

# Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)

## Appointment Brief

Appointment of Chair

September 2024



Catholic  
**Safeguarding  
Standards**  
Agency

The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) is the regulator of safeguarding in the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Our vision is for a safe Catholic Church. We are independent. We are here to offer assurance to the public and to drive safeguarding standards across the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

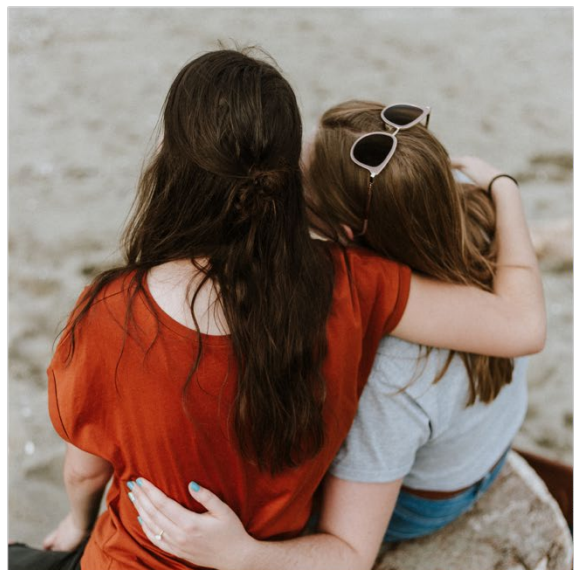
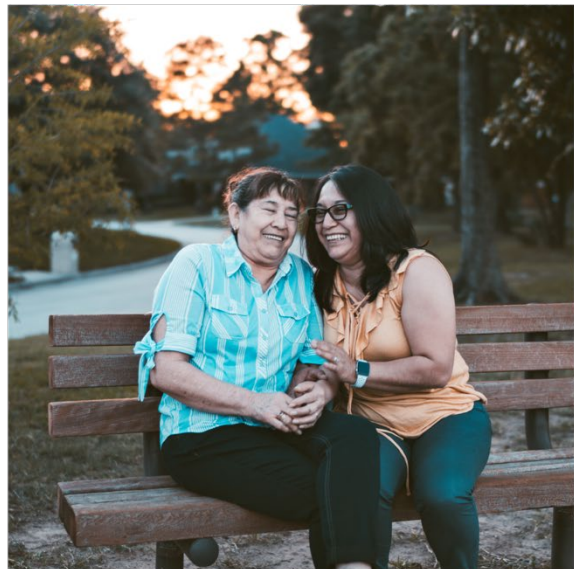
We are looking for our next Chair to lead our continued evolution as a respected regulator.

## Background

In October 2019, an independent review was commissioned of safeguarding structures and arrangements within the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The independent review, carried out by Ian Elliott (sometimes known as the 'Elliott Review') recommended wide-ranging reforms to safeguarding driven by respect for those who had suffered and the desire to prevent future harm. Vitally, the Review listened and learned from those who had experienced abuse in the Catholic Church.

The setting up of an independent regulator of safeguarding was one of the key recommendations of the Elliott Review. The recommendations of this report, along with those made by the separate Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) were wholly accepted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in November 2020. The CSSA was formed in 2021.

[Read more about the Elliott review](#) [HERE](#) and the [IICSA Report](#) [HERE](#)





### **Survivor Voice**

To provide an effective safeguarding service, it is imperative that the voice of those that have been harmed by abuse through their involvement with the Church, is heard and learnt from. We respect and value their opinions, as people with a depth of knowledge and wisdom drawn from their own unique, personal experiences.

We engage with humility, compassion, and empathy in the realisation that there is much to learn. We respect survivors' needs and prioritise their wellbeing. The CSSA aspires to build appropriate, trusting relationships, through both conversations on a one-to-one or small group basis, as well as through the more formal structure of a survivor reference panel.

# The CSSA today

Today we audit, review, and monitor safeguarding in Catholic religious life groups and dioceses in England and Wales. Then we share what we find by publishing the results of audits and safeguarding reviews– every time, whatever the results.

