

Society of the Divine Saviour Salvatorians

Baseline Audit Report
March 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is a baseline audit of the Safeguarding arrangements at the Society of the Divine Saviour, also known, and referred to hereafter in this report, as the Salvatorians. The audit has been undertaken as part of the CSSA's Baseline Audit phase of Religious Life Groups (RLGs).

1.2 The Salvatorians in England and Wales are part of the British Pro-Province of an international congregation of Priests and Brothers founded in Rome in 1881. Members of the international society are engaged in apostolic activities in 40 countries worldwide. There are 11 Salvatorians in England working across eight Parishes in five dioceses as Parish Priests and Curates. Two are in part-time ministry and one is retired with occasional ministry. The Dioceses are Westminster, Clifton, Southwark, Hexham & Newcastle and Liverpool. Three of the Parishes are owned by the Salvatorians but the one in the Diocese of Clifton is currently without a Priest. The Priests are expected to follow the safeguarding expectations of the diocese in which they minister.

1.3 The Salvatorians employ a part-time secretary and a part-time Safeguarding Officer who is self-employed and bills them for the hours that she works. The Salvatorians are members of the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)¹ but have an agreement with them that any safeguarding casework would be managed by the Safeguarding Officer. There are no direct volunteers for the Salvatorians.

1.4 This audit seeks to assess the effectiveness of current safeguarding arrangements, by considering practice over the last twelve months. 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 Salvatorians

¹ [Religious Life Safeguarding Service](#)

were categorised as a level 2 community because their role is to provide Parish Priests and Curates in a mixture of full, part-time and occasional ministry, in five dioceses, and they completed the corresponding self-assessment.

2. Scope & Methodology

2.1 This baseline audit was undertaken following the submission of the Level 2 self-assessment by the Safeguarding Lead on 5 November 2024. Supporting evidence was provided on 11 November 2024 and on the day of the audit visit, 3 December 2024.

2.2 Audit interviews were undertaken in person on 3 December 2024 with the Safeguarding Officer, supported by the secretary, and with the Provincial Lead, the Priest who is the Safeguarding Lead and sits on the Trustees and one of the Parish Priests.

2.3 Liaison has also taken place between auditors, RLSS and the safeguarding teams in Westminster, Southwark, Hexham & Newcastle and Liverpool regarding the Salvatorians' engagement with their safeguarding expectations. As there is no Parish Priest presently in Clifton no contact was made with them.

3. Audit Grading

3.1 Practice was assessed against the eight national safeguarding standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales² 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.

3.3 The Salvatorians have received an overall rating of Exemplary.

² Full details of the eight standards and underpinning sub standards are available here: [The Eight National Safeguarding Standards \(catholicsafeguarding.org.uk\)](https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

Overall Grading	Exemplary
Standard 1 - Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry and culture	Exemplary
Standard 2 - Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message	Comprehensive Assurance
Standard 3 - Engaging with and Caring for those who report having been harmed	Exemplary
Standard 4 - Effective Management of Allegations and Concerns	Comprehensive Assurance
Standard 5 - Management and Support of Subjects of Allegations and Concerns (respondents)	Exemplary
Standard 6 - Robust Human Resource Management	Comprehensive Assurance
Standard 7 - Training and Support for Safeguarding	Exemplary
Standard 8 - Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement	Exemplary

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 Considerable resources have been dedicated by the Salvatorians to safeguarding. This includes through the engagement of a self-employed Safeguarding Lead, a trained and experienced safeguarding professional. She has high level separate qualifications in Theology and Psychotherapy and considerable experience in counselling and safeguarding in religious contexts in the UK and Ireland. A Safeguarding Panel, attended by the Safeguarding Lead and at least one Trustee, meets a minimum of three times a year and supports, assists and advises the Trustees in discharging their Safeguarding duties. Trustees meet on a monthly basis and Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for them with one of the Salvatorian Trustees taking a lead role for Safeguarding. The December 2024 Safeguarding Panel received updates on Safeguarding cases, discussed their Safeguarding information leaflet and policies and procedures, reviewed the Safeguarding plan and discussed cyber security. Interviews with members of the Salvatorians demonstrated that they understood that Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

4.1.2 The Salvatorians have a detailed Safeguarding Policy which was ratified in December 2024 and will be formally shared with all members in February 2025. This was developed by their dedicated Safeguarding Officer with oversight from their Safeguarding Panel and Provincial Council. It was shared with the CSSA, RLSS and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland³ to allow them opportunity to comment upon it. Appendix A to the Safeguarding Policy, Guidelines for Ministry, is the Salvatorian's adaptation of the expectations of

³ [National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland - Home](#)

Integrity in Ministry⁴ giving clear guidance to the Salvatorians of how they must conduct themselves in their daily ministry.

