

**Conference of Religious**  
**Registered Charity Number 277024**  
**Safeguarding Statement**

**Background Information:**

The Conference of Religious was established in 1959. It was originally known as the Council of Major Religious Superiors and there were two 'sections', the men's section and the women's section. In 1979 the first joint AGM took place in Swanwick in Derbyshire and since then has been one Conference.

The Secretariat is located at a house in Ealing in the grounds of the Ealing Abbey.

The Secretariat is responsible for the dissemination of information regarding matters related to or relevant to religious life in the 21st Century, through newsletters, workshops, residential and day meetings and the provision of resource materials.

The Secretariat deals with the regular communication to membership and the organisation of the conferences and other meetings. It also has the responsibility to pass on information from Rome and the Bishops' Conference.

The membership of the Conference of Religious comprises the Leaders of the Catholic Religious Orders together with Associate members i.e., Anglican Religious Orders and Secular Institutes.

**CoR Executive**

Fr Paul Smyth CMF (President)

Sr Frances Orchard CJ (Vice President )

Sr Bernadette Boland

Sr Philomena Bowers RSM

Fr Robert Marsh OSA

Rev Kenneth Okoli CSSP

Sr Ellen Flynn DC

Sr Margaret Donovan HC

Sr Monica Matthews SHCJ (Co-opted Member)

Sr Sue Berry (Anglican Associate Member)

**CoR Secretariat**

Valerie Nazareth, General Secretary

Bernadette Kehoe, Communications and Development Lead

Charlotte Vassallo, Administrative Coordinator

### **CoR Safeguarding Committee**

Mrs Eileen Campling (Chair)

Sr Anne Stewart SHJC

Sr Clare Smith IOLM

Sr Eileen Glancy DC

Fr David Smolira SJ

Mrs Elizabeth Bano

Sr Frances Cullen CSFN

Fr Nicholas Edmonds-Smith Cong Orat

Sr Philomena McCluskey FMSJ

Fr Robert Marsh OSA (Exec link)

Mrs Siobhan Fairclough

Attended by Valerie Nazareth (General Secretary)

### **Aim of the Policy**

This policy is intended to give guidance by identifying the values, principles, policies and procedures underpinning CoR's approach to creating a safe environment for vulnerable people of all ages.

### **Safeguarding Policy Statement**

The Conference of Religious Executive Members, Staff, Members of the Conference of Religious Safeguarding Committee and Members are committed to the Safeguarding Policies of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

This commitment flows from the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church's common belief in the 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.

We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are aware of the National Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the role and responsibilities of the National Safeguarding Commission and the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service.

If staff or others working for CoR need further advice and guidance this can be sought from the Chair or other members of the CoR Safeguarding Committee.

### **National Catholic Safeguarding Commission and Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service Policy Statement (NCSC/CSAS)**

The Catholic Church of England and Wales, the Bishops, Religious Congregational Leaders and all involved in the Church are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church and affirm a 'One Church' approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk through the promotion of a sustained culture of constant vigilance.

The 'best interests' or 'paramount chief principle', which underpins and is enshrined in child and adult protection legislation, shall be the primary consideration in all matters of safeguarding.

With Jesus as our model, in his defence of minorities and the oppressed, it is important that the Church embraces all individuals with a spirit of love, tolerance and without discrimination.

All should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their gender, age, disability, race ethnicity, religious and political beliefs, health, immigration and social status and cultural identity.

#### **Responding to Concerns and or Allegations of Abuse**

The Church authorities always report allegations of abuse to the statutory agencies to ensure that they are dealt with promptly and properly, and where appropriate, perpetrators are held to account. The Church will act in an open, transparent and accountable way when working in partnership with social care agencies, police, health agencies, probation services and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and adults at risk and to assist in bringing to justice anyone who has committed an offence against a child or adult.

Members of the Charity and staff are not directly engaged in work with children, young persons or adults who may be at risk. However, in some circumstances they may be the receiver of a disclosure or aware of information about a disclosure. Therefore they should be aware of the policies and procedures of the Civil Authorities and National Catholic Church in England and Wales. If they are aware, or made aware, of any situation related to another individual, and or children or an adult that identifies serious concerns, risks or immediate harm, they should not delay in contacting the Civil Authorities and the Statutory Agencies.

It is a requirement to ensure that they keep appropriate, factual and clear records and that the General Secretary is informed of the situation and kept up to date of the process.

Principles of confidentiality should be applied and relevant confidential information is shared with appropriate and specific people only.

#### **Key Principles and Values**

The following expressions of principles and values have been agreed by the Catholic Church nationally and underpin its response and actions under these procedures at all times

### **Children**

- The Catholic Church embraces its role in supporting children to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment.
- All adults within the Church have a responsibility to act and intervene when it appears that children need to be made safe from harm, whether the risk of harm is Neglect, Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse or Emotional Abuse.
- The Church will act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with Children's Social Care Services, the Police, Health Agencies, Probation Providers and other agencies to safeguard children and assist in bringing to justice anyone acting in the Name of the Church who has committed an offence against a child.
- Anyone who brings concerns or allegations to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully and seriously. All concerns and allegations will be dealt with within the national procedures and in a timely manner.

### **Adults**

The Catholic Church in England and Wales is fully committed to work in relation to any adult(s) who may be at risk of abuse or maltreatment. The Church will:

- Work actively and constructively within the framework set out in the Care Act 2014 and Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, and with associated statutory and good practice guidance.
- Actively promote the empowerment and well-being of adults throughout the Church.
- Recognise everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse.
- Recognise adults have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation.
- Recognise adults have the right to independence that involves a degree of risk.
- Act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Health Agencies, Probation Providers and other agencies to safeguard adults and assist in bringing to justice anyone acting in the name of the Church who has committed an offence against an adult.

## **Safer Recruitment Procedures**

### **Statement of Principles**

"Being loved and kept safe go to the very heart of the Church's ministry to children & vulnerable adults" (Safeguarding with Confidence - The Cumberlege Commission Report, 2007).

It is a requirement by the State and endorsed by the Catholic Church that all who have regular contact with children, young people and adults at risk should be subject to an enhanced Disclosure

and Barring Check. This does not apply to staff employed by CoR as they do not currently meet the DBS Eligibility Criteria as they are not in regular activity with any child, children young persons or adults who may be at risk.

We are aware of the recruitment and selection process detailed in the CSAS Procedure Manual that is available on the CSAS Website.

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 are kept in a secure place and are confidential.

We ensure that references are taken up as part of staff recruitment.

#### Safeguarding Training

The President of the Charity and General Secretary will ensure that appropriate Safeguarding Training is available for the Members, Staff and Volunteers as required.

**January 2020**

