Catholic
Safeguarding
Standards
Agency

Society of the Catholic Apostolate
Pallottine Fathers
Mother of Divine Love Province (Irish Province)

Baseline Audit Report
December 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 This is a baseline audit of the Safeguarding arrangements at the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, also known as the Pallottine Fathers. The audit has been undertaken as part of the CSSA's Baseline Audit phase of Religious Life Groups (RLGs)

1.2 The subject of this audit was the Mother of Divine Love Province (also known as the Irish Province) of the Pallottine Fathers. This is one of 23 Provinces and Regions of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate worldwide. The Mother of Divine Love Province in England and Wales provide a total of five Parish Priests for Our Lady of the Visitation, Greenford (Diocese of Westminster), St Thomas More, Barking (Diocese of Brentwood) and St Mary Star of the Sea, Hastings (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton). One retired Pallottine Father also provides occasional cover at St Mary Star of the Sea. Safeguarding responsibility for these Parishes is overseen by the individual Diocese who provide the training and vetting for Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs) and volunteers and set the vetting and training expectations for the Pallottine Fathers operating in their Parish. The Pallottine Fathers have no employees and no direct volunteers and do not undertake any additional outreach or mission in England and Wales.

1.3 The audit seeks to assess the effectiveness of current safeguarding arrangements, by considering practice over the last twelve months.

1.4 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 Pallottine Fathers were categorised as a level 2 community because their role is to provide Parish Priests in three Dioceses, and they completed a corresponding self-assessment.

2. Scope & Methodology

2.1 This pilot baseline audit was undertaken following the submission of the Level 2 self-assessment by the Safeguarding Lead on 30th August 2024. Supporting evidence was provided on 11th September 2024.

2.2 Audit interviews were completed in person on 24th September 2024 at Our Lady of the Visitation with the Chair of Trustees, the Safeguarding Lead and a Parish Priest. The interviewees were all Trustees of the Pallottine Fathers and all the three Parishes in which the Pallottine Fathers serve were represented.

2.3 Liaison has also taken place between auditors, the RLSS and the Safeguarding teams in Westminster, Brentwood and Arundel & Brighton regarding the Pallottine Fathers' engagement with Safeguarding expectations.

3. Audit Grading

3.1 Practice was assessed against the eight national safeguarding standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales[1] 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.

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

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

4. Audit findings against each standard

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

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<tr><td>Strengths</td></tr>
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4.1.1 The Pallottine Fathers have a designated lead for Safeguarding who has been undertaking the role since 2018 so is well established in post. On 25th June 2024, the Pallottine Fathers ratified a Safeguarding Policy, based on the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) template, which is due for annual review. The Safeguarding Policy stipulates the Safeguarding responsibilities of the Provincial Delegate and the Safeguarding Lead and mandates that all members must familiarise themselves with the policy and procedures within it. The policy has been disseminated to members, electronically or in hard copy, dependant upon their needs. The policy is also publicly available on the websites of St Thomas More and St Mary Star of the Sea Parishes.

4.1.2 Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at Trustees meetings of which there are a minimum of three per year. It is also on the agenda at each annual Local Assembly attended by all members of the Pallottine Fathers and the Provincial Delegate. Currently, half of the Pallottine Fathers are also Trustees of the charity, representing each of the Parishes they serve in England and Wales. Therefore, there is an almost automatic flow of information from Trustees meetings to the Parishes where they work.

4.1.3 In practice, any Safeguarding concerns that arose within any of the three Parishes would be dealt with by the Diocesan Safeguarding teams unless the concern related specifically to a member of the Pallottine Fathers when RLSS would hold casework responsibility. The interviewees all understood the importance of recognising low level Safeguarding concerns and referring them on to Diocesan Safeguarding teams for advice and support where appropriate.

4.1.4 RLSS confirmed that, in the last 12 months, the Pallottine fathers have engaged with the Safeguarding, Membership and Training teams and applied for enhanced DBS checks. Members have attended RLSS training including Training for Safeguarding Leads in July 2024 and Basic Safeguarding Training in September

2024. This demonstrates that there are established links with RLSS for Safeguarding support.

4.1.5 The Integrity in Ministry[2] pastoral standards document has been distributed throughout the Pallottine Fathers and informally discussed. In common with all Safeguarding communications from the Safeguarding Lead, it has been shared either electronically or in hard copy according to the preference of the recipient.