4.1.3 The current version of the Salvatorian Safeguarding and Communication Plan runs from 2024 to 2028. The latest version provided as evidence for this audit was last updated in August 2024. The plan establishes development objectives, sets actions and allocates them to responsible individuals or groups, with implementation and completion dates. Additional evidence was provided of a Safeguarding Plan dating back to 2017. This demonstrates that there is a long established practice of identifying and mitigating Safeguarding risks within the Salvatorians.

4.1.4 The Safeguarding Policy commits the Salvatorians to safeguarding all children and adults at risk. It was acknowledged that the British Pro-Province website is not functioning as expected and needs updating (see Standard 2 Areas for Development below). However, the website in its current iteration offers a commitment to Survivors that they will be listened to, have their concerns taken seriously, dealt with sensitively and acted upon as necessary.

Areas for Development

4.1.5 No areas for development were identified.

Graded: Exemplary

4.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

Strengths

4.2.1 As the Salvatorians are ministering in dioceses as Parish Priests the primary responsibility for Safeguarding communications lies with the relevant diocese. The

⁴ Integrity in Ministry is a code of conduct for Religious engaged in ministry in the Catholic Church in England and Wales

Safeguarding Policy anticipates that all Salvatorians will communicate the Church's message of Safeguarding through their lifestyle and manner of engaging with people. In addition, the Salvatorian website and Salvatorian newsletter are used by the Provincial Leadership council to share Safeguarding news.

4.2.2 In the Provincial Office auditors were shown a specific Salvatorian Safeguarding Information Poster which includes a policy statement and details of where to report concerns, including to the Safeguarding Lead, RLSS or, in an emergency, to police. It is anticipated that, when refurbishment of the community house is complete, it will be displayed there.

4.2.3 The Safeguarding and Communication Plan 2024 to 2028 has five actions related to "Communicating the Safeguarding Message". One of these actions, creating a Safeguarding Policy Information Leaflet, is fully completed whereas others, with expected implementation dates in 2025, remain ongoing.

Areas for Development

4.2.4 In their self-assessment for audit the Salvatorians said that the Safeguarding page from their website is under reconstruction. When this is completed it will enable them to complete two of their other actions from the Safeguarding and Communication Plan 2024 to 2028. These are to update the website and have their Safeguarding policies and procedures available there.

4.2.5 In its current form, the website contains a commitment to Survivors and links to four external potential sources of support. When the website is able to be updated the Salvatorians may wish to consider whether they also include a link to Safe Spaces⁵, alongside the other external sources of support listed in Appendix F of their Safeguarding Policy, to allow Survivors a means of access to services without the need for them to engage with the Salvatorians beforehand.

4.2.6 When the website is complete and has been available to the public for an appropriate period of time the Salvatorians will wish to review their

⁵ Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal, and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales.

communications for effectiveness. This should be done, if possible, through engagement with key people, such as Survivors, to ensure that messages are reaching them in the manner in which they were intended and, if they are not, to allow adaptations to be made.

Graded: Comprehensive Assurance

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

Strengths

4.3.1 In addition to the expectation that the Salvatorians will comply with the safeguarding training expectations of the dioceses where they minister, they also engage with annual Salvatorian safeguarding training provided by the Safeguarding Lead. Details of the training provided from 2017 to date have been seen by auditors alongside potential content for future training sessions. In 2017 training was given on “Responding to a Complainant” and since that time there has been regular and consistent input on responding to, and supporting, survivors. This has included guidance on note taking, what the Church has to offer children and vulnerable adults, redress, support and outreach to survivors, alongside hearing the voice of a survivor. The Safeguarding Policy stipulates a “Reporting Procedure” and “Reporting Flowchart” combined with guidance on how a “Complainant” will be cared for. This consistent but varied approach, alongside Diocesan training, will allow any member of the Salvatorians to confidently respond to any disclosure of harm that they receive.