The CSSA work with a survivor panel of individuals with lived experience of abuse in the Catholic Church who offer challenge, support, and involvement in key areas of our work.

From 2025, safeguarding support services including policies and procedures, training and advice will become the responsibility of a new Church safeguarding commission.

The CSSA will focus exclusively on its regulatory purpose independent of the Catholic Church. The appointment of a new Chair is an exciting point in the development of the CSSA and safeguarding in the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

## Staff

The CSSA Chief Executive Officer leads a team of staff with responsibility for quality assurance (audit), strategic communications, survivor liaison and administrative support.

## Finances

The CSSA is funded via a levy on dioceses and aligned Religious Life Groups, with all monies remitted to the Catholic Trust for England and Wales, who fund the CSSA.

## CSSA Board

The CSSA has an independent strategic Board to ensure effective practice, supported by a governance framework including a quality assurance committee.

There is representation on the Board from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The majority of directors are lay appointees independent of the Catholic Church, who bring professional skills, knowledge and experience in safeguarding, governance, finance, audit, and risk, as well as being skilled in strategic and operational management. These directors bring clear independence of perspective and do not necessarily have a connection with the Catholic Church.

The CSSA is now seeking to appoint the next independent Chair of the Board.

# The Role: Chair

This is a significant opportunity to become the second Chair of the Board, building on the success and legacy of our first Chair, Nazir Afzal, OBE. Nazir led the agency during its first three years as it developed as an effective safeguarding regulator across the Catholic Church of England and Wales. The Agency is looking to move forward to its next exciting stage of development under new leadership. We welcome applications with those with lived experience of Catholic church-related abuse.

## Purpose of post

The Chair of the Board of Directors will provide effective leadership and management to the CSSA Board, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the Agency and ensuring that appropriate decisions are taken in accordance with the governance documents, legal and regulatory guidelines, and governance good practices.

The Chair works in partnership with the Directors and CEO of the CSSA to ensure that the aims of the organisation are achieved and to ensure a good non-executive to executive dynamic between the Board and the staff, particularly when it comes to the setting and execution of our strategy.

As Chair, they will play a key role in the ongoing development of the Board, its governance, onward recruitment of directors and in ensuring that the CSSA has the resources to be effective.

The CSSA will appoint a Chair who has the drive and experience to ensure that the CSSA continues to deliver the high standards of regulatory performance expected of it and to oversee effective relationship management with Church bodies. They will lead on setting and maintaining excellent standards of governance across the organisation. The Chair will work closely with, and in support of, the CEO as well as the other Board members.

The Chair will bring a combination of their expertise and personal attributes to provide a robust and forward-thinking vision for the organisation. The successful candidate will maintain clear empathy with the voice of survivors and high quality engagement with all stakeholders.

The Chair is a high profile and visible position and will be an ambassador for the work of the CSSA.

# Key Accountabilities & Responsibilities:

## Leadership

- Providing leadership and direction to the Board of Directors, ensuring they are fully engaged and take collective ownership in fulfilling their responsibilities, for the overall governance and strategic aims of the CSSA.
- Ensuring that, together with the rest of the Board, the CSSA pursues its objects as defined in its governing documents, company law and other relevant legislation/regulations.
- Providing leadership for the Board of Directors and members of the senior management team in the development of strategic plans for the Agency.

## Governance

- Chairing meetings of the Board of Directors effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process.
- Fostering, maintaining, and ensuring that constructive relationships exist with and between the Directors, and supporting and enabling the development of the knowledge and capability of Directors.
- Promoting consistency, focus and collaborative behaviours amongst the Board, to aid clear decision making; equity of influence and contribution; the development of consensus; checking understanding and in managing any disagreement with respect.

