

# St Francis Xavier Foreign Missionary Society (Xaverians)

Baseline Audit Report  
March 2026

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report is a baseline audit of the safeguarding arrangements for St Francis Xavier Foreign Missionary Society (commonly known as the Xaverians). This audit has been undertaken as part of the CSSA programme of baseline audits for Religious Life Groups (RLGs) in England and Wales.

**1.2** The Xaverians have been present in Britain since 1948, with their main presence being in Coatbridge, Scotland. The Xaverians had a small community in Preston that was very active in their local church, in chaplaincy at Newman College and in the Diocesan Justice and Peace network up until 2017. An opportunity arose for them to take over a retreat centre from another religious life group, which enabled them to look at new ways to engage young adults in discerning a missionary vocation. Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic, the centre in Preston closed, prompting the Xaverians to reflect on their missionary presences. Upon looking for a small community, in 2024, an approach was made to the Bishop of Salford, and an agreement was made for the Xaverians to move into the Diocese. Since then, the Xaverians have been exploring how to be a missionary in their local church.<sup>1</sup>

**1.3** There are currently three Xaverian members based in England and residing at Mount Carmel Presbytery in Manchester, one of whom is the Provincial Leader. Out of the remaining two members, one is new to the Xaverians and is involved in providing ad hoc parish supply cover for the Diocese of Salford. The designated Safeguarding Lead resides in Scotland, where he also holds the role of a prison chaplain.

**1.4** This audit seeks to assess the effectiveness of current safeguarding arrangements in England, by considering practice over the last twelve 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 with vulnerable populations and/or providing some diocesan activities, such as a Parish Priest), to Level 3 (a large community

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<sup>1</sup> Information taken from [Manchester – Xaverian Missionaries UK](#)

and/or one with significant outreach with vulnerable populations and/or a disproportionately high number of open safeguarding cases). The Xaverians have been assigned to a Level 1 apostolic audit.

**1.5** The CSSA recognises the rich diversity of the Religious and acknowledges that the Religious Life Groups within any category may vary significantly in terms of size, ministry, and safeguarding practice. Consequently, CSSA analysts may use professional judgement to ensure that Religious Life Groups are graded against the national standards in such a way that reflects their uniqueness.

## 2. Methodology

**2.1** The Provincial Leader was contacted by a CSSA analyst on 13 January 2025 to advise of their intention to conduct a safeguarding audit during the week of 14 July 2025. Further contact was made to notify of change to the assigned analyst, necessitating a revision to the scheduled audit date. An online meeting was held between the newly assigned analyst and the Provincial Leader on 1 September, in which an agreement was made to conduct the audit on 18 November.

**2.2** The Xaverians were initially requested to complete a Level 2 audit self-assessment tool providing information on their adherence to the eight National Safeguarding Standards and progress in the overall implementation of the standards. Following the meeting held on 1 September, a change to the assigned audit level was made, to reflect the changes in ministry of the Xaverians, following the closure of the retreat centre in Preston. The date given for the submission of the Level 1 audit self-assessment was 20 October to reflect the change in date of the scheduled audit. The self-assessment was returned ahead of this date, along with supporting evidence, as listed in the Appendix to this report. Additional evidence was provided thereafter, with the final submission received on 4 December. Information from the self-assessment and supporting evidence provided by the Xaverians was reviewed by the CSSA analyst and assessed against the Level 1 Apostolic Maturity Matrix to arrive at ratings for each standard and a combined overall grade.

**2.3** Audit interviews were undertaken in-person on 18 November at Mount Carmel Monastery in Manchester with four members (collectively):

- The Provincial Leader (also Chair of Trustees)
- The Safeguarding Lead (Trustee)
- Two members (one of whom is also a Trustee)

**2.4** Liaison has taken place between the analyst and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)<sup>2</sup>, and the Diocese of Salford regarding the engagement between them and how this meets their expectations for safeguarding.

### 3. Audit grading

**3.1** Practice was assessed against the eight national safeguarding standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales<sup>3</sup> and graded in accordance with the CSSA Maturity Matrix for Level 1 Apostolic RLGs.

