



Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

Inspection Report
June 2026

Possible Grades

Exemplary
Substantial assurance
Exceeding expectations
Meeting expectations
Requires attention
Significant improvement needed
Serious concerns

Overall Grading



Requires attention

Standard 1

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



Requires attention

Standard 2

Communicating the Church's safeguarding message



Requires attention

Standard 3

Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed



Requires attention

Standard 4

Effective management of allegations and concerns



Requires attention

Standard 5

Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)



Requires attention

Standard 6

Robust human resource management



Meeting expectations

Standard 7

Training and support for safeguarding



Requires attention

Standard 8

Quality assurance and continuous improvement



Significant improvement
needed



Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency

Possible Grades

Exemplary

Safeguarding practice is exceptional, innovative, and influential. The organisation demonstrates a deeply embedded safeguarding culture with consistently excellent outcomes. Learning is shared, and the body serves as a model of best practice for others in the Church.

Substantial Assurance

Safeguarding arrangements provide a high level of confidence in both practice and governance. Evidence shows sustained excellence, continuous improvement, and well-coordinated oversight. Policies and culture reinforce safe practice, delivering assurance at a strategic level. There is evidence of continuous improvements and quality assurance activity.

Exceeding Expectations

Safeguarding practice is consistently strong and often goes beyond minimum requirements. There is evidence of positive outcomes, proactive risk management, and well-embedded systems. Leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to safeguarding, and practice is robust and forward-looking.

Meeting Expectations

Safeguarding arrangements are sound, consistent, and compliant with expected standards. Key processes, policies, and oversight mechanisms are in place and functioning effectively. Practice is reliable, and safeguarding responsibilities are understood and fulfilled across the organisation.

Requires Attention

Safeguarding practice is partially effective but contains notable gaps or inconsistencies. Some processes work well, but others need targeted improvement to ensure reliability and compliance. Risks are being managed, but not always proactively or systematically.

Significant Improvement Needed

Core safeguarding structures exist but are not functioning reliably or consistently. Weaknesses in policy, implementation, or oversight significantly undermine safe practice. Improvements are achievable but require substantial effort and focused leadership to reach an acceptable standard.

Serious Concerns

Safeguarding arrangements show serious and immediate failings. Children or adults at risk may be exposed to harm due to significant gaps in practice, governance, or culture. Urgent corrective action is recommended to ensure safety and compliance. Leadership oversight is insufficient or ineffective.

Contents

1. Summary of Findings	4
2. Introduction	5
3. Methodology	7
4. Inspection grading	9
5. Inspection findings against each standard	9
6. Recommendations.....	27
7. Arrangements for follow-up	29
8. Appendix.....	30

1. Summary of Findings

1.1 This is an inspection report of the safeguarding arrangements for the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, carried out by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) as part of its national inspection programme for dioceses and related bodies in England and Wales. The Ordinariate has been graded overall as *Requires attention*, reflecting its developing safeguarding structures and the need for further work to ensure robust governance, oversight and consistency in safeguarding practice.

1.2 The inspection took place within the context of the Ordinariate's unique structure, where safeguarding responsibilities are largely discharged by the dioceses in which its clergy minister. Historically, safeguarding arrangements were managed directly by the Ordinary, primarily through liaison with diocesan safeguarding teams. Recent leadership changes have brought a renewed focus on strengthening accountability and oversight. The creation of the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding role represents a significant development, providing a clear point of leadership and improving accessibility for safeguarding concerns. Substantial progress has been made in a short period, particularly in developing policies aligned with diocesan practice and strengthening relationships with diocesan safeguarding coordinators.

1.3 The inspection identified areas where further development is required to ensure effective safeguarding assurance. The Ordinariate is in the early stages of establishing robust governance structures, including the development of a safeguarding sub-committee and implementation plan. While there is clear openness about current limitations and a strong willingness to improve, there remains a considerable programme of work to embed consistent systems, policies and oversight mechanisms. These improvements are necessary to ensure compliance with national safeguarding standards and to provide sustained assurance to Trustees and stakeholders. It is noted that no evidence was found of individuals being at risk, and the areas requiring attention relate primarily to governance, policy development and procedural strengthening.

2. Introduction

2.1 This is an inspection of the safeguarding arrangements of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham undertaken as part of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency's (CSSA) programme of inspections of the dioceses of England and Wales. The inspection was undertaken in accordance with the contractual agreement between the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham and the CSSA. Public accountability and transparency are provided by the publication of this full inspection report on the CSSA website¹.

2.2 The diocesan inspection programme will run from 2025 until 2028 and represents a second phase of CSSA quality assurance of diocesan safeguarding arrangements, following the baseline audit programme that ran from 2022 to 2024. Having primarily focussed on compliance with safeguarding expectations in the baseline audit phase, inspections will concentrate on the quality of safeguarding arrangements and practice, together with the means by which dioceses quality assure and continuously improve their own practice. For the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, it should be noted that this is their first inspection, however to maintain consistency in the current inspection processes and support their ongoing development and improvement, they have been graded against the revised maturity matrix for diocesan inspections.

