

Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel (Liverpool)

Baseline Audit Report
December 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is a baseline audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel based in Liverpool in the Northwest of England. Belonging to the world-wide Order of Discalced Carmelites, Maryton Carmel were founded in 2012 from three Carmelite Monasteries, Liverpool, Golders Green and Upholland and have come together as one new enclosed community which now has 24 members, all of whom reside within the Monastery. The Sisters have no external ministry and have a primary mission of contemplative prayer. The Monastery consists of an infirmary, Monastery chapel for Mass and private prayer, a small gift shop where the public can purchase cards and other small items that have been made by the Sisters and 4 guest bedrooms that can be used for retreats by members of the public. There are 14 paid employees, 8 staff work within the infirmary, 3 cooks and 1 staff member who works in the reception, the other employees support the maintenance of the property and grounds

1.2 The CSSA assess Religious Life Groups against a categorisation scheme based of the safeguarding risk that is likely to be associated with their activities and size, from Level 1, a small community with minimal outreach and no known safeguarding concerns known as an Apostolic or an Enclosed Order, Level 2, a medium sized community with some outreach with vulnerable populations and/or providing some Diocesan activities such as a Parish Priest and Level 3 a large community and/or one with significant outreach with vulnerable populations and/or a disproportionately high number of open safeguarding cases.

1.3 The CSSA contacted the Prioress and Safeguarding Lead on the 31st May 2024 via telephone, and this was followed up via email the same day where A self-assessment document was shared with an agreed completion date of the 26th July 2024. The CSSA analyst, Prioress and Infirmary Manager of Maryton Carmel met via teams on the 21st June to discuss audit arrangements and further brief email communications were held between the analyst and Prioress to finalise arrangements for visiting the Monastery prior to the audit.

1.4 The CSSA analyst visited Maryton Carmel on the 23rd August 2024, having remotely reviewed the evidence submitted as part of the self-assessment process and the website for the Sisters of Maryton Carmel.

2. Scope & Methodology

2.1 In advance of the formal audit week, the Sisters at Maryton Carmel were requested to complete a bespoke Level 1 – Enclosed Orders audit self-assessment tool¹ providing information on their adherence to the Eight National Safeguarding Standards² and progress in the overall implementation of said standards.

2.2 Information provided within the self-assessment was analysed by the CSSA, alongside additional evidence available on the Sisters of Maryton Carmel’s website. This evidence was assessed against a bespoke Enclosed Orders Maturity Matrix to arrive at ratings for each standard and a combined overall grade.

2.3.1 Interviews

Interviews took place with the following key individuals from Maryton Carmel on 23rd August 2024:

- Prioress and Safeguarding Lead
- Infirmary Manager, 1st Councillor of the elected council and Bursar.
- Sisters Focus Group
- Infirmary Staff Focus Group
- Trustee and member of the elected council

2.3.2 Document Review

Review of the following key documents additionally took place:

- Self-assessment form
- Maryton Carmel website³
- Supplementary evidence

¹ All bespoke self-assessment and grading materials are available at Appendix A.

² Full details of the eight standards and underpinning sub standards are available here: [The Eight National Safeguarding Standards \(catholicsafeguarding.org.uk\)](https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

³ [Maryton Carmel Liverpool \(marytoncarmelitesliverpool.org.uk\)](https://marytoncarmelitesliverpool.org.uk)

2.3.3 Casework Review

No allegations or concerns have been reported to, or about, the Sisters at Maryton Carmel thus, it was not possible to examine casework during this audit or assess some aspects of direct safeguarding practices.

3. Audit Grading

3.1 Practice is assessed against the Eight National Safeguarding Standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales and graded in accordance with the CSSA Maturity Matrix for Enclosed Orders. Each standard is graded on an ascending three-point scale of Not Met, Met With Recommendations, and Met. Grades for individual standards are combined in order to produce an overall grading. The audit draws on evidence generated from self-assessment, supporting documentation and interviews.