**3.2** Potential audit ratings against each standard, and the final overall ratings, are: Not Met, Met with Recommendations and Met.

| Overall grading                                                                                                | Met with Recommendations |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Standard 1</b> – Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body’s leadership, governance, ministry and culture | Met with Recommendations |
| <b>Standard 2</b> – Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message                                            | Met with Recommendations |

<sup>2</sup> The Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) is an independent team of safeguarding professionals offering safeguarding services to the Religious of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

<sup>3</sup> Full details of the eight standards and underpinning sub standards are available here: The Eight National Safeguarding Standards ([www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk))

|                                                                                                  |                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Standard 3</b> – Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed             | Met                      |
| <b>Standard 4</b> – Effective management of allegations and concerns                             | Met with Recommendations |
| <b>Standard 5</b> – Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents) | Met                      |
| <b>Standard 6</b> – Robust human resource management                                             | Met with Recommendations |
| <b>Standard 7</b> – Training and support for safeguarding                                        | Met with Recommendations |
| <b>Standard 8</b> – Quality assurance and continuous Improvement                                 | Met with Recommendations |

## 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** The Xaverians have a public facing website where a safeguarding section can be found via the 'Britain' tab then the fourth tab down below 'British Xaverians,' 'Coatbridge,' and 'Manchester.' The opening statement of this page begins with '*The Xaverian Missionaries, as a religious missionary Congregation and a member of the Conference of Religious (CofR) adheres to the national safeguarding policy of the Catholic Church as agreed by the Bishop's Conferences of Scotland, England and Wales.*' It further states that '*complying with the policy means that ensuring that all activities are conducted safely and applying the principles of 'Creating a Safe*

*Environment’ and ‘In Gods Image’<sup>4</sup> and that all personnel involved are recruited under safer recruitment guidelines and obtain a CRB for working with vulnerable groups that all persons, whether religious or lay, involved in active ministry participate in suitable and appropriate safeguarding training.’* This section follows contact details of the Safeguarding Lead, his address, telephone number and email address, ‘links for the places where they are present’ (eg RLSS, and Diocese of Salford) and ‘other resources’ (Child Protection and Online Protection Command, CEOP). Further strengthening of this section of the website could be seen by the inclusion of a short statement that provides clarity that the Safeguarding Lead covers safeguarding in England and Wales, as well as Scotland. Furthermore, as CRBs are no longer in existence, a change should be made to the above statement to reflect the use of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The ‘other resources’ section is currently limited to providing details of one service. This should be reviewed to include signposting to a range of local and national support services for both children and vulnerable adults.

**4.1.2** The Xaverians have created a bespoke Safeguarding Policy which is applicable to their missionaries across Great Britain. The opening statement of the policy states that they are ‘committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and that the Xaverians in the UK are committed to promoting a culture of safeguarding.’ The policy itself is comprehensive and clearly outlines the Xaverians’ commitment to supporting victims of abuse. It describes how safe environments will be created and maintained, including safer recruitment processes, defined roles and responsibilities, liaison with statutory agencies, and the procedures for responding to any allegations and concerns, including those made against members. The policy goes on to say that the Xaverians ‘are committed to adopting and implementing best practice in safeguarding and will, at least, review its policy, procedures and practice to achieve this.’ It is noted, however, that the current policy is dated April 2022, therefore, it is advised that all review dates be added to the policy to assist with version control and to provide clear evidence of when the

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<sup>4</sup> In God’s image has been published to explain and to direct the approach to safeguarding that is to be taken throughout the Catholic Church in Scotland. [Bishops Conference of Scotland > Safeguarding](#)

document was last reviewed and when the next review is due, in line with the stated review cycle. The Xaverians should make this policy publicly available so that all with whom they have contact are aware of their commitment to safeguarding and know what to expect should they wish to seek further support or guidance from the Xaverian community.

**4.1.3** The Xaverians have a designated Safeguarding Lead, who is based in Scotland and is one of four trustees. At the time of the audit, he had just returned to his role on a phased return, following a period of long-term sickness during which, the Provincial Leader provided safeguarding cover. The Safeguarding Lead also holds the role of prison chaplain, and is a member of the Scottish CSSA, for which he has received some training, however, it is reported that it is not specific to the role of Safeguarding Lead. It is recommended that training specific to the role be sought either via RLSS or another suitable provider. This will help to keep up to date with current practice standards within England and Wales.

