

Delivering Change and Building Trust

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Update

- From Carol Lawrence, Project Implementation Director

The project is entering its final month now, having set out a six-month timeline to deliver the new structures. Whilst there is work to do in some areas, significant progress has been made and the workplan is being drawn together ahead of completion. Many Dioceses are currently working through the transfer from Safeguarding Commissions to Sub-Committees of their Diocesan Trusts, as will the larger Religious Life Groups with their own Safeguarding Commissions. This marks one of the most significant changes in governance for safeguarding, putting those charities which have done so in line with the Charity Commission expectation and guidance. Workstreams are making progress and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service is gathering momentum in its development.

Work has continued on the financial workstream, the group having met several times now, and I am happy to report that progress is being made in this complex area. Those on the workstream are all working hard to finding a way to arrive at a mechanism that is just and equitable and as simple to understand as it is possible to make it. The work is to ascertain how the costs of the CSSA should be allocated to the two constituent cohorts, being Dioceses and Religious Life Groups. It is a difficult task, as financial arrangements often can be, however with goodwill and perseverance a solution will be found.

As always if you have any queries, please do get in touch either through the website www.catholicsafeguardingproject.org/ or by email to info@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk



Workstream Progress

There are currently five ongoing workstreams, some of which are close to completion and others which are beginning as scheduled in the overall workplan.



Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency

Building trust, delivering change.

Dr Colette Limbrick CEO

- The second meeting of the ending alignment working group is taking place on 4th May 2021.
- Work continues on developing the CSSA website.
- The first meeting of the national complaints mechanism workstream took place on 5 May 2021.
- The CSSA has commenced evaluation of the responses to the Parish Resource pilot survey and shared the responses with the pilot dioceses. The working group will meet within the next 2 weeks to finalise the survey.
- Work on the draft national training framework cannot be completed until there is consultation with the Religious Life Safeguarding Service in due course. Meantime, the existing national training policy is being aligned with the new National Standard for Training. An interim framework, supported by the national standard and related policy, will be submitted to the Short-Term Task Group in due course.

Disclosure and Barring Service



The CSSA is now registered in its own right with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Discussions are taking place with GBG (ebulk provider) and PAMIS Ltd (provider of new integrated database/ebulk service) in respect of the transfer to the new Registered Body. This is a significant step in the progress of establishing the CSSA as the Church's regulator, as it has been recognised as a safeguarding service by the DBS.

Whilst the discussions take place to integrate with ebulk, processing will continue to take place uninterrupted under the CSAS Registered Body.

Alignment

There has been some concern expressed that alignment of Religious Life Groups will end with the ending of Diocesan Safeguarding Commissions. However, this is not be the case. Alignment will continue until such times as the Religious Life Safeguarding Service is in operation and the same support and professional advice will be provided by Dioceses to aligned Religious Life Groups as at present. The agreement for alignment is between the respective Diocesan Trusts and the Religious Life Groups, meaning that the work in supporting aligned Groups is unaffected by the transfer to Sub-Committees of Diocesan Trusts and the decommissioning of Safeguarding Commissions. If you have any queries or concerns on this please contact CSSA for assistance.

Project Website <https://www.catholicsafeguardingproject.org/>

Up-to-date information, copies of previous newsletters, presentations and FAQs can all be found on the project website. So far there have been almost 1,000 unique visitors to the site, and whilst the most interest is from people in England and Wales there are visitors from Scotland and all parts of Ireland, across Europe including Belgium, Italy and Malta, as well as further afield as far as USA and New Zealand.

Religious Life Safeguarding Resource

- Fr David Smolira SJ

Hot off the press, I can inform you that the Religious Congregation Leaders in England and Wales have voted for their preferred model for the Religious Life Safeguarding Service. Very nearly 200 Congregation Leaders voted from a wide range of Religious Congregations. In addition, about 15 congregations send in messages saying that they were not voting because they were continuing their own bespoke safeguarding arrangements. They wished the development of the RLSS well and will, of course, contract into the standards and audit process of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency. That leaves about 90 religious Congregations unaccounted for and work will need to continue so that we can make contact with these Congregation Leaders (some of whom will live abroad) and encourage future participation.