4.3.2 The Safeguarding Panel, which has Trustee representation, have oversight of any disclosures that are received. At present the Salvatorians have three open cases, with one of those anticipated to close soon. They all relate to Salvatorians who are deceased so no Safeguarding plans are in place.

4.3.3 The Safeguarding policy sets out clear expectations around Survivors being able to meet with the Provincial Leader or his delegate. The Salvatorians have also taken the decision to offer every complainant access to 12 sessions of counselling, should they choose to accept this. The Provincial Superior spoke about his

experience of meeting with a Survivor who wished to meet with him. He was supported both prior to and after meeting the Survivor by the Safeguarding Officer. He said that he saw how much this individual had suffered and it helped him to recognise the importance of supporting Survivors. This compassion for Survivors is reflected in the long established decision to offer counselling to all Survivors. As part of ensuring that each member of the Salvatorians would be equipped to offer a compassionate approach to Survivors, the 2023 Safeguarding training included dedicated time to hearing the voice of a Survivor.

Areas for Development

4.3.4 The Safeguarding Policy has recently been ratified and therefore can not be considered fully embedded across the Salvatorians. When it is time for the anticipated annual review this should be done in the light of any feedback received from Survivors about the efficacy of current policy and practice.

Graded: Exemplary

4.4 Standard 4 Effective Management of Allegations and Concerns

Strengths

4.4.1 Although they are members of RLSS, the Salvatorians have agreed with them that any safeguarding concerns related to one of their members will be managed by their Safeguarding Officer. Given her level of training and experience, and the provision of support through the Safeguarding Panel, whose terms of reference stipulate that representatives should be sought from agencies such as Police or Probation and currently has a police representative, this is an appropriate way to manage these cases. Safeguarding concerns which relate to Parishioners that attend the Churches would be overseen by diocesan safeguarding teams.

4.4.2 The Safeguarding Officer maintains an effective paper filing system which was seen by auditors in person. This includes a dedicated section to demonstrate reporting of allegations to police and confirming their receipt of them. Evidence was provided which showed the Safeguarding Officer reporting allegations to

Operation Hydrant⁶ in line with the expectations of the Safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Policy highlights that any internal actions are secondary to, and will not interfere with, ongoing criminal investigations. Records are securely stored with access limited to those who require it. Dated records are kept of any external access to the file which includes the reason that the access was provided.

4.4.3 The Safeguarding Lead spoke about learning from their experience of managing previous cases leading to an understanding of the need to keep archives safe and in order. Work is currently underway to review the archives to identify any historic safeguarding concerns that may not have been dealt with effectively, or recorded as dealt with, and address them.

Areas for Development

4.4.4 The Safeguarding Officer acknowledged that the Salvatorian approach to managing any cases that involve them is not fully understood in all the dioceses in which they minister. This could potentially lead to confusion about responsibility for case management and appropriate information sharing. This might, in turn, impinge upon the effective management of any new cases. Therefore, it will be important for the Salvatorians to approach the safeguarding coordinators in each of the dioceses where they work to ensure a common, formally agreed understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Graded: Comprehensive Assurance

⁶ The Hydrant Programme is a national policing programme supporting the work of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Child Protection and Abuse Investigation Working Group. Originally established in 2014 to coordinate the response to non-recent child sexual abuse, but now supporting forces across all child protection and abuse investigation issues.

4.5 Standard 5 Management and Support of Subjects of Allegations and Concerns (Respondents)

Strengths

4.5.1 The Safeguarding Policy outlines the support that Respondents to allegations or concerns are entitled to from the Salvatorians. This includes having an advisor, another member of the Salvatorians, allocated to him who will support him and ensure he has access to civil and canonical legal advice. The Policy does not currently specify the level of training and support that the advisor will have to fulfil their role. The Safeguarding Panel has access to Canon Law expertise to ensure that any necessary investigations were carried out in accordance with its stipulations. There was an awareness across the leadership that there may be occasions when Respondents need to be stepped down from ministry and there would be ongoing emotional, financial and practical support for the Respondent in this circumstance, through a dedicated monitoring panel.