2.3 The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established on 15 January 2011 as a direct result of the Apostolic Constitution, 'Anglicanorum coetibus'² issued by Pope Benedict XVI. The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham (referred to hereafter as 'the Ordinariate') is a diocese-like structure within the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales that enables Anglicans³ to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church whilst preserving elements of

¹ catholicsafeguarding.org.uk

² [Anglicanorum coetibus Providing for Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans Entering into Full Communion with the Catholic Church \(November 4, 2009\)](#)

³ The Anglican communion is an international group of 40 self-governing churches, including the Church of England and Church in Wales. The term Anglican is used throughout this report to reflect that Ordinariate members may originate from any one of these churches.

their previous liturgical, spiritual and pastoral heritage. Whereas membership of a diocese is based on where a parishioner lives, membership of the Ordinariate is on a 'personal' basis which means that no matter where a member of the Ordinariate lives, within the United Kingdom, they will in the first instance be under the ordinary ecclesial jurisdiction of the Ordinariate, and not the diocese. Following reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church, laity and religious become members of the Ordinariate by enrolment in a register. In the case of the ordination of priests and deacons, they are directly incardinated into (placed under the jurisdiction of) the Ordinariate⁴.

2.4 Since 2011, more than 90 clergy have been ordained into the Catholic Church and are incardinated to the Ordinariate. At present there are 37 Ordinariate groups across England and Wales with a presence in 15 different dioceses who are led by their own bishop. The needs of each Ordinariate group are carefully assessed by the bishop, and the most suitable pastoral arrangements are made by him in collaboration with the local diocesan bishop. All Ordinariate groups are served by an Ordinariate priest who is appointed by the bishop, and many of these individuals, in addition to their role as an Ordinariate priest, minister in the diocese in which they are resident as parish priests. Where Ordinariate groups are established but the Ordinariate priest is not a parish priest, services are held within diocesan churches or buildings with the permission of the diocesan bishop. There are two independent Ordinariate groups that have their own churches, one in Torbay and one in Portsmouth. The church in Torbay is owned by the Ordinariate and the church in Portsmouth is owned by a separate charitable trust.

2.5 Since 2014, the Ordinariate has had a memorandum of understanding with the dioceses of England and Wales for the provision of safeguarding services to Ordinariate groups, and these are currently being provided by all 15 of the 21 dioceses where they are present. The CSSA would like to thank these dioceses for their contribution to this inspection by way of their confirmation of the safeguarding

⁴ Information taken from the website of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham [The Ordinariate | The Ordinariate | The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham](#)

arrangements in place and their experiences of working with the Ordinariate on safeguarding issues.

2.6 Formal notification of the CSSA's intention to inspect was sent to the diocese on 17 November 2025, along with the self-assessment document with an agreed completion date of 30 January 2026. A guide for evidence to be provided to support the self-assessment was also shared. The self-assessment was provided on 30 January 2026.

2.7 The inspection was completed between 2 March and 16 March 2026 via a combination of remote inspection, primarily focus groups, with in-person interviews and parish visits. Two CSSA Quality Assurance Analysts completed the inspection.

3. Methodology

3.1 This inspection assesses the progress of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham against all eight national safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in England and Wales⁵. The Ordinariate provided its self-assessment alongside documentary evidence of its adherence to these eight standards. These have been reviewed by the analysts alongside additional evidence provided during the inspection week. All evidence provided is recorded in the appendix to this report. The Ordinariate's website was also reviewed as a key source of safeguarding information.

3.2 Online surveys were sent to clergy and via them to their Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs)⁶ across the different dioceses in which they work, to capture as wide a variety of views as possible. Surveys for clergy and PSRs were

⁵ The eight standards lay out what CSSA expects in terms of level of safeguarding practice in church bodies (that is, dioceses and religious life groups) A description and full details of the Standards can be found on the CSSA website [here](#)

⁶ A Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) is a volunteer who supports their Parish in Safeguarding matters such as Safer Recruitment of volunteers and liaison with Diocesan safeguarding teams

available between 22 January and 6 March 2026. The clergy survey was completed by 51 out of a possible 85 respondents, a response rate of 61%. There were 10 respondents to the PSR survey. A public call for information was also issued regarding the diocesan safeguarding arrangements, with a focus on the last 12 months that had a response from four individuals. All survey responses were received anonymously and any self-identifying information included within free text answers were removed before the clergy and PSR surveys were shared with the diocese.

3.3 The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham arranged parish visits to five of their parishes, two in the Southeast of England, two in the North and Midlands and one in the Southwest of England. The parish visits enabled the analysts to speak with the resident clergy, PSRs and parish secretaries and the premises were inspected to assess how a safe environment is created.

3.4 Interviews took place with key individuals from the Ordinariate, including:

- Bishop David Waller, the Ordinary
- The Vicar General
- The Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding
- The Episcopal Vicar for Evangelisation
- The Episcopal Vicar for Vocation and Formation
- The Trustees
- Lay members of the Safeguarding Steering Group
- A Focus Group of Clergy from across the many dioceses where the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham are in ministry.