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Areas for Development

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4.1.6 To date, the Pallottine Fathers have not created a Safeguarding Implementation Plan to drive improvements in practice. It is their intention to create one to incorporate the recommendations of this audit when it is completed.

4.1.7 To ensure that the expectations of Integrity in Ministry have been understood by all members it would be beneficial to formally discuss it, and record that it has been discussed, as part of the Safeguarding section of the annual Local Assembly, attended by all members from England and Wales.

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Graded: Results Being Achieved

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4.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

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Strengths

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4.2.1 The Pallottine Fathers comply with Diocesan expectations of Safeguarding communications by having Safeguarding noticeboards in their three Parishes. These include contact details for their PSRs and for the relevant Diocesan Safeguarding teams alongside clear instructions about what to do if a child or vulnerable adult is at imminent risk. There is no unified single Pallottine Fathers website in England and Wales. The Parish websites of Our Lady of the Visitation

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

and St Mary Star of the Sea also hold the same contact information and links to Diocesan Safeguarding. At present, St Thomas More only contains the Pallottine Fathers Safeguarding Policy alongside a link to the main Diocesan website. Internal communications on Safeguarding by the Safeguarding Lead are done informally, as and when he receives updates on Safeguarding practice and as standing agenda items for Trustees' meetings.

<div style="text-align:center">**Areas for Development**</div>

4.2.2 Whilst Safeguarding communication takes place on a regular and ad hoc basis, the Pallottine Fathers should create a plan of how they will communicate Safeguarding messages, internally and to external stakeholders. This can form part of their existing Safeguarding Policy or be a standalone plan. Having a formalised plan allows communication to be regularly reviewed for effectiveness and for changes and improvements to be made. When Safeguarding communication plans are reviewed this should be done with the engagement of key people, such as RLSS, the relevant Diocese, PSRs and members of the RLG to evaluate and improve on existing communications.

<div style="text-align:center">**Graded: Firm Progress**</div>

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

<div style="text-align:center">**Strengths**</div>

4.3.1 The Pallottine Fathers Safeguarding policy gives rudimentary guidance on responding to a disclosure of harm. It expects that the allegation should be passed on to RLSS immediately, with the Survivor being informed that this will happen. The Survivor should then be kept informed as to next steps, either by the Safeguarding Lead or RLSS, with them being given options as to what the next steps might be wherever possible and timescales for actions to take place.

4.3.2 The Pallottine Fathers have not had any recent experience of individuals reporting to them that they have been harmed but the Safeguarding Lead was confident that they would receive a compassionate response and would be supported, in line with guidance and support provision from RLSS. In addition,

leaders in the Pallottine Fathers would be happy to engage with, and meet, Survivors should a Survivor come forward and wish to meet with them.

4.3.3 The Parish website of Our Lady of the Visitation has a direct and clear link to the Diocesan page related to support for Survivors which has a detailed list of support agencies that Survivors can access if they choose. Similarly, the website of St Mary Star of the Sea highlights the availability of Safe Spaces[3] as support for Survivors and has details of the Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse which took place in April 2024.

<div align="center">**Areas for Development**</div>

4.3.4 Links are established between the Pallottine Fathers, RLSS and the Dioceses that the Pallottine Fathers operate in. In the event of a disclosure of harm these would be the agencies that they would rely on for guidance regarding support services for Survivors. It would be beneficial if the Parish website for St Thomas More was updated to include guidance for Survivors as to how they can access support services. Ensuring that all members are aware of the support services that Survivors can access, on a local and national basis, would also ensure that anyone making a disclosure of abuse was promptly signposted to support.

4.3.5 The Pallottine Fathers have not had recent disclosures of abuse that they have had the opportunity to reflect and respond to. They indicated that, were a disclosure to be made, they would engage with RLSS who create a report including ongoing support needs, feedback and lessons learned at the end of any incident reported to them. However, they will also want to consider if they can learn from any other Religious Life Groups, again through RLSS, who have received disclosures of harm to understand their learning and subsequent development of practice.