Overall Grading	Met
Standard 1 – Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body’s leadership, governance, ministry and culture	Met
Standard 2 – Communicating the Church’s Safeguarding Message	Met
Standard 3 – Engaging with and Caring for those who report having been harmed	Met
Standard 4 – Effective Management of Allegations and Concerns	Met
Standard 5 – Management and Support of Subjects of Allegations and Concerns (respondents)	Met With Recommendations

Standard 6 – Robust Human Resource Management	Met With Recommendations
Standard 7 – Training and Support for Safeguarding	Met With Recommendations
Standard 8 – Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement	Met With Recommendations

3.2 The key findings of the audit are that the Sisters at Maryton Carmel have achieved the overall grading of Met at this time, which is attributed to the hard work of the Prioress and elected council members and all members of the community to embrace the principles of safeguarding and taking care of one another, which in fact was the key reason why the Sister at Maryton Carmel came together, as they wanted to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their most vulnerable members within the confines of their own home.

4. Audit findings against each standard

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

4.1.1 There is a culture of Safeguarding within Maryton Carmel that is integral to the constitution of the Sisters and has been since the conception of their Religious Life Group. Responding to the more formal expectations of Safeguarding are still developing within the community and the Sisters at Maryton Carmel are making excellent progress in this area.

4.1.2 Governance at Maryton Carmel is provided via the elected council which meets on a monthly basis or more often if an urgent matter arises as all members are resident within the community, there is also an annual meeting of the

Monastery Trustees⁴ where Safeguarding is reported to be an agenda item. Internal governance processes are also subject to some external scrutiny via the 3-yearly canonical visitations⁵, in which the Regular Visitor, and the President of the Association of British Carmels speaks individually with every Group member.

4.1.3 Maryton Carmel has adopted the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) Safeguarding Policy and have published this on their website in July 2024 and there is a plan to update the policy in July 2025. The policy states that *"It is the responsibility of all MARYTON CARMEL members and workers to prevent, whether by action or omission, abuse. 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, needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue"* which indicates that there is a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and an ethos that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as the policy is for "all members and workers". Guidance on how and when to report abuse is contained within the Safeguarding Policy and the Prioress' contact details are also included.

4.1.4 The Safeguarding Policy also includes reference to whistleblowing, which highlights that the RLSS may lead on an investigation if this is felt to be required. Safer recruitment and the recording and storage of safeguarding concerns and case files is also included within the Safeguarding Policy available on the Maryton Carmel website under the category of important information. The policies adopted by the Sisters of Maryton Carmel are sufficient in supporting the community, however the safer recruitment practices of the Sisters exceed the expectations of the current policy, and the Sisters may wish to give consideration to expanding the policy to reflect the operational strengths in this area, safer recruitment practices will be considered later in this report.

⁴ Chapel Trust Maryton Carmel

⁵ A canonical visitation, in these circumstances, is where the Diocesan Bishop visits a Religious Life Group to ensure sound doctrine and good discipline and correct any abuses. These provide an opportunity for Community members to raise any matter of concern in the absence of other Community members.

4.1.5 Maryton Carmel has a dedicated Safeguarding Lead who is also the Prioress and will be referred to as the Prioress for the remainder of this audit report. The Prioress was elected to the post by the community seven years ago and can serve three terms, there are two years left of her current term. The Prioress and Safeguarding Lead do not need to be the same person and the current Prioress could continue in the role as Safeguarding Lead with the approval of the incoming Prioress. The Prioress has demonstrated that she is committed to improving safeguarding practice within Maryton Carmel and she has a good awareness of safeguarding principles and the potential vulnerabilities of members of the community to particular types of abuse. The Prioress is also alert to the potential of spiritual abuse within a religious community.

4.1.6 The Prioress has a professional background and is able to transfer skills and knowledge from her professional career into her role as Safeguarding Lead. The Prioress has recently accessed Safeguarding Training and Training for Trustees via the Religious Life Safeguarding Service in July 2024, and she has also attended the Religious Life Safeguarding Services Annual Safeguarding conference in March 2024.