3.5 Cases involving Ordinariate Priests or Deacons are managed by the dioceses within which they work, with liaison between the safeguarding coordinator⁷ from the diocese and the Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding regarding the progress of

⁷ A Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator (or Officer) is a professional appointed by the bishop to lead the safeguarding team, ensuring compliance with national standards, managing allegations, and supporting victims/survivors

investigations and the actions required from the Ordinariate. There has been one case in the past 12 months; the diocesan case file was not examined as part of this inspection. Documentary evidence was instead provided by the Ordinariate confirming their contact and collaboration with the diocese during this time.

4. Inspection grading

4.1 Safeguarding practice was assessed against the eight National Safeguarding Standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Evidence gathered during the inspection was evaluated using the CSSA Diocesan Maturity Matrix.

4.2 Each standard is graded on a seven-point scale ranging from Serious Concerns to Exemplary. Individual assessments against the sub-standards are aggregated to determine the overall grade for each standard. These standard grades are then considered collectively to determine the overall inspection grading for the diocese.

4.3 The full set of grading descriptors used by the CSSA inspection framework is set out on the opening pages of this report.

5. Inspection findings against each standard

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

Strengths

5.1.1 The Ordinariate has shown its commitment to a strong safeguarding culture through the development and publication of a safeguarding statement promoting the safeguarding of all children and adults at risk within its community, proactively preventing harm and supporting those who have been harmed. This safeguarding statement is supported by a basic safeguarding policy for young people and

vulnerable adults that sets out guidance on what to expect by way of process should there be a safeguarding concern. Both the safeguarding statement and policy are accessible on the Ordinariate website, together with the contact details of the Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding.

5.1.2 The Ordinariate priests working as parish priests in dioceses demonstrated an awareness of their local diocesan safeguarding policies, to which they were accountable. The priests working in dioceses report all safeguarding matters to their local safeguarding coordinator⁸ with many of them also having the support of PSRs. Where appropriate, for example if a safeguarding concern directly involved an Ordinariate priest or member, these are shared with the Episcopal Vicar. He will then liaise with the safeguarding coordinator to manage those elements that are the direct responsibility of the Ordinariate throughout the course of any investigation that follows. The parish priests spoken to were all aware of the role of the Episcopal Vicar and were confident that he would be able to provide information and additional support should they need it. Measures to secure a safe environment were seen at the parish visits and these included using open spaces where both penitents and the priest can be seen but not heard during confession as well as specific arrangements for supervision of minors involved as altar servers.

5.1.3 The Ordinariate has publicly committed to the support of survivors of harm through working with them and using the expertise of the diocesan safeguarding coordinators and their teams to ensure that their needs are met. The bishop has shown his commitment to this by previously meeting with survivors of church abuse and would be willing to meet anyone who would like to discuss their experiences with him. The Ordinariate website includes information for survivors of

⁸ A Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator is a professional appointed by the bishop to lead the safeguarding team, ensuring compliance with national standards, managing allegations, and supporting victims/survivors

church abuse including details of organisations that are there to support them such as Safe Spaces⁹ and information on the Isaiah Journey.¹⁰

5.1.4 The Ordinariate governance structure is represented by a Board of 12 Trustees, chaired by the bishop, and a governing council of 16 members. The Ordinariate constitution requires that when a new Ordinary, in this instance the bishop, is appointed existing governance structures are stopped and a minimal board of three Trustees oversee the charity in line with civil law requirements, until the new Ordinary has appointed his governing council, selected members of which will then also take up their positions as Trustees. The current Board of Trustees and governing council have been in place for nine months and therefore at the time of inspection, meeting structures were still being formally established. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly throughout the year as do the governing council. Minutes of these meetings showed that safeguarding is a standing agenda item with updates provided by the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding on concerns and safeguarding developments as well as DBS and training compliance updates provided by the Ordinariate secretary.

5.1.5 The Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding is a new role created by the bishop to strengthen and formalise the safeguarding arrangements and oversight in the Ordinariate and the current incumbent has been in post for six months after this role was formalised by the bishop. During this time the focus has been on ensuring that the basic requirements for meeting the eight national safeguarding standards are being implemented by the Ordinariate and much has been achieved in terms of writing policies and procedures that will support good safeguarding practice and to help determine the steps needed to embed a proactive and effective safeguarding culture. The Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding is very experienced in

⁹ Safe Spaces England and Wales are 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. [Home – Safe Spaces England and Wales](#)

¹⁰ The Isaiah Journey is a working group of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales which has grown out of the need for a pastoral-spiritual response to the suffering of victims and survivors of abuse in the Church.

safeguarding having worked as a teacher, and understanding the requirements of the task, created a safeguarding steering group of clergy and lay members to help him with the initial stages of development. The work of this safeguarding steering group is now coming to an end, and the plan is to transition them to a safeguarding sub-committee that will be responsible for the oversight of safeguarding practice and who will report into the Board of Trustees via the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding who is also a Trustee. This will ensure greater scrutiny of safeguarding practice and ensure that the strategic vision for safeguarding set out by the Ordinariate's bishop and governing council is achieved. This transition work remains in its early stages at time of audit.