**4.1.4** There are four trustees, all of whom are Xaverian members, two are based in England and the remaining two in Scotland. They are registered with the Scottish Charity Commission.<sup>5</sup> Evidence was seen that safeguarding has been on the agenda for the last five meetings held between the period of October 2024 and September 2025 where discussions have focused on confirming the decision to add safeguarding to the agenda of a forthcoming Assembly, the National Safeguarding Conference being fully booked and plans to attend RLSS's next AGM, to arrange a meeting with RLSS for their support with preparation for the audit, that no safeguarding issues had been raised, and reminding members to bring their DBS documentation for record keeping.

**4.1.5** Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities around how to ensure a safe environment for themselves, each other and those they are likely to encounter, as part of their mission appeals. The Provincial Leader explained that this is achieved by having current DBSs in place and through completion of diocesan safeguarding training and following safer recruitment procedures to confirm the

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<sup>5</sup> Xaverian Missionaries Scottish Charity Number, SCO12905



suitability of the newest Xaverian member, (as will be discussed further in Standard 6). They also described the practical safety measures that are in place, including how a WhatsApp group has been created for members to share their whereabouts, which they see as enhancing their accountability.

**4.1.6** The Xaverians have signed contracts with both RLSS and CSSA and there is evidence of some engagement with each, however, they are not fully utilising their membership with RLSS by availing themselves to the full suite of training available to them. Doing so would be good preparation for responding to any safeguarding situations should they arise during their mission appeals.

**4.1.7** While all members have received a copy of Integrity in Ministry<sup>6</sup>, it is recognised that there is a need to revisit the document, to ensure that each member is not only familiar with its content but is also able to contextualise and apply it in relation to keeping themselves and the people they are likely to encounter safe.

**4.1.8** The Xaverians have the foundations in place for good safeguarding practice, however, further development is required to ensure that safeguarding is fully and consistently embedded. A safeguarding action plan should now be developed, using the recommendations from this audit, to help drive further improvements. Once implemented, it should be reviewed regularly, to ensure appropriate monitoring and tracking of progress is being made against the national safeguarding standards.

**Graded: Met with Recommendations**

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<sup>6</sup> Integrity in Ministry is a code of conduct for Religious engaged in ministry in the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It has been written for the guidance of those in ministry and for the information of those people with and among whom Religious exercise their ministry.

## 4.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

**4.2.1** Safeguarding information has been communicated to members through a range of formal and informal means. The Provincial Leader described how, owing to the size of their community, conversations often take place at social times and during journeys to and from mission appeals. Evidence was seen of safeguarding being a formal agenda item at the last Xaverian Assembly meeting held over two days in January 2025, where members were introduced to a recording of the Scottish CSSA's National Safeguarding Conference on 'preventing abuse in the context of faith organisations,' featuring keynote presentations from the Lucy Faithful Foundation<sup>7</sup>.

**4.2.2** Safeguarding posters were seen visibly displayed in the presbytery, in prominent locations, containing contact details of the Safeguarding Lead and of RLSS. This provides a clear message that should any member need to seek safeguarding advice and support; they can do so through internal channels and external ones (via RLSS).

**4.2.3** The safeguarding section of the website clearly outlines the Xaverians' commitment to adhering to national policies and procedures; however, it could be made more user friendly and accessible. For example, placing it in a more prominent position on the home page and using more personal and reassuring language. Such changes would ensure that anyone accessing the site feels confident that they will be suitably supported if they were to raise any concerns. The Safeguarding Policy should also be made available, as it clearly communicates, early on, the Xaverians' commitment to supporting victims of abuse and outlines their approach to achieving this.

**4.2.4** A Social Media Policy has been created and sets out how members should identify themselves and their connection to the Xaverians when commenting online, and how to act responsibly to protect themselves and others. This policy is

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<sup>7</sup> The Lucy Faithful Foundation is a UK charity that provides advice, services, projects, research, and advocacy to stop child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour.

not dated and refers to the need to be aware of and follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, therefore changes should be made to accurately reflect the policies that are currently in place. Further improvements could be made to this policy by including examples of good practice, eg no private communications to be had with children online, to consider the messages being shared and how they are likely to be perceived, before posting. Furthermore, it should outline the procedures to be followed in the event of a concern being raised via social media platforms, when the policy will be reviewed and identify any training required to support safe and appropriate use of social media in practice.

**4.2.5** A communication plan should now be developed, either as part of the Safeguarding Policy or the safeguarding action plan. It should detail how messages will be communicated to members, and anyone else that the Xaverians may encounter as part of their current mission appeals and in preparation for future appeals planned with other dioceses. The communication plan should also set out the procedures for reviewing the currency and effectiveness of safeguarding messages.