4.1.7 The Prioress is committed to creating a safe environment and is promoting safeguarding within the community with weekly community meetings for the Sisters taking place each Wednesday, where matters of wellbeing and safeguarding are discussed, in addition each Sister meets with the Prioress on a one-to-one basis each month to ensure that the Sisters' have an opportunity to share any concerns directly with the Prioress.

4.1.8 Maryton Carmel has signed formal contracts with both the RLSS and CSSA, and the Prioress has proactively engaged with the CSSA regarding the audit process. Maryton Carmel has engaged directly with the RLSS Training and Safeguarding teams and the Prioress, Infirmary Manager and the Sisters who attended the Focus Group, all spoke confidently about knowing there was support available from the RLSS in respect of any safeguarding matters. More recently all able members of the community have been provided with the Integrity in Ministry Principles, and contributors to the Focus Group shared how this was aligned with their own principles.

4.1.9 The recently adopted Safeguarding Policy whilst sufficient given it serves a small community with minimal public encounters has not been discussed and agreed with all Trustees and therefore practice in this area could be strengthened by ensuring that all Trustees are sighted on important documents that govern safeguarding within the community, furthermore consideration should be given to developing a separate policy for safer recruitment that reflects the excellent work of the Sisters to ensure paid employees are safely onboarded. It is clear that consideration is being given as to how to embed safeguarding further within the community and so a Safeguarding Action or annual work plan could be used to improve safeguarding practice and governance.

Graded: Met

4.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

4.2.1 Safeguarding messages are communicated to members, employees and visitors, and there is a Safeguarding Policy available on the Maryton Carmel Webpages which includes details of how to raise a concern and contact details for the Prioress. Maryton Carmel has recently developed a plan of safeguarding communications, which highlights that safeguarding will be on the agenda for the monthly council meetings, and annually for the Trustees and community members which will coincide with annual refresher safeguarding training. All members of the community have also recently been given safeguarding leaflets provided by the RLSS, and they have viewed the safeguarding Policy and are expecting some supporting slides to follow.

4.2.2 Staff within the Infirmary report that safeguarding is a constant consideration in their work and that safeguarding communications are shared with them by the Infirmary Manager, or one of the Sisters, who is a registered nurse and works in the infirmary. Staff within the Infirmary shared that if there are new policies and procedures shared in respect of safeguarding this will usually be left in a communal area and staff will sign a form to evidence that they have read and understood the document. There are also regular staff meetings within the infirmary where safeguarding is discussed although this is not routinely captured.

The safeguarding communication plan could be strengthened by consideration to including how messages of safeguarding are routinely shared and captured with employees, with consideration to including safeguarding as an agenda item at team meetings.

4.2.3 Although there are only a few members of the public who access the Chapel, safeguarding posters are displayed at the entrance to both the Chapel and small gift shop which includes contact details for the Prioress. Within the Monastery there are four ensuite bedrooms available to known members of the public who wish to seek quiet retreat, no safeguarding materials were observed in these rooms and so Maryton Carmel may wish to give consideration to displaying safeguarding posters in these public areas to support anyone who may need to report a concern or otherwise seek help for a safeguarding matter. The bedrooms available to the public allow for access to the Chapel which then leads on to the Infirmary, whilst the sisters report that they do “vet” those coming to stay, further consideration should be given to any practical measures that could be implemented in the building to ensure the physical safety of the Sisters.

4.2.4 Maryton Carmel has established some external links that will promote a safer environment for community members and visitors to the Monastery. There is an existing link with the Archdiocese of Liverpool, within which the Monastery is geographically located, and Maryton Carmel’s Chaplain is a priest of the Archdiocese who continues to receive safeguarding support from the Diocesan team. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel are also members of the Association of British Carmels and they are aligned with the RLSS and with the CSSA, which will also contribute to a safer environment.