Areas for development

5.1.6 The Ordinariate has made a promising start on formalising their safeguarding arrangements and now has a starter suite of policies that will help them work through processes and procedures when a safeguarding concern, complaint or whistleblowing incident is raised. The safeguarding policy in its current form needs to be strengthened to include more formal guidance and procedure. Adding roles and responsibilities to the policy will ensure that all have a clear understanding of the expectations placed on them when they become aware of a safeguarding concern. This newly strengthened policy should align with the diocesan policies to ensure it meets the standards expected and its content is consistent with current good practice.

5.1.7 The development of the safeguarding sub-committee should be considered a priority for the Ordinariate. Terms of reference for the group should be created that will reflect the need for some formal oversight and collective responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements for the Ordinariate. The sub-committee will play a vital role in the improvement of safeguarding practice through advising on policy, overseeing safeguarding concerns and ensuring that the Ordinariate has assurance on training and safer recruitment processes. The Ordinariate will also need to ensure that it has a broad range of personnel represented on the safeguarding sub-committee.

5.1.8 The Ordinariate's vision and desire for safeguarding to be embedded in all they do is ambitious and to achieve their aims and objectives they may wish to consider the employment of an experienced lay safeguarding advisor or safeguarding consultant to provide expertise and guidance as they move forward. This person would in addition, provide practical support for the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding, enabling the Ordinariate to realise their objectives in a timely way without compromising the other work the Episcopal Vicar is responsible for in his parish and as a Trustee.

5.1.9 One key function for the safeguarding sub-committee will be the creation of a safeguarding implementation plan. This plan should support oversight for the Trustees and allow for evaluation of the effectiveness of any safeguarding improvement actions taken. The development of a safeguarding implementation plan with SMART¹¹ objectives together with an action tracker would provide assurance for the Trustees that progress is being made, and support prioritisation of the work by the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding.

5.1.10 The Ordinariate leadership recognises that there are risks associated with safeguarding and that these need to be formally recorded. The lack of a fully functioning Board of Trustees and governing council during the transition period from one Ordinary to the next has delayed the development of a risk register. This needs to be a priority for the Ordinariate so that the new Board of Trustees has clarity on the risks and can act to ensure that mitigations are put in place and monitored.

Graded: Requires attention

¹¹ SMART objectives are a structured framework for setting goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound. This methodology transforms vague intentions into clear, actionable plans, ensuring objectives are attainable, trackable, and aligned with broader strategic goals.

5.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

Strengths

5.2.1 The Ordinariate has not developed a formal communication plan but is aware of the importance of good communication regarding safeguarding. To support this, it has contracted a specialist IT company to help develop its communications, especially the website, which now provides visitors with comprehensive messaging on the Ordinariate's mission, values and safeguarding commitment. The Episcopal Vicar for Evangelisation has taken the lead on improving the communication the Ordinariate has with the wider public and provides reports to the governing council and trustees on the progress being made. The Ordinariate vision and mission for safeguarding are found on the website, together with their policies and contact details for the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding as well as a reminder that visitors need to additionally contact diocesan teams and statutory services as required if they have a concern.

5.2.2 The Ordinariate has created some of their own resources for communication including posters with the details of the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding. These posters were seen in some, but not all the parish settings visited during the inspection. A more consistent approach to messaging should be achieved by ensuring that all priests are aware of which information needs to be included on their local safeguarding boards and in their local parish newsletters. Clarity on who should be contacted and when should be included in any safeguarding messaging originating from the Ordinariate. Consideration should also be given as to whether resources should be provided in additional languages for areas where there are broad, ethnically diverse congregations.

5.2.3 One of the key elements of sustaining good safeguarding practice for the Ordinariate is the effectiveness of their communication with the different dioceses where they are present. As part of this inspection information was sought from the dioceses on the communication between themselves and the leadership of the Ordinariate, in particular the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding. The dioceses

overwhelmingly reported positive engagement and communication between themselves and the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding noting his professionalism in supporting the management of safeguarding concerns and their ease of access to him. In addition, the dioceses all reported positive engagement from the Ordinariate priests in their parishes, confirming that they had no issues with communication to or from them.

5.2.4 The Ordinariate has used its interactions with parishioners, the experience of the members of the safeguarding steering group, as well as members' existing knowledge and skills to develop its safeguarding statement and messaging. Members have limited experience dealing with survivors of church abuse, but they recognise the importance of reaching out to them to gain their insight into their communication strategy and output. The Ordinariate safeguarding communications are seen by those spoken to as part of this inspection and through the surveys to come from the Ordinariate leadership and are consistent with the messages shared on the website and in the bishop's newsletter to the congregation.

Areas for development

5.2.5 The Ordinariate has made some good progress with the development of key safeguarding messages and by setting out their vision for safeguarding on their website. This should now be supported by a formal communication plan that will set out the actions required to ensure that their messaging is consistently displayed and shared with the parishes where they are present and to raise awareness of their commitment to and vision for safeguarding. It should also demonstrate how communications will be developed going forward. Progress on this plan should be monitored through a tracker and reported on to the safeguarding sub-committee and the Trustees. Consideration must also be given into the development of a crisis communication plan to ensure that they are prepared to manage adverse events in the future.

