

FCJ Safeguarding Policy – Britain



POLICY OVERVIEW

The term FCJ Society shall refer to all FCJ Sisters and workers, voluntary or employed, of Faithful Companions of Jesus, regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.

The FCJ Society is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. This commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church's common belief in the preciousness, dignity, and uniqueness of every human life. We start from the principle that each person has a right to expect the highest level of protection, love, encouragement, and respect. Following safeguarding reviews in 2020, we are committed to the **One Church Approach** to safeguarding by implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to victims/survivors promptly and compassionately.

1. SCOPE

- 1.1. The FCJ Safeguarding Policy and Procedures apply to every member of the FCJ Society, regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.
- 1.2. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It is the responsibility of all members of the FCJ Society to prevent abuse, whether by action or omission.
- 1.3. Abuse in this policy refers to: domestic; emotional; financial; material; neglect; organisational; physical; psychological; self-neglect; sexual; spiritual; or verbal.
- 1.4. Additionally, behaviour which effectively results in modern-day slavery or where there is evidence of discrimination or radicalisation needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue, in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

2. TRAINING

- 2.1 All active members of the FCJ Society will undergo safeguarding training and update training in relation to both Children and Adults, relevant to their role. The list below outlines the minimum training for each role:
 - FCJ Trustees – Trustee Training
 - Area Leader – Trustee Training and/or Safeguarding Lead Training
 - Safeguarding Lead – Safeguarding Lead Training
 - Community Members who work with the public – Advanced Safeguarding Training. Spiritual Directors must also attend Spiritual Direction Training
 - Community Members who are retired from public duties – Basic Safeguarding Training
 - Workers, voluntary or employed, will attend training relevant to their specific role and responsibilities.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Trustees

The Trustees have a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of safeguarding in accordance with this policy and national guidelines. Certain functions of the Trustees will be delegated to the Area Leader and the Safeguarding Lead, as indicated below.

3.2 The Area Leader

The Area Leader is responsible for ensuring appropriate policies, procedures and best practices are in place for the effective delivery of safeguarding, including any related due diligence checks. Certain functions of the Area Leader will be delegated to FCJ Sisters and relevant Lay people who have roles of responsibility as indicated below.

3.3 The Safeguarding Lead

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The Safeguarding Lead has direct oversight of all operational matters and may delegate the delivery of training and development of resources as appropriate.

The Safeguarding Lead has direct oversight of the safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance, including management, training and oversight of documentation, case progression and management, and the secure, legally compliant storage of safeguarding reports and related material, as well as the relationship with, and input to, the work of the RLSS.

The Safeguarding Lead may delegate some case management responsibility to the RLSS but will remain as key contact for the case duration unless another individual is identified to assume responsibility.

3.4 Safeguarding Committee

The Safeguarding Committee will comprise of: Area Leader, Safeguarding Lead, Trustee Representative and Safeguarding Administrator. The Safeguarding Committee has the power to coopt other FCJ Society members to this group.

The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for the review of policies, procedures and audit processes and will meet at least once a year.

3.5 All other roles

All FCJ Society members have an obligation to:

- attend appropriate safeguarding training, and
- ensure they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns
- be familiar with the content of this policy and the safeguarding procedure and other associated policies and procedures.

3.6 General

Everyone involved in the work of FCJ Society has a duty to disclose to the Safeguarding Lead any safeguarding concerns that have been raised about them.

4. PRACTICE GUIDANCE

- 4.1 Action must be taken if a concern is raised that a child or adult is suffering, or is likely to be suffering, from significant harm. This includes but is not limited to
- Someone who is at serious risk of harm from self or others
 - Someone who poses a serious risk of harm to someone else
 - A concern about a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm from someone else
 - Concerns over someone's mental capacity
- 4.2 Action must be taken in line with the Church's mandatory reporting policy. This means that action must be taken if there are reasonable grounds to suspect or believe that someone who holds any type of role within the Church is going to or has committed, a crime, is going to or has caused harm, poses a risk or is otherwise unsuitable to work in a public-facing role.
- 4.3 Any safeguarding allegations involving the FCJ Society will be compliant with Canon Law, with advice sought from a Canon Lawyer. The respondent will be signposted to sources of Canon Law advice.