Graded: Met with Recommendations

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

**4.3.1** The Xaverians do not have any casework to draw upon as evidence against this standard, therefore, grading is based on a review of policy and theoretical responses. The Safeguarding Policy sets out a clear message on the Xaverians' commitment to supporting victims, as can be seen via the 'Support for Victims of Abuse' section, where the Xaverians state they are '*committed to providing pastoral and professional support to victims of abuse and to endeavour to ensure that this provision is effective and responsive to their individual needs.*' A further statement follows '*we are committed to responsibility, accountability and transparency in our support of victims of abuse. We aspire to respond to victims of abuse with active listening, understanding and empathy, taking any disclosures seriously, not*

*minimising the story or blaming the individual.* Within the 'Individual Responsibility for Safeguarding' section of the policy, there are details on the procedures to be followed and by whom, including the expectations for reporting safeguarding concerns, maintaining up to date records and outcomes, and ensuring that victims are helped and supported.

**4.3.2** There are no recent examples of disclosures received to draw upon as evidence against this standard, however, in practice, members explained that should they receive a disclosure, they would listen respectfully to the person and without judgement, avoiding offering opinions and making promises of confidentiality that cannot be guaranteed. They outlined that they would not investigate the matter but would write a record of what was disclosed as soon as practically possible, including the emotional state of the person. This information would be shared with the Safeguarding Lead, unless there was any reason to suggest that the person was in immediate danger, which would necessitate contact being made with the Police. RLSS would also be contacted for further guidance. The person making the allegation would be kept informed of what action was being taken, eg who information would be shared with/reported to and any next steps. Should any member receiving a disclosure need any pastoral support, it is reported that it would be provided by the Safeguarding Lead or any other member of the Council, as appropriate.

**4.3.3** The importance of learning from the experiences of those who report harm is acknowledged. One member (and Trustee) described that this would be achieved by listening to the individual and reflecting on conversations as a community, to identify any learning. Such conversations would be formally recorded and should then be used to further inform policy and practice.

**Graded: Met**

## 4.4 Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns

**4.4.1** While outside the scope of the audit, the Provincial Leader described a situation that arose when covering a parish, in which an individual requiring mental health support was refusing to leave. He outlined the ensuing actions taken to safeguard the individual and ensure they received appropriate support based on their presentation. This included contacting relevant services to determine whether the individual was already known to them, before accompanying them to a nearby hospital for further assessment. This demonstrates the Provincial Leader's awareness of how to respond to concerns and the ability to take appropriate action to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults.

**4.4.2** Trustees understand the importance of maintaining robust records, as was demonstrated when they were previously contacted by an individual making an allegation of non-recent harm against a member. As they did not recognise the details of the member alleged to have caused the harm, a search of archived information was undertaken and revealed that the member in question was not an Xaverian but was from a neighbouring religious life group. This practice is aligned with the 'Record keeping' section of the Safeguarding Policy, where information is included pertaining to the retention period of personnel files for members, along with any safeguarding allegations or concerns. This section only relates to the safeguarding files of members. Therefore it is recommended that a Privacy Notice be developed, either in the Safeguarding Policy or as a separate document, to include details of the data controller, types of data processed, the legal basis for processing personal data, data storage, subject access requests. This should be made publicly available, for transparency to anyone who receives a safeguarding service on how their information will be stored and protected.

**4.4.3** Trustees advised the analyst that they are aware of their reporting responsibilities and while they have not had experience of submitting a serious incident report to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), the decision as to whether to would be made collectively. Details relating to 'Charity Commission' reporting are included in the 'Safeguarding in Xaverian Communities'

section of the Safeguarding Policy. Changes are required to this section, however, to reflect that the OSCR no longer requires charities to use their Notifiable Events process to inform them when something serious has happened or is happening to the charity.<sup>8</sup> The idea is for trustees to manage their charity effectively and handle issues or significant events as they arise. When this is not possible, trustees are able to report through the OSCR's 'raise a concern process.' It is recommended that the Safeguarding Policy be updated to reflect these changes.

**4.4.4** In acknowledging that the Xaverians have not had extensive experience of managing allegations and concerns, the analyst recommends discussing with members some typical safeguarding scenarios and how they should be responded to, in line with the Safeguarding Policy and procedures. This would provide an opportunity to test the policy in practice and ensure a consistent, effective approach to the management of allegations and concerns.