5.2.6 The Ordinariate needs to consider how they will evaluate their current and future safeguarding messaging with those that receive it. They also would benefit from actively seeking out the views of survivors of church abuse to ensure that their

messaging remains in line with the expectations of those who have suffered harm and that it is written to encourage those who may have been harmed to come forward. Feedback should also be sought from clergy as to how they are receiving the safeguarding messages and how they align with the diocesan messages they already receive, and the need to have both those from the Ordinariate and the dioceses on display. This will help to direct future actions in terms of communication.

Graded: Requires attention

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

Strengths

5.3.1 Engagement with those who report harm in the Catholic Church happens through the individual diocesan safeguarding teams that manage safeguarding in the dioceses where the Ordinariate is present. The safeguarding coordinators in these dioceses will contact the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding if an issue arises that involves an Ordinariate priest or deacon and will liaise with him throughout any investigative and supportive processes that follow regarding the person alleging harm and their needs in terms of practical and emotional support. The Ordinariate is aware of its responsibilities to those who report harm and the bishop is very clear in having an open-door policy to anyone who wishes to speak with him about their experiences. Survivors who have experienced harm involving ex-Anglican priests from their time in the Anglican Church are able to report concerns directly to the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding who will instigate investigations and action with his relevant Anglican counterpart. In both scenarios the Ordinariate is aware of its responsibilities to work with survivors to ensure that they receive the support and help they need.

5.3.2 The Ordinariate Trustees have been in place for only nine months and are in the process of completing the training they require to help them to understand how

to implement their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding responses to those who have been harmed. This training has been organised and will be taking place in the next few months. The Board of Trustees does have expertise from those who have previously been Trustees under a different leadership and are aware of who they would need to liaise with to ensure that they have met their statutory obligations and to seek advice on the next steps to be taken in terms of supporting a person alleging harm. The Episcopal Vicar also has established relationships with the diocesan safeguarding coordinators and would actively seek their advice in this instance in terms of accessing professional support for a victim.

Areas for development

5.3.3 The Ordinariate has set out what people can expect of them in terms of safeguarding practice in their policy statement and document. A formal procedure that would be followed in the event of an individual reporting harm against an Ordinariate priest or community member outwith the diocesan structure has yet to be developed. This should be considered a priority going forward and should be an action on the safeguarding implementation plan. This procedure should include guidelines on how and when the bishop will meet with those reporting harm that sets out clear expectations and boundaries for all involved as well as what support will be provided for the person reporting harm in terms of practical, psychological and financial help.

5.3.4 Feedback on the experiences of those who have reported harm is at this point gathered by the dioceses and shared with the Ordinariate as there is very limited direct contact between those reporting harm and the Ordinariate themselves. The Ordinariate does not currently have a formal feedback process in place and consideration should be given to this for those occasions where they might be approached directly by someone reporting harm. In addition, this formal process should include how it gathers feedback from the dioceses on the specific actions of the Ordinariate to understand the effectiveness of their responses and how these might be improved.

Graded: Requires attention

5.4 Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns

Strengths

5.4.1 All allegations and concerns to date have been reported to and managed by the respective diocesan safeguarding team to which they have been raised. This has been done in collaboration with the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding who is notified by the diocese and the parish priest if appropriate when concerns arise. The case management is led by the dioceses, and the Episcopal Vicar will report on the progress of any investigations and outcomes to the Board of Trustees. This will include any actions that are required to be taken by the Ordinariate in terms of accessing civil and canon law advice and informing insurers and the Charity Commission of any significant incidents. Records of interactions between the safeguarding coordinators and the Episcopal Vicar are maintained by him and these are kept digitally in password protected folders. The Ordinariate has not had the need to employ the use of a case management system due to the very small numbers of cases reported to them to date. In practice the Episcopal Vicar maintains case records of discussions with his diocesan safeguarding colleagues, and these showed a good level of collaboration and the ability to resolve differences of opinion in a mature and timely way.

5.4.2 As part of the inspection process a clergy survey and a clergy focus group were conducted as well as five parish visits. In all circumstances the priests and deacons spoken to were aware of their reporting responsibilities and the procedures in their local dioceses. All were aware of the need to inform the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding if a safeguarding concern directly involved a member of the Ordinariate. The clergy spoken to were confident that they had the knowledge and skills to recognise and report safeguarding concerns and all had attended training within their respective dioceses in the past 12 months. All had copies of local safeguarding policies and procedures, and all parish priests and deacons reported good working relationships with the dioceses where they were based in terms of access to safeguarding advice and reporting concerns. A varying

degree of contact was reported but when it had taken place, it was considered to have been timely and appropriate.

Areas for development

5.4.3 The Ordinariate is yet to formally set up their safeguarding sub-committee. As part of their function the Ordinariate should look at how case management will be scrutinised and overseen by the safeguarding sub-committee both in terms of reviewing progress on cases and in how to extract learning from these that can support improvements in safeguarding practice. Both these elements need to be included in the safeguarding sub-committee's terms of reference and a process put in place to achieve them.

