



The Spiritans

British Province
Congregation of the Holy Spirit

*One Heart
One Spirit*

Safeguarding Commission

Safeguarding Policy

Person(s) responsible for the Policy	British Province Safeguarding Team
Approval of the Safeguarding Team	02/03/2025
Ratified by the Board of Trustees	17/03/2025
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Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our approach is enshrined in the guidelines of our wider Spiritan Religious Order's Safeguarding Commitment.

This policy sets out our commitments to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk who are our beneficiaries or come into contact with us or someone affiliated with us.

Furthermore, it is designed to assist Spiritan Clergy and or Religious, volunteers, office and support staff, to understand their responsibilities towards safeguarding the welfare of any person who is involved in activities organised in the name of the Spiritans.

The Spiritans are committed to ensuring all our Ministry, activities and engagement within the wider community are held to the highest standards of safeguarding practice, are compliant with current legislation and fully accountable to the national procedures and the Charity Commission.

Our British Province membership and works cut across the Catholic Church of England and Wales, and the Catholic Church in Scotland, with their distinct Bishops' Conferences.

These standards are in line with the policies and procedures outlined within National guidance from

1. The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) of England & Wales.
2. the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA).

These ensure everyone has a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibility in both England and Wales and Scotland.

Definitions

Abuse and **neglect** are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting, by those known to them., or more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Please see Appendix 2 for more information about different types and indicators of abuse.

A child means any person under the age of 18 and 'children' are to be construed accordingly.

Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health or development including for example impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

LADO means Local Authority Designated Officer. The LADO works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Significant Harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes Significant Harm. Consideration of the severity of ill- treatment may include: the degree and extent of physical harm; the duration and frequency of abuse or neglect; the extent of premeditation; the degree of threats or coercion; elements of sadism and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse.

Who is an 'Adult at risk'?

For the purposes of this policy, an adult at risk is an adult who:

- is aged 18 years or more;
- is receiving or may need care and support for learning, physical or mental disability, sensory impairment, age or illness;
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those needs is unable to take care of him or herself or protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Such a definition includes adults with physical, sensory and mental impairments and learning disabilities, howsoever those impairments have arisen e.g. whether present from birth or due to

advancing age, chronic illness or injury. Also included are people with a mental illness, dementia or other memory impairments, people who misuse substances or alcohol.

What is abuse?

Abuse can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual must always be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It can include physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, emotional abuse. It can include domestic abuse, modern day slavery and so called 'honour' based violence. Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives or friends of the person experiencing abuse, as well as visitors in our various places of mission.

Lone working with children or adults

It is an important safeguarding principle when working with children, young people or Adults at Risk, to ensure that another adult is always present. There are some roles, in particular chaplaincy, where the nature of the role, necessitates working alone with adults, who may be vulnerable or at risk. If any role involves lone working with children, contact must be made with the Archdiocese Safeguarding Team for advice, prior to the commencement. If a role may involve lone working with adults, there are potential risks and therefore a written risk assessment should be completed which considers the following:

- Who knows where you are?
- Can you be seen by others?
- How would you raise an alarm?
- Are you in regular contact with your supervisor?
- Who has access to your diary?
- How do you keep yourself safe?
- How do you mitigate any risk?
- How do you ensure that the person you are working with feels safe?
- How do you minimise an allegation being made against you?

Lone workers should also be able to complete dynamic risk assessments that assess the environment, the client and the individual's perception of the situation. Lone workers must always be able to withdraw from any situation if they feel unsafe and must report this to their line manager as soon as they are able to.

Policy statement

Our British province;

- Recognises that everyone has the right to live free from violence, fear and abuse;
- Acknowledges and will comply with all its responsibilities to safeguard children and adults at risk.

- Recognises the personal dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults towards whom it has a special responsibility and duty of care.
- Undertakes to do all in its power to create a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults and prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Safeguarding Commission will liaise closely with statutory agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly and fairly dealt with and perpetrators held to account.
- Will report all allegations of abuse, to the police within one working day;
- Is fully committed to supporting children and persons with vulnerabilities to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment;
- Will support victims of Spiritan/ clergy abuse. It will also give support to Spiritan/ clergy who are found to be either perpetrators or victims of false allegations.
- Will publish details of who to contact if there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or adult at risk in Religious Communities or other settings in which missionary activity occurs.

Any abuse of children and/or adults at risk under the supervision or care of clergy, religious, volunteers, employees or persons involved in Missionary activities will not be tolerated. Such behaviour is contrary to the Gospel and to the Church's mission, stated values and ideals, which require that everyone must be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

This policy must be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a member of the Clergy or Religious Community, a lay person, or a volunteer or employee:

- has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or an adult at risk;
- has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or an adult at risk;
- has behaved towards a child(ren) or an adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults;
- has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults;
- has behaved in such a way that, by actions or omissions, his or her conduct has been intended to interfere with or avoid civil investigations or canonical investigations, whether administrative or penal, against a cleric or a religious.

If an allegation is made indicating that a child and or adult with vulnerabilities (including adult at risk) is in immediate danger the allegation must be reported to the police and the local authority children's department immediately.

All allegations of abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults reported to any member of the Religious Order (Spiritans) or a member of the Safeguarding Team, or working within the Religious Order, must be reported to the police and, in respect of those with children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO) within one day.

Anyone who reports allegations, provides information or articulates concerns about abuse will be listened to seriously, with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity.

Any allegation of abuse or information or concern about possible abuse will be processed in accordance with all the Religious Order's statutory obligations, with any associated good practice

guidance, all CSSA, and RLSS Policies and Practice Guidance, and with this Spiritan Procedures on the Management of Allegations, Information and Concerns.

Any person against whom an allegation is made (a respondent), or about whom information is received or a concern is raised, will be treated with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity. No assumption will be made as to the guilt of the respondent.

The Spiritans will act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with the police, the LADO, health agencies, the Probation Service and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and adults with vulnerabilities (including adults at risk) to assist in bringing to justice anyone who has committed an offence.

Anyone acting in the name of the Spiritans has a responsibility to act in accordance with the Safeguarding Minors and Vulnerable Adults Guidelines (2025), the CSSA Guidance, and this Policy, when it appears that any child has suffered or is at risk of abuse.

All those who have a role within the Religious Order (Spiritans) whether in paid employment, in voluntary work, or as clergy or religious must comply with the requirements of this Policy.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed

- Every 3 years.

We recognise that the safeguarding landscape is always evolving and our policy could be subject to change in the light of;

- 1. Any change in jurisdictional guidance,*
- 2. legislative changes in the UK,*
- 3. As required by the Charity Commission,*
- 4. Following any learning by The Spiritans, British Province, the Catholic Church in England & Wales and Scotland).*

If you have any concerns about the welfare of children or adults at risk, please contact one of the following:

Fr. Terkura Igbe, CSSp.

Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator

M: 0740 580 5128

E: safeguarding@spiritans.co.uk

Or

Edouardo Ushe

Assistant Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator

M: 07542668916

E: safeguardingoffice@spiritans.co.uk

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative: _____

Police Tel: _____

Social Services:

Children Tel: _____

Vulnerable Adults Tel: _____

National Childline. Tel: 0800 1111

NSPCC. Tel: 0808 800 5000

Stop It Now! Tel: 0808 1000 900

Action on Elder Abuse. Tel: 0808 808 8141

RLSSS. Tel: 0151 556 2311