Graded: Met with Recommendations

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

**4.5.1** The Safeguarding Policy states that *'if a Xaverian is accused of a safeguarding matter against a minor or a vulnerable adult, we will follow all statutory obligations and procedures as set out by the CSSA in England and Wales.* Within the 'Xaverians in Restricted Ministry' section of the policy, it acknowledges that *'following a risk assessment, a safety management plan will be drawn up by the Safeguarding Lead and reviewed by the relevant national safeguarding body and enacted by the Provincial Superior, for any Xaverian who is the subject of a safeguarding investigation; or who, on the balance of probabilities, is considered to have abused a child or adult at risk, even if not convicted of such an offence.* Further detail is

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<sup>8</sup> [OSCR | The Notifiable Events process has been replaced: changes in the way charities report important issues to OSCR](#)

provided in this section on how the safety management plan will outline the conditions under which the member may live, including details of any restrictions to their life and ministry; who is responsible for monitoring its implementation; and the review cycle.

**4.5.2** The Xaverians have not had any recent experience of managing and supporting a member subject to allegations and concerns (within the scope of the audit), however, they were able to describe a previous situation where they were contacted by the Police after an allegation was made against a member, which resulted in a temporary removal from ministry while the Police investigation was carried out. Although the allegations were unsubstantiated, legal advice was sought at the time. If an allegation were to be made against a Xaverian member now, the same procedures would be followed, in line with the Safeguarding Policy, which also includes the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against the Provincial Leader. In practice, this would include the expectation that the member would be stepped down from ministry and moved to another community, (this would be Scotland, if approved by statutory authorities), pending further investigation. In the event of any counselling support being required, it would be arranged through an external provider. The Provincial Leader reported that he would ensure continued engagement with the relevant authorities involved in the investigation. The importance of balancing the needs of both the alleged victim and member was acknowledged. To manage this appropriately, it would be recommended that different support personnel be allocated to each party, if this can be achieved given the size of the Xaverian community in England.

**4.5.3** If any legal advice was required, this would be sought. The Xaverians have links with a canon lawyer in London and would seek their advice if necessary.

**Graded: Met**

## 4.6 Standard 6 Robust human resource management

**4.6.1** Safer recruitment processes are outlined in two sections of the Safeguarding Policy, including the 'Safeguarding Checks' section and the 'Safeguarding in Xaverian Communities' section. In the 'Safeguarding Checks' section, it states that *'in England and Wales, all Xaverians in public ministry will have DBS enhanced disclosure certification and in Scotland all Xaverians in public ministry will have PVG certification'* and that *'all Xaverians in public ministry will sign up to the update service, and give personal data consent to the Provincial Council so that checks can be carried out when moving to new residence or ministry.'* Confirmation was provided by the Diocese of Salford that two members have up to date DBS checks, as processed by the safeguarding team, one of these being the newest member, and the other, the Provincial Leader. Evidence was seen by the analyst of the other member's DBS check during the in-person meeting. The Safeguarding Lead and fourth trustee who are based in Scotland, both hold the requisite PVG<sup>9</sup> check. The 'Safeguarding In Xaverian communities' section of the policy sets out the expectations that each community should have codes of practice, safer recruitment procedures, information sharing arrangements, and appropriate supervision and support, including safeguarding training. It is noted that no evidence was seen of what the codes of practice contains or any information sharing processes. If these documents are available, they could be added as appendices to the policy or distributed separately, so that all members are aware of and understand the expected standards of practice.

**4.6.2** The procedures for receiving new members are also outlined in the 'Xaverians visiting from other Provinces' section of the Safeguarding Policy. Any Xaverians coming from overseas who will be engaged in public ministry for a period of up to six months will be checked in their home province in regard to their suitability for

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<sup>9</sup> The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme helps ensure people who are unsuitable to work with children and protected adults cannot do regulated roles. Disclosure Scotland continuously checks members' criminal history information. It also keeps lists of people barred from regulated roles.



public ministry, including safeguarding. A Testimonial of Suitability is required from the Provincial Superior or local Bishop which includes children and adults at risk protection checks carried out with civil authorities in the member's home province. Xaverians coming from overseas for 6 months or longer are expected to undergo a DBS. A Testimonial of Suitability has been received for the newest Xaverian member, who is currently on a two-year visa, during which he will explore and consider what areas of ministry he would like to be involved in. The analyst heard that as part of this member's inculturation programme, they have been provided with some safeguarding support, including training (which will be discussed further in Standard 7). Further work is needed, however, which was acknowledged by the Safeguarding Lead, to introduce him to the national safeguarding standards so that he is fully aware of what the expectations are in relation to safeguarding.

