

Scalabrini Fathers

Baseline Audit Report
April 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is a baseline audit of the Safeguarding arrangements of the Scalabrini Fathers. This audit has been undertaken as part of the CSSA's Baseline Audit phase of Religious Life Groups (RLGs).

1.2 The Scalabrini Fathers in England and Wales are part of the wider European Province. They number six active members serving Italian, Portuguese and Filipino migrant communities as Priests in the Dioceses of Arundel & Brighton and Northampton and the Archdiocese of Southwark. One of the Scalabrini Fathers whose primary area of mission is in Arundel & Brighton also serves migrant communities in the Dioceses of Clifton, Portsmouth, Northampton and the Archdiocese of Birmingham. One Scalabrini Father is retired from active ministry and resident at Villa Scalabrini¹, a Residential Care Home connected to the Scalabrini Fathers and rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission in February 2022.

1.3 There are two employees of the Scalabrini Fathers, a secretary and a housekeeper. Volunteers associated with the Scalabrini Fathers have their Safeguarding training and vetting undertaken by the relevant Diocese. The Scalabrini Fathers are members of the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)².

1.4 This audit seeks to assess the effectiveness of current Safeguarding arrangements by considering practice over the last 12 months. The CSSA has categorised RLGs on a scale from Level 1 (a small community with minimal outreach and no known Safeguarding concerns), Level 2 (a medium sized community with some outreach to vulnerable populations and/or providing some Diocesan activities, such as Parish Priests), to Level 3 (a large community and/or one with significant outreach to vulnerable populations and/or a

¹ [Welcome to Villa Scalabrini, Residential Senior Living in Hertfordshire](#)

² RLSS are an independent team of Safeguarding professionals offering Safeguarding services to the Religious of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

disproportionately high number of open Safeguarding cases). The Scalabrini Fathers are categorised as a Level 2 community and they completed a corresponding self-assessment.

2. Methodology

2.1 This baseline audit was undertaken following the submission of the Level 2 self-assessment and supporting evidence by the Local Superior, who also takes the role of Safeguarding Lead, on 18 November 2024.

2.2 Audit interviews were undertaken in person on 4 December 2024 with the Local Superior and with a member of the Scalabrini Fathers who also serves as a Trustee.

2.3 Liaison has taken place between auditors, RLSS and the Safeguarding teams in Northampton, Southwark and Arundel & Brighton regarding the Scalabrini Fathers engagement with their Safeguarding expectations.

3. Audit grading

3.1 Practice was assessed against the eight national Safeguarding standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales³ and graded in accordance with the CSSA Maturity Matrix for Level 2 RLGs.

3.2 Potential audit ratings against each standard, and the final overall rating, are: Below Basic, Basic, Early Progress, Firm Progress, Results Being Achieved, Comprehensive Assurance and Exemplary.

³ Full details of the eight standards and underpinning sub standards are available here: [The Eight National Safeguarding Standards](#)

3.3 The Scalabrini Fathers have received an overall rating of Early Progress.

Overall grading	Early Progress
Standard 1 – Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body’s leadership, governance, ministry and culture	Early Progress
Standard 2 – Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message	Early Progress
Standard 3 – Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed	Early Progress
Standard 4 – Effective management of allegations and concerns	Firm Progress
Standard 5 – Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)	Firm Progress
Standard 6 – Robust human resource management	Early Progress
Standard 7 – Training and support for safeguarding	Basic
Standard 8 – Quality assurance and continuous Improvement	Basic

4. Audit findings against each standard

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

Strengths

4.1.1 The Safeguarding Policy of the Scalabrini Fathers, dated 1 September 2023 is available on their website⁴. It is based on an RLSS template which has been amended to reflect the Scalabrini Fathers' particular circumstances. It also identifies that the Scalabrini Fathers Safeguarding Policy reflects the international Scalabrini Fathers document "Guidelines of the Scalabrini Congregation for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons". The international guidelines contain Principles of Integrity and Ethical Standards for all Scalabrini Fathers which support the expectations of Integrity in Ministry⁵.