Graded: Met

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

4.3.1 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel do not have any previous experience of, and therefore there is no practice evidence available that would enable a direct assessment of the management of allegations and concerns. However, interview

evidence demonstrated that the community, led by an informed and pro-active Prioress, is well-equipped to respond appropriately to any person reporting that they have been harmed.

4.3.2 The Prioress has recently completed safeguarding Training with the RLSS and has demonstrated a competent understanding of the potential needs of those who are harmed and the likely support, advice and pastoral care that they would require. The Prioress and Infirmary Manager shared that resources for specialist support would be made available for any member of the community who shared concerns and required bespoke support. In addition, the Sisters' Focus Group contributors recalled bespoke support being offered to a former community member, therefore evidencing appropriate responses to those at risk of harm.

4.3.3 All community members who contributed to the audit demonstrated an awareness of how to respond to a disclosure of abuse in that they would listen to the person reporting harm in a caring and compassionate manner and then share the information with the Prioress, and in the case of an emergency the police, there was also an awareness amongst the community members that they could speak with the Association President, Sr Shelagh Banks in respect of any concerns.

4.4.4 Similarly, staff within the infirmary shared that in the event that they received a disclosure of abuse, they would record the information and share this with the infirmary manager and or the Sister who works within the infirmary and is a qualified nurse, and in the event that either were unavailable they would speak to the Prioress. Staff in the infirmary were confident in contacting the police in the case of an emergency, or in the event that they were concerned about the responses from the community leadership. There are two long standing members of staff who have worked for Maryton Carmel for many years, and have noted that the care needs of the community has increased in recent years with a greater need for more specialised care and interventions, it is evident that the staff and Sisters within the infirmary are proficient at liaising with statutory services in relation to obtaining care and medical support for the most vulnerable members.

Graded: Met

4.4 Standard 4 Effective Management of Allegations and Concerns

4.4.1 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel do not have any experiences of and therefore there is no evidence available that would enable a direct assessment of the management of allegations and concerns, however within the Safeguarding Policy there is a procedure to follow in the event that anyone within Maryton Carmel becomes aware of safeguarding concerns and it is highlighted that the Prioress and RLSS need to be notified and that referrals to the Police or Local Authority might be required. To complement the Safeguarding Policy, Maryton Carmel have devised The Information for Safeguarding Policy, that lists the contact details for a wide range of services including the Local Authority Children's and Adult Services for Liverpool, local LADO ⁶ RLSS and the CSSA. The Infirmary Manager has also developed a safeguarding ring binder folder that is available within the manager's office in the infirmary, within the folder are key documents such as a concern recording form for anyone noting concerns, a body map where injuries can be recorded, the Maryton Carmel Safeguarding Policy and RLSS guidance in relation to responding to safeguarding concerns.

4.4.2 The Prioress demonstrated her understanding of the differences of managing a low-level dispute between members of the community and responding to an allegation of abuse. Similarly, elected council members and members of the community who contributed to the Sisters' Focus Group have all given consideration as to how an allegation or concern may be shared with them and displayed a clear understanding that any concern or allegation would need to be reported to the Prioress, RLSS and, in an emergency, directly to the police, which is aligned with the Safeguarding Policy. Interview evidence demonstrated a good understanding of the types of safeguarding concerns that may arise within the community, such as ill treatment of the more elderly Sisters, spiritual abuse, and bullying.

⁶ The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is set out in the HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and developed in subsequent editions.

4.4.3 The Prioress understands the need to make accurate records of any concerns, which is referenced in the Safeguarding Policy under “the recording and storage of safeguarding concerns and case files” and to ensure that they are retained confidentially and securely. There is lockable storage within the Monastery and Infirmary where if needed any relevant paperwork may be kept.

Graded: Met

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

4.5.1 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel do not have any experience of, and therefore there is no practice evidence available that would enable a direct assessment of the management or support of any Sister who might be the subject of an allegation, that said, interview evidence highlighted that the Prioress and the community have given consideration to what action to take should there be an allegation against a member of the community.