The Model for the RLSS chosen by the Religious is one that has three dimensions to it. The first is a two-way contracting arrangement: with the CSSA, to agree to the standards and auditing approach and to contract into the RLSS and its professional safeguarding service. The second dimension of the RLSS chosen is for an “all-in” service, including case management (where necessary), training, policy advice and support, assistance with how each congregation can make its contribution to creating a safer Church for everyone. The third dimension is the way that the levy for the RLSS will be calculated and collected. The Congregation Leaders have chosen what is called a *per capita* levy. This will set a standard fee for each religious in England and Wales and the Religious Congregation will contribute on the basis of how many members they have within the Bishops’ Conference area. The way in which the contribution from Religious to the CSSA and the National Tribunal Service will be calculated is still being discussed. The CSSA has proposed a different system than was being considered earlier and this will now need to be worked on in the Financial Workstream. Naturally enough, all of these things take time to agree, but it is so important to try and get the very best possible arrangements from the very beginning.

The Religious Congregations, while trying to work out the best model of financially supporting the RLSS have recognised that there are quite a few Congregations which will not be able to pay all or part of the levy. They are determined to make sure that no Religious Congregation will be prevented from participating fully in the RLSS and the safeguarding work within the Church more generally and so are looking at ways of providing the needed financial support. One way may be to reduce the levy for some Congregations or another, perhaps better way, may be to create a ‘hardship’ fund to assist those Congregations who are genuinely unable to pay all the levy. The solidarity shown by Religious Congregations to one another to make sure that their shared commitment to improve safeguarding in the Church is the very best that it can be, is very encouraging.

Once again thank you to all those people from the Religious Congregations who filled out our safeguarding questionnaires in order for us to better understand the needs of Religious with respect to safeguarding. We will soon be working on analysing the data which has been sent. We hope to present a summary of these findings to the Religious Consultation Meeting on the 16th of June.

Another very important part of the safeguarding implementation process is how to manage the transition of cases and safety management plans of those Religious Congregations currently using diocesan Safeguarding Commissions to the RLSS when it is established. This will be a lengthy and delicate process to ensure that any victims/survivors who are involved will be well supported and that this transition will not in any way harm them further. Again, another workstream, The Realignment Workstream is beginning to look at this sensitive issue and has already developed a set of guiding principles aimed at ensuring the best possible transfer arrangements.

The Religious Consultation Meeting on the 6 May 2021, agreed the governance model for the RLSS. This will probably be either a company limited by guarantee or a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Congregation Leaders received a briefing paper with pros and cons of each model so that they were informed

prior to the 6 May meeting. Shortly, we hope to begin the process of recruiting staff for the RLSS. This may take several months.

At the 6 May Religious Consultation Meeting, Dr Colette Limbrick, the head of the new CSSA explained to Religious how the standards-based approach is an improvement on our current safeguarding arrangements and how the audit process will work. We are still looking for a date at which Dr Ed Morgan QC can come to a Consultation meeting to talk about the NTS and its relevance to the Religious of England and Wales and you will be notified in due course.

Work Plan

In the last two weeks we said we would:	And we have:	In the next two weeks we will:
Shortlist candidates for interview for the CSSA Board	Shortlisted candidates and undertaken interviews	Announce the CSSA Board
Finalise the review the responses to the template for gathering information on resources in parishes for use in pilot parishes	Undertaken final analysis	Issue survey to all parishes
Continue to work on proposed survivor reference charter on engagement with survivors.	Scheduled in further work on this	Continue work with survivors on this document.
Collect data from Religious to explore anticipated service needs and support, etc, ensuring that we have a representative sample and then begin analysis	Received questionnaires and more are awaited	We will analyze this data and report back as soon as possible
Continue workstream on financial arrangements to ensure allocation models are fair and representative	Meetings continue	Continue the work over the coming weeks.
Continue work on drafting the Rules of Procedure for the National Tribunal Service, and produce the next in the series of FAQs	Continued work.	Continue work, including extending the series of FAQs