4.1.2 The Local Superior is also the Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Policy dictates that he must complete Safeguarding training specifically for Safeguarding Leads. Evidence was provided that this was completed by him on 28 August 2024.

4.1.3 RLSS confirmed that the Scalabrini Fathers had engaged with their membership, Safeguarding and Training Teams within the last 12 months. This includes work on the ongoing management of a Safeguarding Plan. The Scalabrini Fathers confirmed that they would always seek the support of RLSS for all matters of Safeguarding work.

⁴ [safeguardingpolicy.pdf](#)

⁵ Integrity in Ministry is a code of conduct for Religious engaged in ministry in the Catholic Church in England and Wales

Areas for development

4.1.4 Trustees do not routinely discuss Safeguarding at their four meetings per year. The Scalabrini Fathers have yet to create a Safeguarding Implementation Plan to drive Safeguarding improvements. They informed auditors that it is their intention to create one, based upon the recommendations of this audit process.

4.1.5 The Scalabrini Fathers are a relatively small RLG, albeit audited at Level 2 due to their provision of Priests in Diocese. This means that the Local Superior also acts as the Safeguarding Lead in addition to his day to day duties as a Priest. This limits the time he has available to dedicate to his Safeguarding role.

4.1.6 Integrity in Ministry was last distributed through the Scalabrini Fathers in 2015. Religious who have arrived since that time have not received the document or been expected to understand the expectations of conduct it places upon them.

4.1.7 In their self-assessment the Scalabrini Fathers wrote that their Safeguarding policy was reviewed on 25 September 2024. They will wish to update their website with the reviewed policy.

Graded: Early Progress

4.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

Strengths

4.2.1 Auditors were shown Safeguarding posters from the Archdiocese of Southwark, posters advertising the services of Safe Spaces⁶, posters identifying the Local Superior as the Safeguarding Lead, with contact details for RLSS, and

⁶ Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales.

Safeguarding notices translated into Italian. This demonstrates an awareness of the need to distribute the Scalabrini Father's Safeguarding message, as does the inclusion of their Safeguarding policy on their website. The availability of contact information for Safe Spaces allows Survivors to access their services directly should they choose to do so. Contact details for RLSS also allow individuals to report any concerns directly to them without having to go through the Safeguarding Lead.

Areas for development

4.2.2 Whilst they have a Safeguarding Policy, this does not directly address how the Scalabrini Fathers will share their Safeguarding messages internally or externally. They should develop a written plan that will describe how they will communicate their Safeguarding messages, to whom and in what manner. Messages that are communicated should come from leaders and demonstrate the importance that they place upon Safeguarding. This plan can then be regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Best practice would be to review the communication plan in conjunction with key people who use their services, such as those whose first language is not English, to ensure that messages are being received in the intended manner and, if they are not, for improvements to be made.

Graded: Early Progress

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

Strengths

4.3.1 The Safeguarding Policy gives guidance to members of the Scalabrini Fathers of how to respond to an allegation of abuse. This includes the initial steps to take and how to keep the person who made them aware of the allegation informed. There is an awareness of the support that Survivors might access through Safe Spaces but, primarily, the Scalabrini Fathers would be led by RLSS to help them support those who report having been harmed.

4.3.2 The Scalabrini Fathers informed auditors that, as soon as they became aware of any Safeguarding concern, they would liaise with RLSS for support. The Local Superior said that he would be prepared to meet with any Survivor who chose to meet with him, and he would seek the guidance and support of RLSS to ensure that he was prepared for the meeting. He confirmed that there were financial resources available to support Survivors if any approached them.