**4.6.3** While no Xaverians members currently have care needs, it is acknowledged that as members become older, they are likely to require support if they were to become less independent. When this situation occurs, the arrangements would involve other members providing care and assistance, as long as this is physically and emotionally manageable. If additional or external care became necessary, it would be sought accordingly. It is acknowledged that as a small community, this is likely to have an impact, however, it was confirmed that there is sufficient resilience to be able to manage the situation. This approach aligns with the 'Care of Vulnerable Xaverians' section of the Safeguarding Policy which outlines how they are *'committed to the safeguarding and good care of our sick, elderly and vulnerable members. This is done through the customary cura personalis<sup>10</sup> of the Regional Council.'*

**4.6.4** The Xaverians have not yet developed Complaints or Whistleblowing Policies and acknowledge the need to do so. They have not had experience of responding to any complaints or any whistleblowing concerns, and in practice, would seek

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<sup>10</sup> The customary cura personalis emphasises the importance of treating people as individuals and honouring their unique worth. It involves caring for the 'whole' person, including physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health, while also considering people's backgrounds, such as family life, nationality and culture.

advice and support from RLSS. It is recommended that these policies be developed as a matter of urgency to ensure that there are clear processes in place for raising complaints and concerns. Once developed, both policies should be shared with all members and made publicly available to ensure transparency and accessibility.

**Graded: Met with Recommendations**

## 4.7 Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding

**4.7.1** All three members residing in England have completed the CSSA Endorsed 'Basic Safeguarding training' as provided by the Diocese of Salford. The certificates signed by the diocese's Head of Safeguarding confirm that the following topics were covered: referral themes, modern day slavery, and equality, diversity and inclusion. The Safeguarding Lead has attended the SCSSA's National Safeguarding Conference, however, has not attended any role specific training, although it is acknowledged that he has completed clergy training with a Scottish diocese and SCSSA that aligns to the standards contained within In God's Image. It is important that the Safeguarding Lead avails himself of role specific training, either with the SCSSA or RLSS, in order to stay up to date with safeguarding developments and best practice, and to be able to effectively support members in responding to safeguarding concerns, including engaging with anyone who should come forward to seek a safeguarding service. Trustees should also seek to engage with the SCSSA in role specific training, if available, to ensure that they understand their legal and safeguarding responsibilities and can provide effective oversight.

**4.7.2** The Provincial Leader recognises the importance of keeping up to date on safeguarding developments, and that a way of achieving this is through attendance at RLSS's Safeguarding Conference. Evidence was seen of attempts to book on the last conference, albeit unsuccessfully. Email correspondence between the Provincial Leader and the CEO of RLSS, following his successful attendance at their AGM, evidences a conversation on the possibility of providing an input into the international dimension of religious safeguarding, which demonstrates positive working relationships being developed.

**4.7.3** At the time of the audit, the analyst heard how the responsibility for keeping records of training currently lies with individual members, however, it is the Safeguarding Lead's intention to create a single central record which will be accessible to the other trustees. This will ensure there is collective oversight of training (as well as vetting compliance). The Safeguarding Policy states that is the Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to work closely with other Xaverians in the development and delivery of introductory training and refresher training for all Xaverians. While introductory basic safeguarding training has been provided to the newest member, to prepare him for providing ad hoc parish cover, plans should now be made to determine what further training he and the other members require. The Safeguarding Lead should seek to establish the suite of training available from RLSS and SCSSA and then should create a training plan for members, taking into account what their mission appeals involve, and the individuals that they are likely to encounter eg children and vulnerable adults. In line with the Safeguarding Policy, refresher training should be included in any training programme, though, there is no time period indicated in the policy for this, therefore the decision will need to be made as to the frequency of this. Given that the diocesan basic safeguarding training was completed by members in 2024, attention should be given to this.