4.5.2 Sisters within the Focus Group all felt confident that should they be the subject on an allegation they would be supported by the Prioress, the community and the RLSS, and equated this to the more modern nature of their community in recognising the need to support one another and not judge harshly or seek to punish, which had been methods they reported had been implemented historically in some Monasteries.

4.5.3 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have developed a Staff Handbook for employees in which it is detailed the steps that will be taken and the support that will be offered to paid employees should they be the subject of an allegation in the workplace. Within the Staff focus group, staff reported that they were confident that they would be adequately supported by the Sisters at Maryton Carmel, making reference to the positive experiences that they had during the covid 19 pandemic, staff were unsure albeit confident that they would have been provided with some written information in respect of this, and so consideration should be given to redistribution of the Staff Handbook to all employees.

4.5.4 The Prioress has stated that if there was a serious allegation against a member of the community, she would immediately liaise with the RLSS in respect of a care and safety management plan and seek to manage the subject of the allegation by limiting her access to other members and utilising her private space known as her cell, there are also bedrooms available to members of the public that would support the subject of the allegation to be further segregated from the rest of the community or another Carmel or Religious community residence could be identified if it was felt that this was required. The Prioress, is also able to reach out to other Carmel's for suitable safe accommodation for a member of the community if this was deemed necessary. The Prioress recognised that any member of the community subject to an allegation would require additional support and care and stated that additional resources would be made available to support the subject of the allegation, for instance is counselling was required.

4.5.5 Within the Safeguarding policy it is recorded that *"in the event of an allegation a member of the community may need to have restrictions placed upon them or be stepped down from ministry"*, and whilst all members of the community that were spoken to as part of this audit were confident that they would be supported appropriately by the leaders in the community, it may be useful to the Sisters to have a more detailed understanding of what this may entail, and so practice in this area could be strengthened by a policy reassuring community members of the spiritual, emotional, legal, and financial support that would be available if they were subject to an allegation.

Graded: Met With Recommendations

4.6 Standard 6 Robust Human Resource Management

4.6.1 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have no external ministry and no member of the community conducts regulated work; thus, there is no need for any Sister to maintain a valid DBS certificate, DBS checks have been routinely sought for any new members seeking to join the community, although the Sisters at Maryton Carmel may wish to seek the views of the RLSS in terms of the necessity and suitability of DBS checks for new members. Paid employees, with the exception of the cook's, gardener and receptionist have been subject to a DBS check. The Priest who accesses the community to say Mass is from the Arch Diocese of Liverpool,

and so the Diocese are responsible for maintaining the DBS of the Priest, however the Prioress may wish to seek assurances on a three yearly basis, that the DBS check and Celebret remains valid.

4.6.2 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have recently formalised their safer recruitment processes, including safer recruitment within the Safeguarding Policy. The safer recruitment processes evidence that DBS will be sought where appropriate and that no formal offer of a job will be made until two satisfactory reference checks are completed, the Prioress stated that all references provided by email will be verified via follow up phone calls completed by her or the Infirmary Manager. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel employ a Recruitment and Retention Process which details the various steps needed to ensure someone is onboarded safely.

4.6.3 All new employees within the Infirmary are subject to a probationary period which is formally reviewed at 1 week, 1, 3 and 6 months. Staff within the Infirmary receive regular supervision although this is not always formally captured, efforts are being made to increase this to monthly supervision with an increased focus on capturing the discussions formally. Staff are also subject to annual appraisals that are captured formally with consideration to learning and training opportunities. There is a Staff Handbook available to all employees, which includes information of equal opportunities, disciplinary procedures and health and safety. The staff handbook is more comprehensive in respect of what employees can expect from the Sisters of Maryton Carmel as employers and what policies and procedures are being used to support staff in their roles.