5.4.4 Investigations and information gathering does not take place within the Ordinariate, and they are aware of their limitations in terms of expertise to do these, relying on the experience and resources of the dioceses. Should a concern be raised with them directly out with a diocesan structure, for example at an Ordinariate led event such as the annual pilgrimage to Walsingham, they would need to access expertise to assist them with the initial and ongoing management. The Ordinariate should consider whether the appointment of a lay expert safeguarding advisor or consultant would bridge this gap. This individual would also be able to assist them in developing internal reporting and management processes for allegations raised directly with them that are not within the diocesan structure.

5.4.5 The Ordinariate has a Data Protection Officer who can advise on confidentiality agreements and the sharing of pertinent and relevant information between the dioceses and the Ordinariate during investigations and for case management purposes. In the main, there have been no issues in regard to sharing data and information in line with the Data Protection Act (2018)¹² and with General

¹² The Data Protection Act (2018) Regulates the processing of information relating to individuals, sets out the Information Commissioner's functions and sets out a direct marketing code of practice [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)¹³, but on occasion there has been some confusion between the diocese and the Ordinariate on what can and cannot be shared about the Ordinariate priests and clergy. A review should clarify these matters.

Graded: Requires attention

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

Strengths

5.5.1 As in standard four, the initial management of respondents sits with the individual dioceses where they are present. The Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding would be informed immediately of any concerns involving an Ordinariate priest or deacon and would work with the relevant safeguarding coordinator to take whatever action was required, for example, withdrawing the individual from ministry. Risk assessments would be carried out by the diocesan safeguarding team who have the expertise to do this work and who would make recommendations to the Ordinariate. A safeguarding plan would be developed in collaboration with the Episcopal Vicar, which would be shared with the bishop and Trustees. The bishop and Trustees would be required to agree to the terms and a support package for the individual and his family as required. Oversight of compliance with any plan is the responsibility of the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding, again in collaboration with the safeguarding coordinator of the diocese. This process has been followed once in the past 12 months and evidence showed that issues were managed in line with good practice and that reviews were held in a timely manner. In addition, where safeguarding plans are in place for lay

¹³ The General Data Protection Regulations are the UK's data privacy laws that have been in effect since May 2018 [Data protection: The UK's data protection legislation – GOV.UK](#)

members in Ordinariate congregations, these would also be managed by diocesan teams with the support of the Ordinariate priest.

5.5.2 The Ordinariate has internal processes in place for the management of respondents as described and those members of the clergy spoken to and those who took part in the surveys reported feeling confident that they would be supported should there be an allegation made against them. There was concern raised on how their personal situations may be managed in terms of accommodation and support and this is something that should be clarified. Further complexities can arise due to some Ordinariate clergy being married or in possession of Church of England pensions, both of which affect the type and level of support needed. The Ordinariate has access to both civil and canon law support and would support its clergy to have access to both in the event of an allegation being made.

Areas for development

5.5.3 Complexities arise for the Ordinariate when an allegation is made against an individual relating to their time as an Anglican priest. These situations involve liaison between multiple departments and teams, including those within the Anglican Church, and can therefore take longer than usual to investigate and resolve. The Ordinariate would benefit from having a formal management process in place with timelines that are negotiated with the Anglican Church to expedite the management of these cases wherever possible. Delays in the management processes in a previous case had severe consequences resulting in recommendations being made on how these cases are managed. The Ordinariate provided evidence that they are working on the recommendations from the coroner in this case through the strengthening of their safeguarding policies and procedures and seeking dialogue with colleagues in the Anglican Church.

Graded: Requires attention

5.6 Standard 6 Robust human resource management

Strengths

5.6.1 The Ordinariate has an appointed Episcopal Vicar for Vocations and Formation whose role it is to oversee all the recruitment of seminarians and of those clergy who wish to join the Ordinariate from the Anglican Church. The Ordinariate has a safer recruitment policy in place and has strict procedures that must be followed before clergy are ordained into the Catholic Church or accepted as seminarians. These processes have been developed since the inception of the Ordinariate, and learning has led to additional caveats being put in place to ensure that they are robust and that those joining the Ordinariate are fully aware of their obligations and responsibilities to the Ordinariate leadership and the Catholic Church.

5.6.2 Once ordained into the Catholic Church, clergy will often take up roles within dioceses as parish priests. At this point they are subject to the safer recruitment policies of their diocese and will need to be able to provide a celebret from the bishop of the Ordinariate before they are allowed to provide any form of ministry. The celebret can only be issued if the member of the clergy has a current DBS certificate and has completed their safeguarding training. Celebrets¹⁴ are issued annually by the Ordinariate bishop and will be withheld if this strict criterion is not met. Records of training and DBS status are gathered from the dioceses by the bishop's secretary who holds a register of compliance which is reported on at Trustees meetings.

5.6.3 The Ordinariate has four individuals who are in formation to become priests within the Catholic Church. The Ordinariate identified an issue with the obtaining of DBS checks for seminarians at Allen Hall by which there was uncertainty over where

¹⁴ Celebret – A celebret is a letter issued by a bishop or religious superior in the Catholic Church that authorises a priest to celebrate Mass in a diocese other than his own. It serves as a form of identification for the priest, confirming that he is free from canonical censures and is permitted to perform sacraments.

the responsibility sat resulting in some seminarians not having these checks completed. After discussions with the seminary at Allen Hall and with the safeguarding team of the Archdiocese of Westminster, a new process has been put into place to ensure that all seminarians at Allen Hall have DBS checks completed by the archdiocesan team regardless of where they originate from. This has mitigated the risk of seminarians being unchecked before entering placements in parishes across the country.