4.3.6 There is a willingness from leaders to engage with those who report harm. They will wish to ensure that they access any available training or practice

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[3] 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.

development for leaders so that, as and when they do meet with Survivors, they able to provide a compassionate and caring approach.

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4.4 Standard 4 Effective Management of Allegations and Concerns

<div style="text-align:center; background:#f5a623; color:white; font-weight:bold; padding:8px;">Strengths</div>

4.4.1, There have been no Safeguarding concerns related to members of the Pallottine Fathers in the last 12 months. Therefore, assessment in this area is reliant on policy review and theoretical discussions in interview. The Safeguarding policy, recently ratified, details that allegations or Safeguarding concerns must be passed to Social Services and the Police within 24 hours. However, if there is immediate danger or imminent risk of harm emergency services must be contacted right away. The members of the Pallottine Fathers that were interviewed were all aware of the expectation and would follow it whenever necessary. They would also contact RLSS, or the relevant Diocese, as soon as they were aware of any concerns, in line with policy expectations, so that they could be provided with support and guidance. The need to take and keep contemporary records of any disclosures, store them securely and share them with statutory agencies and RLSS was well known.

4.4.2 In the event that there was an allegation against one of the Pallottine Fathers then Canon Law guidance would be sought either through Canon Law experts who are part of the international Pallottine Fathers or through the relevant Diocese.

4.4.3 Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for Trustees meetings. Trustees would also be made aware of any Safeguarding concerns that arose outside their scheduled meetings as they are represented in all the Parishes in England and Wales that the Pallottine Fathers operate in.

Areas for Development

4.4.4 Although leaders of the Pallottine Fathers would be aware of any allegations relating to their members in England and Wales they would need to ensure that they retain oversight during any period of an allegation remaining open and that expectations of Safeguarding practice by leaders and their members are met. It will be important for Trustees to understand their obligations about reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission which, interviews demonstrated, was not a current area of strength.

4.4.5 The Safeguarding Policy is based on an RLSS template, and annual review by senior leaders is planned. The policy should also be reviewed for effectiveness following any allegation or concern being raised.

Graded: Results Being Achieved

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

Strengths

4.5.1 The Pallottine Fathers could be called upon to support lay subjects of Safeguarding plans being managed in their Diocesan Parishes. They must also be prepared for a situation where one of their number could be the subject of a Safeguarding allegation or concern.

4.5.2 The Pallottine Fathers have access to Canon Law expertise, either through their international organisation, or in conjunction with the Diocese in which they operate. This access would extend to being able to signpost Respondents to allegations to Canon Law advice.

4.5.3 Where lay Safeguarding plans have been managed in Diocesan parishes, with the support of Pallottine Fathers for Respondents, they have engaged with annual reviews to ensure the ongoing risk assessment, safety and support for Respondents.

4.5.4 The Safeguarding Lead confirmed that, were it to be necessary, the Pallottine Fathers have access to accommodation which a member of Religious who was stepped down from ministry for a period could access. He said that a Respondent would also have a support person from the Pallottine Fathers allocated to them. Counselling or similar support services would also be accessed as necessary in each individual case.

<div align="center">**Areas for Development**</div>

4.5.5 As part of internal Safeguarding discussions the Pallottine Fathers should ensure that all members are aware of the support that RLSS can provide to Respondents to allegations. Members should also be told of the support that they would be entitled to receive from the Pallottine Fathers were an allegation or concern to be raised against them

4.5.6 Leaders in the Pallottine Fathers will also wish to inform themselves of support agencies that they can access, either nationally or locally to the Parishes in which they serve, to meet the spiritual, mental health, emotional, physical and legal support needs of Respondents. This will allow these agencies to be promptly signposted to in the event that there is an allegation made against any member of the Pallottine Fathers.

<div align="center">**Graded: Results Being Achieved**</div>

4.6 Standard 6 Robust Human Resource Management

<div align="center">**Strengths**</div>

4.6.1 The Pallottine Fathers Safeguarding Policy includes Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance. However, in practice in England and Wales they have no employees or direct volunteers. Furthermore, there are no individuals in Formation in England and Wales as any Formation process takes place in Ireland. When individuals do arrive in England and Wales to minister from overseas, Testimonials of Suitability are sought and provided to the relevant Diocese. In addition, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are routinely sought and RLSS confirmed that the Pallottine Fathers had applied for four enhanced checks in the last 12 months. The Dioceses

of Brentwood, Arundel & Brighton and Westminster confirmed that vetting expectations for the Pallottine Fathers to operate in their Parishes are met.