**Graded: Met with Recommendations**

## 4.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

**4.8.1** The Provincial Leader sought assistance from RLSS for their support with preparing for the audit and from the self-assessment, he views his attendance at their AGMs as a way of keeping up to date with safeguarding practice and understanding how their support would be accessed in the event of receiving any safeguarding concerns. He acknowledges that, as a small community, learning and updates are typically shared informally with other members, most of whom are trustees, and recognises the need to formalise these processes in order to provide a clear evidence trail.

**4.8.2** During the in-person meeting, the analyst was encouraged by members' openness and constructive engagement, and their clear recognition of the actions needing to be taken to ensure continuous improvements in their safeguarding practice.

**4.8.3** The Xaverians should seek to develop their practice further by ensuring that there is a clear and consistent understanding amongst members of the national safeguarding standards, and of Integrity in Ministry standards. Discussions should be held on how these documents apply to Xaverians' mission appeals and how compliance will be monitored.

**4.8.4** In preparation for receiving any safeguarding concerns, and to ensure that anyone coming forward to report harm is suitably supported and cared for, further training and support is required. The Safeguarding Policy provides a strong message of the Xaverians' commitment to supporting, helping and caring for individuals. Should anyone come forward, they need to ensure that opportunities are taken to listen to their voice and experiences and use them to inform and strengthen future practice.

**Graded: Met with Recommendations**

## 5. Summary of overall findings

**5.1** The Xaverians have developed a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy that provides clear guidance to members on their responsibilities, including how to create safe environments, how to respond to concerns and the expectations for maintaining compliance with vetting and training requirements. The policy also sends strong messages to survivors of abuse about their commitment to ensuring they are suitably supported. It now needs to be made publicly available so that anyone who wishes to come forward to report harm or seek support, knows what to expect and how they will be supported. This transparency will further underpin effective safeguarding practice.

**5.2** The Xaverians are members of RLSS, CSSA and SCSSA, however, they are not currently making use of the services available to them. In particular, the training available through RLSS and SCSSA, which they should engage with, in order to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, statutory requirements, and best practice.

## 6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

### Within 3 months

- To amend the Safeguarding Policy to reflect the changes required regarding OSCR reporting, as well as the dates for review and review cycle. When these changes are made, the policy should be made publicly available, for transparency.
- To develop a safeguarding action plan, using the recommendations from this audit. Once developed, it should be regularly monitored and reviewed for progress against the recommendations.

### Within 6 months

- To review the safeguarding section of the Xaverians website, to ensure it is more accessible and user friendly and provides signposting information on local and national support services.
- To seek out role specific training for the Safeguarding Lead and Trustees.
- To further promote Integrity in Ministry standards and discuss how that and the national safeguarding standards apply to the Xaverians mission appeals.
- To develop a communication plan (this could be part of the Safeguarding Policy or safeguarding action plan) that sets out how safeguarding messages will be communicated and the mechanisms in place to review their currency and effectiveness.

- To introduce regular discussions on safeguarding scenarios to allow members to test out the Safeguarding Policy and explore appropriate responses. Any learning from these discussions should be used to strengthen the policy, where necessary.
- To ensure that the codes of practice (as referred to in the Safeguarding Policy), is shared with all members. Checks should be made to ensure that all members understand their content and what is expected of them.
- To develop Complaints and Whistleblowing Policies (or to include these elements within the Safeguarding Policy) and ensure these are disseminated and made publicly available, for transparency.
- To create a single central record to maintain up to date information pertaining to members' DBS and training.

#### **Within 12 months**

- To develop mechanisms for the systematic learning from the experiences of those who report harm and for learning to be used to inform safeguarding practice.
- To review the Social Media Policy and make the necessary changes so that it is clearer, practical, safeguarding focussed and supportive. Any revised policy should be disseminated amongst all members.
- To create a Privacy Notice (this could be included in the Safeguarding Policy) to inform individuals how their information will be stored and protected.
- To formalise processes for sharing any learning identified from training.

## **7. Arrangements for follow-up**

7.1 In line with the audit pathway, having received an overall rating of Met with Recommendations, the minimum period prior to the Xaverians' next safeguarding audit will be two years, subject to there being no indications of increased risk.

## 8. Appendix

Xaverian Assembly 2025 presentation

Conference of Religious AGM booking form 2025

Extracts from Council Meetings

Integrity in Ministry

Email correspondence with RLSS

Safeguarding extracts from General Chapter

Safeguarding Policy

Social Media Policy

Training certificates

In God's Image, Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland