and advice, and offer pastoral care tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Establish access to personnel with training relevant to specific needs, to deliver professional mental health and other appropriate support when required.
- Collaborate with other organisations, both voluntary and statutory, who specialise in this area of work.
- Look to learn from the experience of those that are provided with a service, to confirm that it is meeting their needs.
- Reflect on any disclosures that it receives with a view to drawing learning from them to inform the CSSA and future safeguarding practice across the One Church.

EC2: The Leadership of the Church body will:

- Actively reflect upon their response to those who report that they have been harmed, to enhance their commitment to it being compassionate and caring, and improving their practice.
- Engage with those that report harm to try to learn from their experiences.
- Support development in their practice that is aimed at enhancing a compassionate and caring response.

The following represents evidence that would indicate compliance with this standard:

- Seeking training for all members who may receive a disclosure of abuse to help them respond in a compassionate and caring way.
- Signposting to other organisations that have appropriately trained personnel to respond to those that report that have been harmed.
- Commissioning reviews of their practice from the CSSA (Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency).
- Creating conversations with those that report that they have been harmed, either in groups or individually.
- Records that show that the experience of those that report that they have been harmed has been actively discussed and reflected upon within leadership and management meetings in the Church body.

National Guidance -Standard 4

Effective Management of Allegations and Concerns

Each Church body will have processes for raising concerns or making allegations, which are clear, understood, and accessible and reviewed by its leadership.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

EFI: The Church body will:

- Ensure that it receives and responds to allegations in line with the nationally agreed policies.
- Receive allegations and concerns respectfully, identifying and addressing the difficulties faced by those making disclosures and those receiving and responding to them.
- Will always collect such information into an allegation as necessary, providing that this does not conflict with, or jeopardise the actions to be taken by the statutory authorities.
- Provide support for those disclosing or raising a concern, and those against whom an allegation or concern is raised.
- Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality in respect of allegations or concerns, in line with accepted standards.
- Keep accurate records of any allegations disclosed in accordance with data protection principles, national policies and procedures, and in a way that makes the information recorded easily accessible.

EF2: The Church body will:

- Ensure that all allegations of abuse are passed on without delay to the appropriate statutory authorities for investigation.
- Comply with the stipulations of Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019) and the CDF's Vademecum (2020) regarding responding to and supporting those who report having been harmed.
- Where relevant, inform the CSSA / SCCS of the existence of the allegations and share with them the details that would enable them to provide support if required.
- Inform the trustees of the existence of allegations and confirm the responses being made.
- Routinely seek to draw and share learning from any concerns that are raised as a way of developing its own and the wider 'One Church' practice.

The following can be used to confirm that this standard is being met:

- Records of allegations and concerns received, and details of the responses made to them.
- A written plan for supporting those who make and those who are the subject of an allegation.
- The minutes of leadership meetings within the Church body that record

National Guidance -Standard 5

Management and Support of Subjects of Allegations and Concerns (respondents)

Each Church body will have in place an effective process for responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations, which includes a robust system for managing and monitoring, and an effective system for supporting respondents.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

SMR 1: Management – The Church body will:

Have access to personnel that have been trained in providing management, monitoring and support of respondents.

Ensure that any canonical investigation into an allegation will take place in compliance with can. 1717 §§1- 3, other relevant provisions of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and any lawfully promulgated revisions, Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela (as amended in 2010), Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019), and the CDF's Vademecum (2020).

Access suitably accredited professionals to conduct risk assessments to inform the provision of safeguarding plans.

Seek advice and guidance from the CSSA when faced with a need to create and put in place a safeguarding plan for individuals with roles within the Church, without abrogation of responsibility by the Church body for putting plans in place.

Establish effective mechanisms for regular review of continuing safeguarding plans.

Maintain confidentiality whilst meeting disclosure requirements to statutory and canonical authorities.

On completion of any statutory investigation, the Church body will take forward the preliminary investigation in compliance with can. 1717 §§1- 3 and can. 695 (where applicable) and the relevant provisions of Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019) and other applicable law and instruction from the Holy See.[2]

SMR2: Support – The Church body will:

- Adhere to national policies and/or practice guidance that set out how a respondent is to be informed when an allegation has been made and supported thereafter.
- Be mindful of the impact on the wellbeing of the respondent and appoint a support person with the responsibility for listening to and addressing the pastoral needs of the respondent.
- Access suitably accredited professionals to deliver professional mental health and other appropriate support when required.
- Ensure that the respondent has access to suitable legal representation when subject to statutory/canonical investigation.

The Church body may evidence that it is meeting this standard by:

- Appointing appropriately trained and experienced personnel.
- Demonstrating adherence to national policy through how they inform, support, manage, and monitor respondents.
- Facilitating leave from sacred ministry.
- Managing the return of the respondent to ministry when there is no case to answer or the allegation has been shown to be false.
- Conducting appropriate safeguarding risk assessments.
- Providing records detailing the steps taken to monitor respondents.