4.6.2 The Pallottine Fathers ratified separate interim Complaints and Whistleblowing Policies on 25th June 2024, pending CSSA guidance on final complaints and whistleblowing policies. These have been distributed to members either electronically or in hard copy.

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4.6.3 In the course of this audit it became apparent that there had been a loss of information between the Pallottine Fathers and a Diocese regarding a retired individual who acted as a supply Parish Priest on occasions. In May 2017 the Bishop was aware that the Priest would be available to assist in the Parish, but this information had been misplaced in the move to electronic records for the Diocesan Safeguarding team. The individual did have up to date vetting external to the Diocese but has not recently engaged with Diocesan Safeguarding training. This situation has now been identified and rectification is in process, but the Pallottine Fathers will wish to verify that all members who provide any ministry are known to Diocesan Safeguarding teams.

4.6.4 The Safeguarding Lead does keep records of when DBS checks have been completed. Records can be improved by keeping track of expected renewal dates so that they are always applied for in a timely fashion.

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4.7 Standard 7 Training and Support for Safeguarding

<div style="text-align:center; background:#f5a623; color:white; font-weight:bold; padding:4px;">Strengths</div>

4.7.1 The Safeguarding Policy stipulates the level of training provision expected by role. For example, the Safeguarding Lead is expected to complete Safeguarding Leads training, and this was done in July 2024. The Safeguarding Lead also keeps training records, both from RLSS and those completed with Diocese, for members of the Pallottine Fathers. These were shared with auditors during the audit visit and

demonstrate that the expectations of training outlined in the Safeguarding policy are being met.

4.7.2 The Pallottine Fathers have not had to address any persistent failures to comply with Safeguarding training expectations. However, if this did happen it would be referred to the Provincial in Dublin and ultimately if an individual failed to comply with expectations they would be removed from ministry.

<div align="center">**Areas for Development**</div>

4.7.3 The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and Brentwood confirmed that the Pallottine Fathers operating in their Parishes were meeting Diocesan training expectations. The Diocese of Westminster's records indicate there are gaps in completion of some online training modules expected by them and that the three Pallottine Fathers working in the Diocese should attend the next in-person Safeguarding training provision for clergy. The Safeguarding team have confirmed that invitations will be sent to them to enable this attendance. Evidence was seen by auditors that the three Religious have completed Safeguarding training with RLSS within the last 12 months.

4.7.4 As with DBS records, the Safeguarding Lead should include expected renewal dates in his records of training completion by the Pallottine Fathers. This will ensure that expectations are consistently met. It would also be beneficial if feedback on the effectiveness of training provision was gathered and shared with the providers to allow them to review and develop their offering.

4.7.5 Liaison with RLSS demonstrated that members had undertaken training in subjects such as Basic Safeguarding, Advanced Safeguarding and Training for Safeguarding Leads. To enhance Trustees' understanding of their specific Safeguarding obligations they should also enrol on Safeguarding for Trustees training provision through RLSS.

<div align="center">**Graded: Firm Progress**</div>

4.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Strengths

4.8.1 The Pallottine Fathers have engaged fully with the CSSA audit process and intend to implement a Safeguarding Implementation Plan after the audit, incorporating the recommendations, to drive practice improvements. They also produce Annual Parish Safeguarding Self-Audits, identifying all Parish activities involving children and vulnerable adults. A checklist under six headings is completed – these are Protecting; Policy; PSR; Preventing & Promoting Safeguarding; Safer Recruitment; and Recording, Training, Insurance, Risk & Church Premises with activities that the Parish Priest should have completed under each heading. If these are not complete, then an action plan is created. Evidence was seen of clear relevant action planning i.e. put Safeguarding Statement and Policy on the website, with an owner for the task and an expected and actual date of completion. These are a useful audit tool for evaluating Safeguarding compliance at a Parish level.