4.5.2 The Respondent's advisor is entitled to regular meetings with the Safeguarding Officer to keep them abreast of developments. The Salvatorians would also be able to access psychological support for any Respondent that needed it. The Safeguarding Officer has the professional expertise and experience to ensure that Respondents are receiving the appropriate level of support from the Salvatorians, in line with the expectations of the Safeguarding Policy, throughout the period there is an open allegation or concern against them.

4.5.3 No Safeguarding plans are currently in place and there has not been one in the last 12 months. However, on the last occasion that a risk assessment and Safeguarding plan was necessary the Safeguarding Officer conducted these with the support of a police officer to ensure their effectiveness. The Safeguarding Panel, and therefore Trustees, would also have oversight to make sure that their practice expectations were met.

Areas for Development

4.5.5 No areas for development were identified.

Graded: Exemplary

4.6 Standard 6 Robust Human Resource Management

Strengths

4.6.1 As noted previously, the Safeguarding Officer is self-employed so not a direct employee of the Salvatorians. However, she was engaged by them following a recruitment process involving an interview and seeking references. She is also DBS checked for her role. The Provincial Secretary, a part-time role, is their only employee in the UK and has been in post for a number of years. She works with the Safeguarding Officer and is responsible for DBS checks and collating Safeguarding Training information & Certs. The Salvatorians have no volunteers as those that work in the Parishes are recruited by the Diocese. Therefore, they have not had to utilise a Safer Recruitment process in the last 12 months. Despite this, the Safeguarding Policy outlines Safer Recruitment expectations including the Safeguarding Officer assessing, in liaison with RLSS and the relevant Diocese, whether the role needs a Disclosure and Barring Service⁷ (DBS) check and at which level. CSSA and RLSS recruitment forms will be used. Candidates must also agree to adhere to the stipulations of the Safeguarding Policy. It is mandated that all Salvatorians will have an enhanced DBS check, updated every three years with copies provided to the Provincial Secretary for a central record. Responsibility for completion of the DBS check lies with the diocese in which they are ministering. As noted previously, one of the Salvatorians had an out of date DBS at the point of audit which demonstrates that there is not full compliance with the Policy.

4.6.2 The Salvatorians have one individual who is hoping to enter into Formation. He is now living in the UK and has arrived from a country with similar safeguarding expectations. He is compliant with visa requirements. When he has been in the UK for six months a DBS check will be sought. References have been received, including from his employer and he will be expected to be compliant with all the Safeguarding training expectations of the Diocese where he works and the additional Salvatorian Safeguarding training. A second priest has recently arrived from a country where safeguarding expectations are not fully in line with those of the UK. However, he has received a check from the police in his country of origin and will be expected to complete online training, diocesan training and work with

⁷ [Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

the Safeguarding Officer to ensure that he is fully conversant with the safeguarding expectations of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

4.6.3 The Safeguarding Policy has a two-stage process for an individual to raise a complaint about how their allegation of abuse was handled by the Salvatorians. The first is an informal stage which aims to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of both parties promptly. If this is unsuccessful the complainant can utilise the second formal stage in which the Provincial Superior will refer the complaint to an external body, RLSS, to investigate. The Safeguarding Policy also has a whistleblowing, or Conscientious Disclosure, section which will be shared with the membership in February 2025.

Areas for Development

4.6.4 When the website is redeveloped and the Salvatorians are able to publish their policies there individuals within and outside the Salvatorians will have ready access to a process whereby they can raise complaints or make a Conscientious Disclosure. At present the limitations of the website prevent this.

4.6.5 The CSSA Policy “Making a complaint to the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) about a diocese, eparchy or religious life group in England and Wales” states that “The CSSA will investigate complaints about the Catholic dioceses, eparchies, and religious life groups” and “The CSSA is the final stage for unresolved complaints”. Therefore, the Salvatorians will need to update their Safeguarding policy to reflect that the CSSA will investigate unresolved complaints rather than RLSS.

4.6.6 Enquiries with the Diocese revealed that one member of the Salvatorians is outside the expected three year recheck for DBS. The Diocese intend to work with the individual in January 2025 to resolve this but Leaders of the Salvatorians will wish to ensure that this individual engages fully with the process to rectify it promptly.