4.6.4 Similar processes are in place for new prospective members wishing to join the community, although there have been no new members in the last 12 months. Similarly, there have been no overseas applicants, however the Sisters at Maryton Carmel are aware that if in the future they do support an overseas applicant they will need to seek a letter of good character from the incoming person's Religious Superior and observe a copy of the DBS. Prospective members must be known to the community for at least a year before they are allowed entry into the Carmel. The formation/discernment period has in recent years been extended to 9 years minimum and 12 years maximum, which allows them time to fully discern their vocation and provide the wider community an opportunity to assess their suitability. All new members are also subject to psychological assessments, and

the Prioress stated that she is confident reviewing psychological assessments, and if there are any areas of concern, she is comfortable in contacting the assessor to explore this and would seek guidance and support from the RLSS, all new members are provided with safeguarding training as part of their postulant training. The Sisters are visited by a community servant of the poor of the Third World once a year, this is a visit to the Sisters only.

4.6.5 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have recently developed their whistleblowing policy, again embedding this into the overall Safeguarding Policy. The whistleblowing policy advises those with concerns about Maryton Carmel *“malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions”* to contact the RLSS, and there is reference to the RLSS completing an investigation if appropriate, it is highlighted that a written outcome will be provided. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have also developed a template form for raising a grievance, although this is not referenced in the whistleblowing policy. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel do not have a formal complaints policy, and so consideration should be given to developing a complaints policy.

4.6.6 The Sisters’ Focus Groups demonstrated that members of the community were comfortable to raise any grievances with the Prioress, and there was a discussion that the culture within the Monastery and within wider society had shifted, and the Sisters feel very safe and like a family and are able to share problems with one another without fear of repercussions, it was reported that the elected council are there to serve the community and there is no hierarchy. The Prioress has reported that there is an increased focus on the wellbeing of community members as if the Sisters are not well cared for and are distracted by their own concerns this renders them less able to serve God effectively. Promoting the well-being of the Sisters is supported by enabling the Sisters to have monthly contact with their family members or friends and encouraging weekly community meetings to share any concerns.

4.6.7 Practice in this area could be developed further by further developing the whistleblowing policy to include the use of the grievance form, and by developing a complaints policy.

Graded: Met With Recommendations

4.7 Standard 7 Training and Support for Safeguarding

4.7.1 Safeguarding awareness and training is a priority for the Sisters at Maryton Carmel, and all those identified as having capacity by the Prioress and elected council have completed basic safeguarding training in August 2024, additionally the Prioress has attended the RLSS conference in Milton Keynes in March 2024 and trustee training and safeguarding lead training in July 2024. Three of the other Sisters have also completed trustee training, one has attended safeguarding lead training and one also attended the RLSS conference earlier in the year. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel keep an excel spreadsheet to record the training attended by the community members.

4.7.2 The employees within Maryton Carmel have also been encouraged to attend safeguarding training even when this has not been specific to their role. Staff within the Infirmary have reported accessing mandatory training every year, to include safeguarding adults, however this year they have also completed additional training on safeguarding children and although it does not apply to their role, staff reported that it provided a greater insight across the board against what safeguarding is. Staff within the infirmary complete training with Flexiebee and Social Care TV annually. Staff within the Infirmary report that training is a priority for the Sisters at Maryton Carmel and that they are encouraged to identify training for themselves that the Sisters will provide resources for. There is a plan this year for basic safeguarding training to be provided to the receptionists at Maryton Carmel. A record of staff training is compiled and updated by the Prioress and training compliance is going to be an agenda item for the Monastery council meetings.

4.7.3 Improvements to practice in this area will be including oversight of safeguarding training compliance in the meetings of the Monastery council.

Graded: Met With Recommendations

4.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

4.8.1 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel are aware of the need to review and improve practice in relation to safeguarding and this CSSA audit has contributed to an overall reconsideration of safeguarding practice. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel are

familiar with the integrity in Ministry and the Eight National Safeguarding Standards and in addition to signing that they have read and understood these documents, Sisters within the Focus Group shared that they have contributed to discussions about these documents with the Prioress and other community members and they understand the need to comply with the expectations of both.