## Plan and Chair the annual cycle of Board meetings.

- Ensure provision of accurate, timely and clear information to Directors.
- Liaising closely with relevant Board members to ensure that CSSA operates within a robust budget framework, ensuring full and timely financial transparency and information disclosure to the Board.
- Ensure the implementation of procedures for board induction, development, training, and appraisal.
- Ensuring Directors decisions are acted upon.
- Ensure individual Directors and overall Board effectiveness, leading and mentoring other Directors to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensuring that the performance of the Board as a whole, and of the Directors individually, is reviewed on a regular basis, through a defined appraisal process.
- Ensuring appropriate committees are established and work effectively and in line with their terms of reference.
- Maintain the focus and commitment of the Board, including renewal and succession planning.

- Acting between full meetings of the Board in authorising action to be taken intra vires, e.g. banking transactions, and legal documents in accordance with relevant mandates.

## **Relationship with the Executive**

- Establishing and building an effective and constructive working relationship with the Chief Executive Officer, CSSA and his/her team to develop relationships founded on mutual respect, trust and regular, open, and transparent communication.
- Ensure that the Chief Executive Officer is held to account, is adequately supported, and professionally developed, to achieve the agreed strategic objectives.
- Lead the Board is setting the remuneration and assessing performance objectives for the Chief Executive and where appropriate other members of the senior leadership team.
- Fostering a relationship between the Board of Directors and executives which is centred on honesty, trust, transparency, and a strong understanding of shared goals.

## **Representation**

- Join the Chief Executive Officer and team to meet with stakeholders as required.
- Ensuring that the voice of survivors is ever present in the Board's work.
- Where agreed, serve as a spokesperson for the CSSA.
- Ensuring that there is constructive engagement with leaders in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, both in Diocese and Religious Life Groups.
- Potentially to give high profile media interviews at short notice.
- Represent the CSSA nationally.







# Person Specification:

## Chair

The ideal candidate will demonstrate all or most of the following experience and attributes:

### Experience

- Successful non-executive experience as a Director, Trustee or Chair in a complex national environment.
- Excellent stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills.
- A strong understanding of safeguarding and / or regulatory oversight/ standards setting.
- First class communication skills across all media.

### Governance

- Experienced and effective Chair of meetings.
- Ability to work constructively with the Director, Board, the Catholic Church, and wider stakeholders.
- A good understanding of governance processes, particularly charity governance.
- An ability to listen, learn & respond to the views of various constituents in our environment.

### Values

- Integrity and honesty.
- A strong commitment to effective safeguarding.
- A forward-thinking approach to regulatory oversight.
- A clear commitment to the work of the CSSA and its role in restoring confidence in safeguarding in the Catholic Church of England and Wales.
- A personal commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### Personal Attributes

- Those with lived experience of abuse are encouraged to apply.
- Coach and mentor, striving for excellence in everything we do.
- Intellectually curious and willing to understand the structures and systems of the Catholic Church.
- Independence of mind and judgment, able to gather consensus and decide.

- Energetic and passionate advocate for effective safeguarding.
- High emotional and adaptive quotient.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills; the ability to clearly explain complex opportunities and challenges to colleagues.
- Ability to support executives in their leadership of the business while monitoring their conduct.
- Listening sensitively to the views of others, inside and outside the board.
- Ability to command trust and respect across the Board, Catholic Church in England and Wales, its community, and all those interested in its role in safeguarding.
- Questioning intelligently, debating constructively, challenging rigorously, and deciding dispassionately.

# Terms & How to Apply

- The role is for a tenure of three years. The Chair role will be remunerated with a £21,000 fee and reasonable expenses paid with an expected flexible commitment of 2 days per month.
- There are 4-6 Board meetings a year in addition to committee work, representational work with stakeholders and regular engagement with the executive.
- Meetings are held both remotely and at centrally agreed locations.

## How to apply

- For an informal conversation with our Vice-Chair, please contact [HR@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:HR@cbcew.org.uk)
- Candidates should apply for this role through the website at [catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](http://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk) or [cbcew.org.uk](http://cbcew.org.uk)
- Closing Date: 23.59 Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October
- Interviews are expected to be held on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November
- Applicants must provide a full CV and covering letter illustrating their experience, skills and motivation for this role to [HR@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:HR@cbcew.org.uk)

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