Graded: Comprehensive Assurance

4.7 Standard 7 Training and Support for Safeguarding

Strengths

4.7.1 The Safeguarding training expectation for a member of the Salvatorians is higher than that of a diocesan priest. The Safeguarding Policy directs that Salvatorians take part in the safeguarding training of the Diocese and, in addition, complete annual Salvatorian Safeguarding training prepared by the Safeguarding Officer. Liaison with the diocese indicates that they are compliant with their training expectations and the Provincial Superior said that all members complete the annual Salvatorian training. Records are kept of training completion by the Provincial Secretary. If members were not compliant then there is a process that would be followed. Initially the Provincial Secretary would request that they complete the expected training, then it would be raised to the Safeguarding Officer. If this were unsuccessful, it would be brought to Trustees for their attention and action. This scenario has not yet occurred.

4.7.2 The Salvatorian training provision is based on feedback from the Salvatorians themselves at their annual gathering, the members of the Safeguarding Panel and on the professional knowledge and experience of the Safeguarding Officer. Potential future topics for training include the Canonical Crime of Sexual Abuse, Grooming and Self-Care which incorporates vicarious trauma. Evaluation forms are distributed at the end of training sessions and verbal feedback is encouraged at the end of sessions. The interviewed members of the Salvatorians valued the training provision highly.

Areas for Development

4.7.3 No areas for development were identified.

Graded: Exemplary

4.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Strengths

4.8.1 The eight Safeguarding Standards of the Catholic Church in England and Wales are detailed in the Safeguarding Policy and were part of the annual Salvatorian safeguarding training in 2023. The Safeguarding Officer completes an annual review of safeguarding practice which is shared at the annual gathering with all Salvatorians. Also at the safeguarding training in 2023 there was a dedicated section for the voice of a Survivor to be heard. This enabled all Salvatorians to learn directly from the experience of a Survivor. The Provincial Superior also spoke about his experience of direct engagement with a Survivor.

4.8.2 A Safeguarding Implementation Plan, initially referred to as the Safeguarding Plan and now the Safeguarding and Communication Plan, is well established and regularly reviewed by the Safeguarding Panel. Actions are allocated to individuals and groups and tracked for completion to ensure continuous improvement.

Areas for development

4.8.3 No areas for development were identified.

Graded: Exemplary

5. Summary of Overall Findings

5.1. The Salvatorians in England and Wales minister in diocesan and Salvatorian Parishes and must, according to their own Safeguarding Policy, meet diocesan vetting and safeguarding training expectations. However, they also engage their own Safeguarding Officer, who has considerable skills and experience in safeguarding, to lead on the management of any concerns involving members of the Salvatorians and provide the Salvatorians' additional internal safeguarding training expectations. Care for survivors includes the offer of meeting with Leaders and funding for counselling should they chose to accept it. Respondents also know that they would be allocated an advisor to support them through any allegation made against them. While they already demonstrate robust safeguarding

practice, an established Safeguarding Plan, overseen by the Safeguarding Panel including representation from Trustees, drives future developments.

5.2 There are some areas where improvements can still be made, the most significant of which is updating the Salvatorian website. However, the evidence seen for this audit demonstrates that the highest overall rating of Exemplary is achieved.

6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

Within 3 months

Liaise with the safeguarding coordinators in the dioceses where the Salvatorians minister to formally agree a written understanding of case management and information sharing expectations

Update the Safeguarding Policy to reflect that the CSSA are the final stage for unresolved complaints

Ensure that all Salvatorians in ministry engage with Diocesan DBS recheck processes to be within the expected three year period

Within 6 months

Reconstruct the Salvatorian website to include the Safeguarding Policy for public accessibility

Add links to Safe Spaces and other sources of external support for Survivors to the website

Within 12 months

Review the effectiveness of Communications, in association with stakeholders such as Survivors, to ensure messaging is reaching target audiences as intended

Review and update the Safeguarding Policy, with feedback from Survivors where possible

7. Arrangements for Follow-up

7.1 In line with an overall rating of Exemplary, the earliest date of the next audit of the Salvatorians by the CSSA is within three years in December 2027. If the CSSA becomes aware of a significant Safeguarding concern or allegation in the intervening period, then an earlier audit will be required.