4.8.2 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have signed contracts with both the RLSS and the CSSA and the Sisters have sought advice and guidance from the RLSS as and when needed, evidenced in discussions in respect of processing DBS. The Prioress and several other Sisters have attended training organised by the RLSS relevant to their roles and the RLSS Annual Safeguarding Conference, providing an opportunity to liaise with safeguarding professionals about good safeguarding practice within religious life.

4.8.3 There is evidence of routine appraisals being offered to Staff within the Infirmary, all new employees are subject to a formal probationary period, and once onboarded they are subject to annual appraisals of their practice. Formal processes for staff supervision is every four to six weeks although this is being developed and will likely increase to monthly supervision and will be routinely recorded the more formal supervision is complemented by the informal supervision that takes place on a daily basis.

4.8.4 Practice in this area could be strengthened by the introduction of a supervision contract, outlining the responsibilities of the Sisters at Maryton Carmel and the staff to ensuring effective and purposeful supervision. The Prioress and elected council members and Trustees may also wish to consider developing an annual work plan of safeguarding tasks to include their routine tasks and any appropriate recommendations of this audit which are aligned to the Eight National Safeguarding Standards to further support Quality assurance and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

Graded: Met With Recommendations

5. Summary of Overall Findings

5.1 It is clear that the Sisters at Maryton Carmel understand the need to keep all members safe, there is a dedicated Safeguarding Lead who is the Prioress, and she has embraced opportunities for herself and other members to attend safeguarding training and training for Trustees so that they are fully aware of their responsibilities. There has been an increased focus more recently of formalising the processes and procedures underpinning safe practice, with the introduction of a written Safeguarding Policy publicly available on the website, which includes key points for consideration such as whistleblowing and data protection.

5.2 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have embraced their responsibilities of effective safeguarding practice and have recently developed a Communications plan to highlight how they intend to promote safeguarding, and key information such as Integrity in Ministry and the Eight National Safeguarding Standards have been shared with members of the community and there are safeguarding posters available in public spaces.

5.3 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have no frame of reference for supporting those who have been harmed, or of the management of allegations and concerns or of supporting the subjects of allegations, however the Prioress has demonstrated that there have been considerations to how the Sisters at Maryton Carmel would practically manage this, and this is supported by supplementary evidence provided by members of the Focus Groups.

5.4 The Sisters at Maryton Carmel have made significant efforts to create a safe environment with consideration to the emotional and mental wellbeing of all its sisters and a particular focus on ensuring the safe recruitments of the carers who care for the most vulnerable elderly and infirm members and they have developed effective Safer recruitment processes that exceeds the policy available within the Safeguarding Policy.

5.5 Areas for development are to continue to embed and expand the existing policies that have been adopted, ensuring that all key members are consulted where necessary.

5.6 The Religious Life Group demonstrated elements of good practice across all of the standards, which is reflected in the individual grades and the overall grade of Met.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The following recommendations are made to support the Sisters at Maryton Carmel to further embed good safeguarding practice.

- Consideration should be given to any practical measures that could be implemented in the building to ensure the physical safety of the Sisters.
- Ensure that all Trustees are sighted on important documents that govern safeguarding within the community.
- Develop a Safeguarding Action or annual work plan could be used to improve safeguarding practice and governance against the Eight National Safeguarding Standards.
- Develop policy or guidance reassuring community members of the spiritual, emotional, legal, and financial support that would be available if they were subject to an allegation.
- Develop the whistleblowing policy to include the use of the grievance form
- Develop a complaints policy.
- Ensure safeguarding materials and contact details for the Safeguarding Lead are available in guest bedrooms.
- Embedding of oversight for safeguarding training compliance in the meetings of the Monastery council.
- Develop a Supervision contract for employees
- Redistribute the Employee Handbook

6.2 In line with the overall rating of Met, the minimum period of re-audit by the CSSA will be three years, subject to no new risk factors arising. The Sisters at Maryton Carmel will be invited to complete an action plan arising from this audit.