National Guidance - Standard 6

Robust Human Resource Management

Each Church body will ensure that those working with children or adults at risk are appropriately recruited, vetted, and supported to deliver safeguarding standards in practice.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

HRM1: Recruitment – The Church body will:

- Ensure that all selection and screening procedures have been completed and the results acted upon.
- Require all overseas personnel, and those that are new to ministry, to have received training in the safeguarding standards and to have a good understanding of their content, prior to being involved in active ministry.
- Require the completion of all vetting checks in a timely way.
- Keep accurate records of those who have committed offences, noting their location, and management plans, and sharing this information with the CSSA upon request.

HMRC2: Human Resource Management and Support – The Church body will:

- Create and publish a complaints policy that sets down how a complaint can be made, and how it will be responded to.
- Respond to all complaints in a way that aims to achieve an early resolution.
- Ensure that the whistle blowing policy is readily available to all personnel to enable them to report a concern.
- Provide or access training in the supervision and management of known or suspected offenders.

The following represents evidence that indicates that this standard is being met:

- Leadership of the Church body is regularly informed of any delays in completing screening checks for new personnel in safeguarding roles.
- Appropriate checks are made on all overseas personnel.
- Records are monitored by leadership to ensure that they are up to date.
- Training is provided to those involved in the supervision and management of offenders or those who are subject to a safeguarding plan.

National Guidance - Standard 7

Training and Support for Safeguarding

The Church body will provide and access ongoing training and support to everyone involved in safeguarding to enable them to deliver the practice described within the safeguarding standards.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

TS1: Training – The Church body will:

- Ensure that all its members who require it, including those in formation, have access to and avail themselves of nationally agreed safeguarding training to support their contribution to the Church body's safeguarding practice.
- Look at ways in which the specific training needs of key personnel, such as safeguarding leads or those in leadership roles, can be met.
- Regularly review what training is provided and seek ways in which this can be developed further.
- Produce a training needs analysis to facilitate the provision of training.
- Avail themselves of locally provided safeguarding training from relevant organisations in the area.
- Keep records of those who avail themselves of training opportunities and proactively engage with those who do not attend.

TS2: Support – The leadership of the Church body will:

- Prioritise the provision of effective safeguarding training which delivers and promotes critical reflection on practice.
- Raise an alert to its trustees and notify the CSSA / SCCS on any failures to meet its training requirements which may impact negatively on its practice.

The following represents evidence that would indicate compliance with this standard:

- The existence of a safeguarding training plan for the Church body, which has been updated and revised.
- A comprehensive training needs analysis for safeguarding for the Church body.
- Notes within the minutes of management and leadership meetings for the Church body, that the training needs are being tracked and discussed.
- An induction programme for new leaders and other key roles within the Church body.

National Guidance - Standard 8

Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

The Church body will develop a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards to continuously improve their practice.

The criteria which indicate that this standard is being met include:

QA 1: Quality Assurance – The Church body will:

- Put in place and maintain arrangements that will evaluate compliance with the agreed safeguarding standards in all its various activities.
- Proactively engage with and hear the voice of those who report having been harmed to inform and improve practice.
- Regularly track the level of compliance as shown by its own auditing processes.
- Report any deficits in its compliance to the agreed standards along with details of any actions to be taken to address the situation to the competent ordinary or superior, to its trustees, and to the Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- Analyse concerns and allegations, and complaints received and create innovative ways in which it can draw learning from its practice to build improvements.

QA2: Continuous Improvement – The Church body will:

- Create a three-year rolling safeguarding implementation plan[3].
- Specify who is responsible for implementing agreed actions within the plan.
- Make available the necessary resources to track and complete the agreed actions.
- Produce and publish an annual safeguarding report for members, trustees, and other stakeholders.
- Regularly review its implementation of and adherence to the national mandatory safeguarding policies (at least every three years).

QA 3: Continuous Improvement – The Church body will:

- Facilitate the independent review of their compliance with the safeguarding standards undertaken by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) in accordance with the contractual agreement between them.
- Adopt the recommendations arising from any CSSA review incorporating these into its safeguarding implementation plan.
- Provide updates to the CSSA on progress in implementing the recommendations.
- Publish any CSSA review and report this to its stakeholders.

The following represent evidence that would indicate compliance with this standard. The Church body has:

- Devised a range of mechanisms that track its compliance with the agreed safeguarding standards; these may include direct observation of practice to ensure compliance with agreed standards.
- Sought and shared information relating to its performance with the CSSA.
- Regularly monitored and amended its safeguarding implementation plan as circumstances change.
- Shared details of its performance with its members, trustees, the CSSA, and other stakeholders.