

Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Leads' Group

Purpose of the Safeguarding Leads' Group (SLG):

The purpose of the Safeguarding Leads' Group (SLG) is to provide a forum for collaboration between all the stakeholders/partners involved in Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland; namely, the Bishops' Conference of Scotland (BCoS), the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA), the Conference of Religious in Scotland Safeguarding Commission (CRSSC) and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSAs). It will act as a driver for continuous improvement of safeguarding arrangements by creating a supportive environment for the sharing of best practice and the development of national initiatives, with due regard to capacity.

It will provide a space for local and national safeguarding leads to help bring more coherence and simplification to safeguarding policy, as well as ensuring the SLG's interconnectivity with related activity on prevention and survivor engagement as part of a 'One Church' approach to improving safety and protection.

Remit of the SLG:

The remit of the SLG includes all areas of Safeguarding within the church environment with specific focus on:

- a) Updates of SCSSA priorities;
- b) Maintenance and upkeep of 'In Gods Image v2.0';
- c) Development of national and local safeguarding resources that support implementation of IGI v2.0;
- d) Report to the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding who may refer relevant issues to BCoS and/or the Board of the SCSSA if need be, for further deliberation;
- e) Identify requirements for national policy responses to emerging risks and issues, and develop solutions, which respond to identified barriers, inconsistencies or omissions in practice guidance.

Structure of the Group:

The Chair – Lead Bishop for Safeguarding

Vice-Chair - General Secretary of BCoS

Director and Head of Training of the SCSSA

Chair of the CRSSC plus 2 members who are both Religious

DSAs from each diocese

The Minutes Secretary - Assistant General Secretary of BCoS.

It is possible to co-opt other parties as members for specific issues or work.

Membership Responsibilities:

- To demonstrate collaborative leadership, taking shared responsibility for tackling challenging issues and implementing change.
- To bring their knowledge and expertise to inform work on safeguarding, particularly in the context of their own organisation or community.
- To consult with colleagues in their Diocese and Religious organisations before and after meetings of the SLG.
- To act as advocates for improvement activity promoted by the SLG and to influence change within the remit of their constituent role.
- To identify any risks and issues which impact on the delivery of actions and to propose actions for mitigating and resolving these.
- To provide constructive challenge and advice to the SLG.
- To identify and develop opportunities for collaborative change, improvement and peer support.
- To promote links with relevant external agencies and public bodies involved in the public protection arena.

In addition, each stakeholder of the SLG has the following responsibilities:

SCSSA to provide updates on the progress and development of its operational priorities, the National Training Plan, the Safeguarding Training Advisory Group (STAG), the Safeguarding Learning Network, Self-Assessment Evaluation/Quality Assurance, including any learning obtained from the process and the Survivor Engagement Panel.

DSAs and SCSSA to work collaboratively on the development of associated practice guidance and resources in relation to local and diocesan safeguarding delivery.

DSAs to report developments at diocesan and parish level to promote a consistent One Church approach and to table proposed amendments/changes to IGI and the eight standards contained within when appropriate.

Conference of Religious in Scotland Safeguarding Commission (CRSSC) to report on developments in the context of safeguarding affecting religious congregations and to promote safeguarding practices in line with a One Church approach.

BCoS - the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding can make decisions at the SLG on operational practice after consultation with the stakeholders but may choose to feed back some issues to the full Conference for further discussion in order to ensure a consistent One Church approach.

In the event of differences of opinions regarding a particular item on the agenda, the matter should be referred to BCoS and the Board of the SCSSA for further consideration where necessary.

Governance & Reporting Arrangements

A meeting is quorate when there is at least one representative from each stakeholder.

All discussions at meetings will be victim/survivor focused, with an acknowledgement of this expressed in prayer at the beginning and end of each meeting.

All papers for the Group must be provided to the secretariat at least 7 days prior to the meeting date.

The secretariat will publish the agenda and relevant papers at least 7 days before the meeting date.

Draft minutes of the previous meeting will be issued at the same time as the draft agenda of the upcoming meeting.

All participants will be given the opportunity to suggest items for the agenda. Agenda items can be submitted individually or from a lead representative on behalf of a constituent group.

There is an expectation that relevant agenda items will be supported by a lead report and a clear ask of the group, including where any decisions or recommendations are requested.

There is an expectation that members will discuss relevant points of interest with their respective Bishops, SCSSA Board member, or relevant Religious Superior in advance of each meeting.

Working groups may be established by the SLG to address specific tasks. All members must be informed about the outcomes of such meetings with reports presented to meetings of the SLG.

All SLG members will endeavour to work in a collaborative manner with the aim of reaching a consensus on issues and respecting any final outcome.

The SLG will commit to reviewing the remit and responsibilities as necessary to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Frequency of Meetings

The SLG will meet quarterly each year, primarily online, but will try to accommodate one 'in-person' meeting each year. Extra-ordinary meetings may be called if required.