5. PROCEDURE

- 5.1 If any member of the FCJ Society becomes aware of a safeguarding issue, they should contact the Safeguarding Lead (or in her absence the Area Leader).
The Safeguarding Lead will contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team and pass on the concern and all associated documentation immediately.
The person receiving the disclosure should ensure the person who made you aware of the concern knows you are doing this.
- 5.2 The Safeguarding Lead and RLSS Safeguarding Team, who have casework responsibility should:
- Ensure the victim/survivor or individual has been informed of the next steps
 - Explain what will happen, give them options if possible and an indicative timescale
 - Contact any relevant bodies
 - Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure appropriate record keeping of all communications including phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case
 - Inform the Area Leader of the new safeguarding referral
- All referrals/reports outside of the RLSS should be made within 24 hours of receiving the information unless there are exceptional circumstances to postpone making this referral/report. The decision to delay a referral/report must be authorised by the Area leader.
- 5.3 When the concern needs to be reported to a statutory agency, the individual reporting the issue must be informed that the information will not be kept confidential and that the details will be passed on to the police and any other appropriate statutory body.
The Safeguarding Lead should be supportive of the individual making the disclosure but should not seek more details than necessary for an initial statutory referral.

5.4 The RLSS will make recommendations about when to report to safeguarding bodies or external agencies based on risk and need and the national policy guidance supplied by the CSSA.

The following is a list of external safeguarding agencies (not exhaustive)

- Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)
- Charity Commission
- Community Psychiatric Nurse
- Crisis Team
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- General Practitioner (GP)
- Internal Safeguarding Structures within the Catholic Church
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Local Authority Safeguarding Team – Adults
- Local Authority Safeguarding Team – Children
- Local Safeguarding Commission
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
- Police 101
- Police 999
- Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) - Out of Hours Team
- Safe Spaces – 0300 303 1056

5.5 Appropriate support will be offered to both Survivors and Respondents.

6. WHISTLEBLOWING

6.1 The FCJ Society will encourage and enable anyone with a serious concern, to raise that issue without fear of victimisation, or disadvantage.

If that concern is regarding malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions, of the FCJ Society or other religious institutions, relating to safeguarding, then the RLSS should be made aware.

6.2 The action taken by the RLSS will depend upon the nature of the concern referred to. However, an investigation will be undertaken if appropriate, followed by appropriate action and written feedback will be provided, including a rationale documenting the reasons why identified actions have been taken. This can be delegated to the RLSS.

7. RECORDING AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND CASE FILES

7.1 Primary responsibility for the management of documents and safeguarding case files lies with the Safeguarding Lead and the RLSS, who will ensure an accurate, auditable, and secure record of any safeguarding concerns or allegations referred to the FCJ Society are maintained.

This record will include:

- Relevant contact details
- Details of how/when the concern or allegation was received
- Details of the concern itself
- Relevant historical information
- Identified past and present risk factors
- Any actions or investigation undertaken including those by the FCJ Society or the RLSS and from statutory agencies
- Rationale for actions and or outcome of case.

- 7.2 All records are potential evidence in a criminal proceeding, civil case or statutory/public inquiry and must be stored in a suitable and retrievable format with an auditable record of provenance and integrity.

8. SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE

- 8.1 FCJ Society members responsible for recruitment will ensure that processes set out within the Safer Recruitment Procedure are followed. This will include (but not limited to):
- The development of clear job descriptions and person specification criteria
 - How we advertise vacancies (internally and externally)
 - The use of application forms and CVs
 - Right to Work checks undertaken
 - How individuals are shortlisted
 - The interviewing process
 - Appointments based on experience, skills, abilities and qualifications
 - References obtained
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, according to their role and in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements
 - Registration with the Online Update Service where applicable.
- 8.2 Appointment to a role will not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS disclosure check has been received and previous employment references confirmed as being acceptable.
- 8.3 All documentation relating to the applicant will be stored in a secure place, is held in line with GDPR guidelines and remains confidential.
- 8.4 On appointment, all new employees will be asked to sign to say they understand all relevant safeguarding policies and procedures, and their responsibilities as outlined in the document.
- 8.5 All persons seeking to work with children or adults whether in a paid or unpaid capacity must be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information. This is a DBS Code of Practice requirement and applies to anyone being asked to have an Enhanced Disclosure.

9. POLICY REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy is approved by FCJ Trustees and will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee annually, or sooner where there is a significant change to the organisational infrastructure, processes or to relevant legislation.

Key Roles	Names	Contact information
Religious Area Leader and Trustee Representative	Sr Patricia Binchy	+44 (0)208 232 9570
FCJ Safeguarding Lead	Sr Bernadette Coughlin	+ 44 (0)7375 801201 safeguarding@fcjbritain.org

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Signed by Sr Patricia Binchy Religious Area Leader & Trustee Representative	Signature:  Date: 3 rd September 2025