Areas for development

4.3.3 Whilst there is a Safe Spaces poster displayed, the Scalabrini Fathers' knowledge of support services for Survivors was almost entirely dependant upon RLSS. Increasing knowledge of support services available for Survivors would enable the Scalabrini Fathers to promptly signpost individuals to them should it become necessary. Updating the website with contact details for Safe Spaces and other agencies would enable Survivors to engage directly with any that they chose. The Safeguarding policy could also be updated to reflect how the Scalabrini Fathers would plan to support any Survivors that they became engaged with.

4.3.4 At present, no Survivors are directly engaged with the Scalabrini Fathers. Therefore, they should consider engaging with other RLGs who have had contact with Survivors or RLSS to ascertain if there are any lessons that can be learned to ensure a compassionate response as and when Survivors do approach them.

Graded: Early Progress

4.4 Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns

Strengths

4.4.1. As mentioned above, the Safeguarding policy outlines how to respond to an allegation of abuse. What to do in a non-emergency and an emergency situation is also detailed. This includes passing information promptly to statutory authorities.

In practice, the Scalabrini Fathers would deal with an allegation of abuse against one of their members, in conjunction with RLSS, and the relevant Diocese would manage allegations related to Parishioners or other concerns. The Scalabrini Fathers keep records of concerns in locked cabinets and an encrypted electronic filing system with limited access. If the allegation related to a member of the Scalabrini Fathers then they would liaise with RLSS to ensure effective management. Other Safeguarding concerns would be managed by the Safeguarding teams in the Diocese where the Scalabrini Fathers minister. Evidence was seen by auditors of the Scalabrini Fathers working with RLSS to create a Safeguarding Plan and ensure its oversight and effective management.

4.4.2 When necessary the Scalabrini Fathers are able to access Canon Law advice and guidance through their worldwide Order. This would make sure that any investigation or Safeguarding plan that was in place complied with the stipulations of Canon Law.

Areas for development

4.4.3 As Safeguarding is not a standing agenda item for Trustees, oversight of allegations and responses is not routine practice. This is especially important when, as now, there is an open Safeguarding plan requiring leadership oversight of implementation and effectiveness. The current Safeguarding plan was not referred to the Charity Commission as a Serious Incident⁷ as it was not judged to fit the criteria. However, the Local Superior acknowledged that his understanding of the process was not complete. This demonstrates a need for him, and all the Trustees, to familiarise themselves with the Charity Commission guidance to aid future decision making. Therefore Safeguarding should be included on all Trustee agendas and decisions about referring Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission should be made in that forum.

⁷ [How to report a serious incident in your charity - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity)

Graded: Firm Progress

4.5 Standard 5 Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)

Strengths

4.5.1 The Scalabrini Fathers are currently engaged, with the support of RLSS, in managing and supporting a Respondent who is subject to a Safeguarding plan. This plan was completed by RLSS and has been shared with and signed by the Respondent and three members of the Scalabrini Fathers, the Local Superior and two identified Welfare Support Persons (WSP). The WSP's role is to provide pastoral support to the Respondent, visit him and provide updates on his wellbeing. The plan is due for review in October 2025, or after a change in circumstances, which demonstrates that the Scalabrini Fathers understand the necessity of reviewing Safeguarding plans at least annually. The need for confidentiality of the plan is addressed by limiting its disclosure to named individual signatories.

4.5.2 The Local Superior confirmed that the Scalabrini Fathers have the financial resources to support Respondents. In their self-assessment the Scalabrini Fathers reported they would follow the RLSS voluntary removal procedure from ministry and could offer alternative accommodation if necessary.

Areas for development

4.5.3 As they are heavily reliant upon RLSS for all matters related to managing Respondents, and due to the Local Superior's lack of available time, there is limited knowledge of people or organisations that Respondents could be referred to for spiritual, mental health, emotional, physical or legal support.

4.5.4 The Local Superior acknowledged that, outside of their knowledge of RLSS, members of the Scalabrini Fathers do not know what support they would receive in the event of an allegation being made against them. Incorporating details of the support they would receive in the Safeguarding policy or via direct communication

from the Local Superior would alleviate concerns that members may hold about how they would be treated if there were a Safeguarding allegation against them.