Areas for development

4.8.2 As noted in 4.8.1, the Pallottine Fathers have yet to develop a Safeguarding Implementation Plan although they intend to do so post audit. As part of this they plan to incorporate the recommendations of this report into the plan to develop their Safeguarding practices.

4.8.3 To build on their practice of auditing at a Parish level the Pallottine Fathers should consider how they will regularly evaluate their own compliance with the eight Safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. In

Graded: Basic

5. Summary of Overall Findings

5.1. The members of the Pallottine Fathers operate as Parish Priests in three Diocese in England and Wales. They do not carry out any additional ministry, so the basic Safeguarding expectation placed upon them is to comply with individual Diocesan

Safeguarding arrangements. The evidence demonstrates that they fulfil this expectation. As a separate charity from the Dioceses where they minister, they also have Safeguarding expectations placed upon them across the eight Safeguarding standards of the Catholic church in England and Wales. One of the standards assessed achieved a rating of Basic and another reached Early Progress. Three were judged to have achieved Firm Progress with the remaining three rated as Results Being Achieved. This gives an overall rating of Firm Progress.

5.2 The Pallottine Fathers have demonstrated their commitment to Safeguarding through compliance with Diocesan expectations, additional training and engagement with RLSS and by the ratification of a Safeguarding policy. Annual Local Assemblies and regular Trustees meetings all have Safeguarding as standing agenda items. Members are aware of how to respond to a Safeguarding allegation or concern and have all received the Integrity in Ministry pastoral standards document. Survivors and Respondents to allegations would be supported, through Diocesan arrangements or engagement with RLSS. Internal Parish audit procedures demonstrate internal Safeguarding quality assurance processes are in place with plans implemented to mitigate any identified shortfall in expectations.

5.3 Further developments can be made through creating to a rolling Safeguarding Implementation Plan to incorporate the recommendations of this audit alongside any improvements identified via internal audits or post Safeguarding case reviews. Trustees also need to ensure that they fully understand their Safeguarding obligations and should access specific training to facilitate this. All Parishes where they operate should have links to Survivor support agencies on their websites. Leaders should be prepared for potential disclosures by having an understanding of the support they can access for Survivors and Respondents.

5.4 The Pallottine Fathers have demonstrated that their current practice clearly exceeds minimum Safeguarding practice expectations such that an overall rating of Firm Progress is warranted.

6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

Within 3 months

- Create a Safeguarding Implementation Plan to drive ongoing Safeguarding improvements
- Pallottine Fathers operating in the Diocese of Westminster to complete all expected online training modules and book to attend the next in-person clergy training session
- Add expected renewal dates to records of DBS vetting and Safeguarding training completion by the Pallottine Fathers
- Trustees to familiarise themselves with Charity Commission guidance on Serious Incident reporting and add to the agenda for the next Trustees meeting to ensure consistent understanding
- Trustees to organise to attend specific training on Safeguarding for Trustees through RLSS or other equivalent provision

Within 6 months

- Add links to agencies that support Survivors, such as Safe Spaces, to the St Thomas More Parish website
- Pallottine Fathers leadership to familiarise themselves with local and national agencies that can support Survivors and/or Respondents so they can be promptly signposted to when necessary. These should be discussed at the next Local Assembly so that members of the Pallottine Fathers are aware of the support provision they would receive in the event of an allegation against them
- Update the Safeguarding policy to reflect that it would be reviewed after any allegation involving the Pallottine Fathers in the light of the RLSS post allegation report

Within 12 months

- Discuss the expectations of Integrity in Ministry as an agenda item at the next Local Assembly to ensure widespread understanding
- Create a formal plan for Safeguarding communications, internally and to external stakeholders. This can form part of the current Safeguarding policy and should be reviewed annually for effectiveness
- Develop current self-audit practice to evaluate own progress against the eight Safeguarding standards to inform future developments of the Safeguarding Implementation Plan

7. Arrangements for Follow-up

7.1 In line with an overall rating of Firm progress, the earliest date of the next audit of The Pallottine Fathers by the CSSA is within two years in September 2026. If the CSSA becomes aware of a significant Safeguarding concern or allegation in the intervening period, then an earlier audit may be required.