



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) has a threefold commitment – to the Church, the Jewish People and a world of justice, peace and love.



1. POLICY STATEMENT and OVERVIEW

The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. For the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland), this commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church's common belief in the preciousness, dignity and uniqueness of every human life. We start from the principle that each person has a right to expect the highest level of protection, love, encouragement and respect. Following the safeguarding reviews in 2020, we are committed to the One Church Approach to safeguarding by implementing the necessary changes and ensuring we respond to victims/survivors promptly and compassionately.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy and procedure apply to all within the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland), regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.

2.2 It is the responsibility of all within the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) to prevent abuse, whether by action or omission. Abuse in this policy refers to: physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, neglect, self-neglect, organisational, material, psychological, financial, domestic, or verbal. Additionally, behaviour which effectively results in modern-day slavery or where there is evidence of discrimination or radicalisation, this needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 6.

2.3 The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) has signed the current child safeguarding policy for the Catholic Church in Ireland, demonstrating our commitment to helping keep children safe. Our signed commitment is available on our website.

3. TRAINING



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3.1 All members of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) will undergo Safeguarding Training relevant to their role.

3.2 The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) members, Trustees and staff will undertake refresher training every other year.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) Trustees have a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of safeguarding in line with this policy and national guidelines. Certain functions of the Board will be delegated to others within the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland), as indicated below.

4.2 The Co-ordinators

The Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures, and best practices are in place for the effective delivery of a robust safeguarding service. Certain functions of the Co-ordinators will be assigned to the Safeguarding Lead, as indicated below.

4.2 The Safeguarding Lead

The Safeguarding Lead has direct oversight of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) safeguarding policy and guidance. This includes oversight of the relationship with the RLSS and input on its work.

4.4 All other roles

All members and staff have an obligation to ensure they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns by making themselves familiar with the content of this policy and the procedure contained within it and any other associated policies/procedures.

4.5 General



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Everyone involved in the work of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) has a duty to disclose to the Safeguarding Lead / Co-ordinator any safeguarding concerns that have been raised about them.

5. PRACTICE GUIDANCE

5.1 Action must be taken if a concern is raised that a child or adult is suffering or is likely to be suffering from significant harm. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Someone who is at serious risk of harm from self or others
- Someone who poses a serious risk of harm to someone else
- A concern about a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm from someone else
- Concerns over someone's mental capacity

5.2 Action must also be taken in line with the Church's mandatory reporting policy. This means appropriate action must be taken if there are reasonable grounds to believe that someone who holds any role within the Church is going to or has committed a crime, is going to or has caused harm, poses a risk or is otherwise unsuitable to work in their role.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1 If someone is in immediate danger or there is a safeguarding emergency, call 999.

If the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) becomes aware of a concern as detailed in Section 5 or any other safeguarding issue, they should contact the Safeguarding Lead, who will inform the RLSS Safeguarding Team or the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) and pass the concern and all records of it to them immediately. Ensure the person who made you aware of the concern knows you are doing this.



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6.1.1 The RLSS, the NBSCCCI, or the Safeguarding Lead at the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) who has casework responsibility should:

- Ensure the victim/survivor or individual has been informed of the next steps
- Explain what will happen, give them options if possible and an indicative timescale.
- Contact any relevant bodies within 24 hours, unless there are any exceptional circumstances to postpone making the referral/report. The decision to delay a referral/report must be authorised by a leader.
- Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure appropriate record keeping of all phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case are documented.
- Update the relevant people at the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) and offer any support needed.

6.1.2 When the concern needs to be reported to a statutory agency, the individual making the referral must be informed that all information about safeguarding will not be kept confidential, and that the details must be passed on to the police and any other appropriate body, but they may be able to remain anonymous depending on the circumstances. The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) should be supportive of the individual making the disclosure, but should not seek more details than necessary for an initial statutory referral.

6.2 The RLSS or the NBSCCCI will make recommendations about when to report to safeguarding bodies or external agencies based on risk and need.

6.3 Safeguarding Bodies (not exhaustive)

- Internal Safeguarding Structures within the Catholic Church
- Local authority Safeguarding team – Adults
- Local authority Safeguarding team – Children
- Police 999
- Police 101
- An Garda Síochána 999/112 (National police service for the Republic of Ireland).
- GP
- Crisis Team
- NBSCCCI - Co.Kildare Phone no: **01 505 3124**
- RLSS - **0151 556 2311**
- Community Psychiatric Nurse



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- Charity Commission
- CSSA
- Local Safeguarding Commission
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- NSPCC
- DBS

7. WHISTLEBLOWING

7.1 The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) will encourage and enable anyone with a safeguarding concern to refer the concern without fear of victimisation or disadvantage.

7.1.1 If that concern is regarding malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions at the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) or other religious institution in relation to safeguarding, then the RLSS or the NBSCCCI should be made aware.

7.2 The action taken by the RLSS or the NBSCCCI will depend upon the nature of the concern referred. However, an investigation will be undertaken if appropriate, followed by appropriate action, and written feedback will be provided, including a rationale explaining why the identified actions have been taken.

8. RECORDING AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND CASE FILES

8.1 Primary responsibility for the management of documents and safeguarding case files sits with the Safeguarding Lead / RLSS / NBSCCCI, who will ensure an accurate, auditable, and secure record of any safeguarding concern or allegation referred to the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) are maintained.

8.1.1 This record will include:

- Relevant contact details
- Details of how/when the concern or allegation was received.



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- Details of the concern itself
- Relevant historical information
- Identified past and present risk factors
- Any actions or investigations undertaken, including those by the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland), RLSS or NBSCCCI, and from statutory agencies.
- Rationale for actions and or outcome of case

8.2 All records are potential evidence in a criminal trial, civil case, or statutory/public Inquiry and must be stored in a safe and retrievable format with an auditable record of provenance and integrity.

9. SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE

9.1 The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion (UK & Ireland) will ensure that the congregation members, lay staff, and volunteers are subject to the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Garda Vetting checks in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements.

9.2 Appointments will be based on the person's experience, skills and ability to meet the set criteria and job specification for the specific role. It is essential to ensure that all documentation relating to the applicants is kept in a secure, confidential place.

9.3 Appointment to a role will not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS or Garda Vetting disclosure check has been received and previous employment references confirmed as being acceptable.

9.4 On appointment, all new employees should be provided with and sign to say they understand all relevant policy and procedures, including a copy of this document and their responsibilities within it highlighted.

9.5 Anyone who is seeking to work with children or adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, must be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information.