5.6.4 The Ordinariate has safer recruitment policies in place for the recruitment of lay employees which are used as and when the need arises. Appointments require the provision of references, and all appointees are subject to an application and interview process. Ordinariate employees do not have contact with the public therefore there is no requirement for a DBS check to be completed for them. Volunteers within Ordinariate parishes are recruited by the diocese in which they are situated.

5.6.5 The Ordinariate has both a complaints policy and a whistleblowing policy, both of which can be found on the Ordinariate website. Complaints would be overseen by the Trustees and any decisions on actions would be taken after discussion and in consultation with the Ordinariate Trustees and Governing Council. Whistleblowing issues would be managed in the same way. The Ordinariate has not had any complaints or whistleblowing incidents reported in the past 12 months. Learning from complaints and whistleblowing incidents would be shared with the Trustees and used to inform practice going forward. All of those spoken to during the audit felt that they would be able to raise a complaint or whistleblowing issue without fear of being compromised in their position within the Ordinariate.

Areas for development

5.6.6 The Ordinariate is currently relying on information provided by the dioceses or their priests regarding DBS checks. In some cases, this information is harder to obtain than in others, especially where priests are semi-retired and only providing occasional ministry. The Ordinariate should look at ensuring that it has a system in place that addresses these issues and allows for a more robust register to be kept

of all clergy actively engaged in ministry, including those working across dioceses in a temporary or occasional way.

Graded: Meeting expectations

5.7 Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding

Strengths

5.7.1 There is an expectation that all the Ordinariate clergy in active ministry complete safeguarding training and attend annual updates. These training sessions are facilitated through the dioceses where they work. Evidence from the 15 dioceses where the priests are active showed that all had completed mandatory training and had attended their annual updates. Records of the training completed are held individually by the dioceses. Records are also maintained by the Ordinariate as training must be completed and up to date prior to the issuing of a Cebret by the bishop of the Ordinariate. The Ordinariate does not have volunteers, and their staff do not attend safeguarding training as they are not in positions where they meet the public in their roles. In addition to ensuring clergy are appropriately trained, the Ordinariate advertise and encourage participation in the Catholic Church in England and Wales safeguarding e-learning package which is offered free of charge to every parishioner. The link to this training was found on the Ordinariate safeguarding page. There are three overseas Ordinariate clergy who follow the local requirements for training

5.7.2 The training requirement for Ordinariate priests in ministry is managed and overseen by the individual dioceses who should have completed training needs analysis to ensure that the training they provide meets the needs of their clergy, staff and volunteers. In addition, the dioceses are responsible for gathering feedback on the training provided. The priests spoken to during the inspection and those that responded to the clergy survey agreed that the training provision within the dioceses was excellent and all reported having the knowledge required to fulfil their roles.

5.7.3 The Ordinariate holds three plenary meetings every year and these have also been used to share safeguarding messages and provide priests with additional training in safeguarding. The Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding intends to develop this programme to include input from external safeguarding experts. Ordinariate seminarians receive their safeguarding training from Allen Hall, a seminary in London, where they are based.

Areas for development

5.7.4 There is acknowledgement amongst the Trustees and the members of the governing council that there are gaps in their training in these roles. To address this, the Trustees will be accessing Trustee training in 2026. The Ordinariate would benefit from reviewing the knowledge and skills of the Governing Council and Trustees to ensure that any other gaps in training are identified and action is taken to address these. The development of their own training plan based on an internal training needs analysis being completed will support this work.

Graded: Requires attention

5.8 Standard 8 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Strengths

5.8.1 The Ordinariate used its recent change in leadership and governing council to complete a systematic reflection on its safeguarding practices and processes and through this has recognised the need to formalise arrangements and make existing policies more robust to ensure that they comply with the eight national safeguarding standards. Since the first early contact with the CSSA inviting external scrutiny it has engaged positively with the CSSA inspection process and has repeatedly stated a wish to learn from the outcome of the inspection, recognising its own limitations on safeguarding knowledge and expertise and the infancy of work so far.

5.8.2 The Ordinariate does not currently have a safeguarding implementation plan in place and is awaiting the outcome of the CSSA inspection to develop one, and plan to use the recommendations made to enable them to identify and prioritise the actions that are required to strengthen their safeguarding practice. The Ordinariate has shown good insight into their current safeguarding practice and recognised, prior to the CSSA audit, that as much of the safeguarding activity to date is covered by the dioceses, it has been difficult for them to identify all the areas that they themselves need to have complementary policies and procedures in place for. They have made a positive start with the development of key policies and procedures covering safeguarding practice, safer recruitment, training, complaints and whistleblowing. More work needs to be completed on these to make them more robust, and they also need to look at how they engage with those reporting harm and learn from their experiences, as well as formalising the processes they follow when managing an allegation made against an Ordinariate priest or deacon. Part of this work will be to put in place systems and processes for formally evaluating the effectiveness of their actions, which has been acknowledged by the senior leadership and the Episcopal Vicar for safeguarding as a priority that will allow them to develop their practice in a dynamic way.