Graded: Firm Progress

4.6 Standard 6 Robust human resource management

Strengths

4.6.1 Safer Recruitment practice guidance is part of the Scalabrini Fathers Safeguarding Policy. It requires that staff are subject to the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)⁸ check for the role they undertake and that they will not be appointed until such check has been received alongside acceptable previous employment references. Employees are also expected to sign to say that they have read and understood relevant policies including the Safeguarding policy. This demonstrates an understanding of the fact that individuals working with children or adults at risk need to be appropriately recruited and vetted.

4.6.2 Members of the Scalabrini Fathers do arrive from overseas to minister in England and Wales. The Scalabrini Fathers hold a UK Visa Sponsorship Worker licence for ministers of Religion to facilitate this. Those arriving have to fully comply with Visa expectations before they can arrive. The Local Superior said that they are expected to complete Safeguarding training in the nations where they undertake formation as Priests and online Safeguarding training, alongside the Safeguarding training expectations of the Diocese when they arrive. As the arrivals from overseas are coming from within the same RLG separate Testimonials of Suitability or references are not sought.

⁸ [Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

4.6.3 As part of the evidence they provided for audit the Scalabrini Fathers included draft complaints and whistleblowing policies. These are not yet ratified by leaders and available to the public.

Areas for development

4.6.4 The Diocese that liaised with the CSSA confirmed that the Scalabrini Fathers were up to date with their vetting expectations. However, the Scalabrini Fathers do not keep accurate records of all their DBS checks in a central storage location. Therefore, they would not be able to promptly demonstrate that they were compliant with the vetting expectations of their own Safeguarding policy. Similarly, their records of training completion, which will be examined in more detail in the below standard, are insufficient to demonstrate that all who arrive to minister from overseas are fully conversant with the Safeguarding standards and meet the training expectations of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Compliance with Safer Recruitment expectations should be reported to Trustees so they can be reassured that the Safeguarding policy is being followed.

4.6.4 The draft complaints and whistleblowing policies should be ratified by leaders and published so that they are readily accessible to their target audiences.

Graded: Early Progress

4.7 Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding

Strengths

4.7.1 As highlighted above, the Local Superior has, in his role as Safeguarding Lead and in line with the stipulations of the Safeguarding policy, completed Safeguarding Leads training in 2024. Diocesan liaison confirmed that the Scalabrini Fathers are compliant with their Safeguarding training expectations.

4.7.2 The Local Superior holds some training certificates for four of the seven Scalabrini Fathers, including himself.

Areas for Development

4.7.3 Whilst there are some rudimentary Safeguarding training records, these are incomplete. To be compliant with their own Safeguarding policy the Scalabrini Fathers would need to hold records that demonstrate that their Board have done Trustee training, equivalent to Level 2, their Community Members who work with the public have completed Advanced Safeguarding Training, also equivalent to Level 2, and members who do not work with the public have completed Basic Safeguarding Training at Level 1. At present, they would be unable to do this.

4.7.4 With the exception of the Board members, who are asked to complete yearly refresher training, the Safeguarding policy does not dictate how often those in other roles should update their training. To a large extent this will be at the discretion of the Diocese in which they minister but the policy would benefit from a minimum refresher training expectation.

4.7.5 When accurate Safeguarding training records are created and maintained, it will be important for Trustees to have regular oversight of the level of compliance with the mandates of the Safeguarding policy. If members are failing to engage with Safeguarding training then Trustees will be able to promptly identify this and initiate remedial action. Full training records will also allow leaders in the Scalabrini Fathers to evaluate the effectiveness of the training currently received, through Diocese and RLSS, and make plans to address any gaps or strengthen areas of Safeguarding practice linked to their ministry with migrant communities.

Graded: Basic

4.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Strengths

4.8.1 The Scalabrini Fathers engaged fully with the CSSA Baseline Audit process. It is their intention to develop a Safeguarding Improvement Plan (SIP) based upon the recommendations of this audit with a view to improving their Safeguarding

practice and ensuring their adherence to the eight Safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Areas for Development

4.8.2 Trustees of the Scalabrini Fathers must ensure that they have regular oversight of compliance with the eight Safeguarding standards and the expectations of Integrity in Ministry. As a first step, making Safeguarding a standing agenda item will be key alongside accurate reporting of areas such as vetting and training compliance. Trustees should also complete, and refresh, RLSS Safeguarding Trustee training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in full in relation to Safeguarding.

4.8.3 When the SIP is created post audit, the Scalabrini Fathers must make sure that actions set are allocated to individuals or groups who are given appropriate resources and time to complete them. Progress should be reported to Trustees in their meetings so any slippage can be identified and addressed.

Graded: Basic

5. Summary of overall findings

5.1. The members of the Scalabrini Fathers serve migrant communities as Priests across several Dioceses in England and Wales. The basic Safeguarding expectation placed upon them is to comply with the individual Diocesan Safeguarding arrangements and the evidence seen demonstrates that they fulfil this. As a separate charity from the Diocese, they also have Safeguarding expectations placed upon them across the eight Safeguarding standards of the Catholic church in England and Wales. They have been rated as achieving Firm Progress against two of the standards, Early Progress against a further four standards and as Basic against the remaining two. This gives an overall rating of Early Progress.

5.2 Compliance with Diocesan Safeguarding expectations, the ratification of a Safeguarding policy and working with RLSS to oversee and manage a Safeguarding plan demonstrates the Scalabrini Fathers commitment to Safeguarding.

5.3 Improvements should be made in ensuring that Trustees always discuss Safeguarding at their meetings and are regularly updated with key information such as vetting and Safeguarding training compliance which may require their action. A SIP, which they plan to implement post-audit, should also be tracked at these meetings. The Integrity in Ministry pastoral standards document should be re-distributed to the members and arrangements made to discuss it to demonstrate a shared understanding.

5.4 The Scalabrini Fathers have demonstrated that their current practice exceeds minimum Safeguarding practice expectations such that an overall rating of Early Progress is warranted.

6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

Within 3 months

Add the current version of the Safeguarding policy to the website

Distribute Integrity in Ministry to all members and discuss amongst the Scalabrini Fathers

Add Safeguarding to the agenda for all future Trustees meetings

Create full, accurate records of vetting and Safeguarding training completion by all Scalabrini Fathers and report on these to Trustees

Set the minimum Safeguarding refresher training expectation and add to the Safeguarding policy

Within 6 months

Create a Safeguarding Implementation Plan, to include recommendations from this audit. Allocate tasks and resources to complete them and track in Trustee meetings

Add Safeguarding Communications to the Safeguarding policy to plan how they will communicate the importance of Safeguarding to all they minister to

Add contact details for Safe Spaces to the Scalabrini Fathers website

Distribute information amongst the Scalabrini Fathers as to the support they would receive were an allegation to be made against them

Ratify the Complaints and Whistleblowing policies and publish on the Scalabrini Fathers website

All Trustees to complete RLSS Trustee training or equivalent and familiarise themselves with the Charity Commission Serious Incident reporting guidance

Within 12 months

Review the Safeguarding policy annually and add the updated version to the Scalabrini Fathers website

Trustees to create a directory of local and national support services for Survivors that they can signpost to promptly

Trustees to create a directory of local and national support services that they can signpost Respondents to promptly

7. Arrangements for follow-up

7.1 In line with an overall rating of Early Progress, the earliest date of the next audit of the Scalabrini Fathers by the CSSA is within one year in December 2025. If the CSSA becomes aware of a significant Safeguarding concern or allegation in the intervening period, then an earlier audit will be required.