



**Catholic  
Safeguarding  
Standards  
Agency**



# Clergy & Religious

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If you are the subject  
of an allegation of abuse.

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## Introduction

If you have been the subject of concerns or allegations, this is likely to be a difficult time for you. This information leaflet has been produced to help you to understand the process by which enquiries and investigations are managed in response to concerns and allegations.

The procedures described apply where concerns have been expressed or allegations have been made about a member of the clergy or religious, suggesting that they have:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed, or may have harmed a child or adult at risk; and
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; and/or
- Behaved in a way which indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children
- The allegations or concerns relate to the person's behaviour in the Church, at home or in another setting.

*The national safeguarding policies and procedures are used to ensure that safeguards are put in place for the person making the allegation, others who may be at risk and you.*

The full national safeguarding policies and procedures for the Catholic Church in England and Wales can be accessed at [www.csas.uk.net](http://www.csas.uk.net).

The national safeguarding procedures manual contains a range of other information sheets that might be of assistance to you.

## Involvement of other agencies

When an allegation about current abuse, or abuse that occurred in the past, is reported to the diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator and/or the religious order's Safeguarding Lead, they will refer the matter to statutory authorities e.g. the police and local authority safeguarding and social care services.

All allegations of abuse against children, current or having occurred in the past, will be reported to the statutory authorities.



Usually a strategy meeting will take place involving the local authority designated officer, the police, the Safeguarding Coordinator and other relevant parties, which determines whether enquiries should follow and by whom.

Ensuing action might include:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- Enquiries and assessment by the local authority social services departments for children or adults;
- Other actions such as 'disciplinary action' and referral to the DBS.

The strategy meeting will plan enquiries, allocate tasks and set timescales.

*Those taking part will be kept informed of progress and outcomes*

The statutory agencies will provide advice to the Safeguarding Coordinator about aspects of the case, such as continuing in role and management of risk.

Temporary removal from active ministry will always be considered when an allegation is made and the decision will be informed by advice from the statutory agencies and the recommendation of the relevant Safeguarding Commission.

For more information, see the Information Sheet – Temporary Removal from Active Ministry in the national safeguarding procedures manual or look at the Information Sheet section of the national safeguarding procedures manual.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will continue to liaise with the statutory authorities as enquiries /investigation progresses. They will also report progress back to their Safeguarding Commission.

You must not make any attempt to communicate with the individual making the allegation because this could be experienced and perceived as an attempt to influence and intimidate the person.

## Outcomes of statutory authority enquiries and investigations

The outcome of enquiries and investigations might be that allegations are:

- Substantiated – there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;
- Malicious - there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation, however, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive;
- Unsubstantiated – there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

A referral to the DBS will be considered unless allegations have been disproven.

## Management of allegations process

### Internal Church processes

Even if the statutory authorities are taking no further action, where it is determined that concerns remain and dependent upon your role within the Church, an independent investigation or assessment might be commissioned.

This will be commissioned by the Safeguarding Coordinator on behalf of the Bishop or Religious Leader.

For more information see the national policy and procedure relating to Commissioning Independent Investigations and Independent Assessments.

If you have been convicted of an offence against a child or adult or where there is no conviction but concerns remain about your conduct towards children or adults, you may be supported to participate in the Church using a Safeguarding Plan. For more information see the national policy and procedure relating to Safeguarding Plans.

*The purpose of the investigation or assessment is to gather further information to inform decision making about your role and ministry*

You should always see a copy of the investigation and/or risk assessment report.

The Safeguarding Coordinator and the Safeguarding Commission will use this information to evaluate risk and make recommendations to the Bishop or Religious Leader about what needs to happen next.

Decisions are made by the Bishop or Religious Leader. If you are not satisfied with the recommendations being made and before the Bishop or Religious Leader makes a decision, you can request from them a review of the process and recommendations.

## Record keeping and information sharing

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The Safeguarding Coordinator will open a case file and record all relevant information. The records will be kept securely, confidentially, shared only with those who need to know and in accordance with the national record retention schedule (unless the diocese or religious congregation has its own).

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For more information on the national record retention schedule see Safeguarding record retention schedule or look at section 3 of the national procedures manual.

You can make a subject access request to the Data Protection Officer to find out what information is held about you and how it is being used. You have the right to ask for any inaccuracies to be corrected.

Decisions about the information that you can be given, and when this can be given, will be informed by the advice of the police and local authority designated officer for safeguarding.

It may not be possible to provide any detail about the allegation, or who made the allegation, until the police have agreed to information being shared. This is to ensure that the sharing of information does not adversely affect any police investigation.

## Provision of support

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Where it is necessary for a member of the clergy or Religious Congregation to vacate his/her normal place of residence, the diocese or religious congregation will assist with finding alternative accommodation, subject to the approval of the Bishop or Religious Congregation Leader.

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The diocese or religious congregation will make financial provision, where this would normally be their responsibility, and will help you with accessing legal aid. Charitable funds should not normally be utilised to pay legal fees in connection with criminal investigations or prosecutions.

For more information, see the Information Sheet – responsibilities of dioceses and religious orders towards clergy and religious against whom allegations have been made.

You can speak with the Safeguarding Coordinator to identify sources of support and to clarify how you will be kept informed during the process of enquiries, investigation and/or assessment.



Catholic Safeguarding Agency Ltd

+44 (0) 207 901 1920

[www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

Catholic Safeguarding Agency Ltd.

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### *Local Contact*

#### Safeguarding Coordinator

Name goes here

Phone number goes here

Email goes here

### *National Contact*

#### Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency

39 Eccleston Square London,  
SW1V 1BX

[admin@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](mailto:admin@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

[www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

020 7901 1920 (the telephone number is staffed Monday to Friday,  
9.00am – 5.00pm)

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