Areas for development

5.8.3 As previously stated the Ordinariate has made a promising start on formalising and improving their safeguarding policies and processes. The development of a safeguarding implementation plan is required to help them action the areas where there needs to be a more robust approach to safeguarding. Using the recommendations of this audit will support them to identify the required actions to improve practice. They also need, however, to consider how they might learn from their own experiences of managing safeguarding incidents with the dioceses and put systems in place that will capture this learning and enable the analysis required to identify where changes in practice are required.

5.8.4 In addition to learning from the external audit completed by the CSSA the Ordinariate should consider how it might develop its own internal audit processes to be able to measure key safeguarding improvements as well as getting

assurance for key safeguarding data, such as training and DBS compliance. The newly created safeguarding sub-committee should look at developing Key Performance Indicators¹⁵ for safeguarding data that will help them identify areas of concern that need to be addressed in a timely manner. All of these could then be collated into an annual safeguarding report that would provide evidence of continued oversight.

Graded: Significant improvement needed

6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

Within 3 months

- Review and further development of the safeguarding policy to ensure that it includes guidance on the processes to be followed in the event of a safeguarding incident as well as the roles and responsibilities of all in terms of safeguarding. The policy also needs to include the training and reporting expectations for Ordinariate priests and deacons.
- Completion of a training needs analysis for the senior leadership of the Ordinariate, including Trustees, to ensure that all training requirements have been identified and training put in place to meet them.
- Development of terms of reference for the newly formed safeguarding sub-committee to include how they will oversee key safeguarding practices including case management, training and safer recruitment. Once developed these terms of reference should be used to ensure that the skill mix of the safeguarding sub-committee is the correct one.
- Creation of an organisational risk register to include specific safeguarding risks. This will need to include mitigations for risk and should be supported

¹⁵ Key Performance Indicators are a quantifiable measure used to evaluate the success of an organisation, employee etc in meeting objectives for performance. (The Oxford English Dictionary).

by a risk management policy that includes how risks are scored, escalated and retired. Risk management training may be required for those in senior leadership positions.

- Consideration should be given to the employment of a lay safeguarding advisor or consultant to provide additional external expertise on safeguarding as well as the provision of advice in the development of the safeguarding implementation plan

Within 6 months

- Creation of a safeguarding implementation plan with SMART objectives together with an action tracker to provide assurance that the recommendations of this inspection as well as self-identified actions are being completed and evaluated to set timeframes.
- Ensure that all communication resources that have been created have been distributed to all parishes where Ordinariate priests and deacons work and are on display for parishioners. This action would be part of a communication plan that should include how the Ordinariate will review the effectiveness of their safeguarding communications. The Ordinariate should also create a crisis communication plan to manage adverse events should they occur as part of this communication plan.
- Improvement of systems for collating information on DBS currency for all priests and deacons with a focus on those who minister on an ad-hoc basis and move between dioceses need to be made to provide assurance that all meet the requirements.

Within 12 months

- Development of internal audit processes and Key Performance Indicators that complement the external audit and inspection processes undertaken and provide Trustees with assurance on compliance with key safeguarding requirements.
- Development of a formal management process negotiated with the Anglican Church to clarify roles and responsibilities for the management

of safeguarding issues involving Ordinariate priests and deacons during their time in the Anglican Church. The emphasis of this agreement should be in the need to ensure cases are managed in a timely and co-ordinated manner with the ongoing care of the respondent in mind.

- Development of a formal procedure for the management of safeguarding concerns raised against clergy or community members that are out with the diocesan safeguarding structure. This should complement the diocesan processes and should include information and guidelines on how the Ordinariate will support those reporting harm to meet their needs.
- Improvement is needed in seeking the views of those who have been harmed by the church as to their experiences of raising concerns and the support they have received. A system needs to be developed that captures the learning from survivors and uses it to inform improvements in practice.
- A review should be undertaken of the data sharing agreements between dioceses and the Ordinariate to ensure that there is clarity on the ownership of the data and the limitations of what can and cannot be shared is fully understood by all.

7. Arrangements for follow-up

7.1 In line with an overall rating of Requires Attention, the earliest potential date of re-inspection of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham is within two years. In the intervening period there will be check in meetings every three months and the Diocese will be asked to complete an annual self-assessment. If the CSSA becomes aware of a significant safeguarding concern or allegation before the anticipated next inspection, then an earlier inspection will be required.

8. Appendix

The following documentation was provided as evidence:

- Safeguarding policy
- Safeguarding Statement
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- 2025 Clergy Survey
- Safeguarding posters
- DBS register for clergy
- Training registers for clergy and staff
- Meeting minutes from Trustee meetings
- Minutes from Governing Council meetings
- Meeting minutes from safeguarding steering group meetings
- Meeting minutes from the Plenary meetings
- Records of meetings and liaison between the dioceses and the EV for safeguarding
- Safeguarding communication resources including posters and newsletters