



SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

in the Catholic Church in Scotland

December 2022

What needs to improve?

For some years in Scotland information has been collected about all those who work with children and vulnerable adults on Church premises across the country. Every parish, diocese, religious congregation and Catholic organisation is required to complete an annual Safeguarding audit form, answering questions about how they are complying with the safeguarding standards of **IN GOD'S IMAGE**. The annual audits are now managed by the SCSSA.



What is the point of an annual audit?

The audit is intended to provide a transparent view of how effectively the Catholic Church in Scotland is developing a culture of safeguarding that respects, protects and nurtures the dignity of all people, keeps them safe and is compliant with legislation.

The purpose of the audit exercise is NOT merely to record statistics, although it is important that faith communities can demonstrate that they are managing safeguarding effectively by keeping accurate records of WHO was responsible, WHEN they were involved and WHAT their duties were.

Much more importantly, completing the audit provides those responsible for Safeguarding in faith communities with the ideal opportunity to:

- reflect on their practice
- demonstrate how well they are meeting safeguarding standards
- identify examples of good practice that can be shared with others
- make plans for improvement
- share their plans with others.

What is audited?

The SCSSA uses various online audit forms to gather information from all Catholic faith communities on:

- safeguarding risk assessments of premises and activities
- the vetting and training of clergy, religious, employees and volunteers
- all allegations of abuse
- the outcomes of investigations
- identified training needs
- what improvements are planned.

How can this newsletter help you?

INSIDE you will find advice about how to prepare for completing your audit, some information about the actions required after Audit forms are distributed **by 9th January 2023**.

INSIDE PAGES:

- p2: Steps on the road to completing your Audit
- p3: Tips on working with the Audit form
- p4: Other Safeguarding News

If you wish to offer your views on how Safeguarding can be improved, please email:
chair@scssa.org.uk

STEPS IN COMPLETING AUDITS

TO BE TAKEN BY PARISHES, RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

STEP 1

Prepare in advance

Gather together all the information that you will need to complete the audit. Schedule meetings of those who will contribute to its completion.

27th
JAN.

3rd
FEB.

Reflect on your practice

What does your information tell you about your Safeguarding practice in the last year? How proactive were you in meeting the standards of 'In God's Image'?

STEP 2

STEP 3

Plan to improve

Did you achieve last year's plans for improvement? What Safeguarding training was undertaken? What do you plan to improve this year?

10th
FEB.

17th
FEB.

Complete the audit form

While the online form can be saved in stages, it may be easier to complete it in one sitting. Following submission, you will be emailed a copy of your data.

STEP 4

STEP 5

Keep everyone informed

Discuss Safeguarding practice in your community and review progress with your plans for improvement. Look out for audit feedback from the SCSSA.

ongoing

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❑ The **SCSSA** is responsible for designing and managing the Audit process. It will email links to online forms and guidance notes to dioceses, religious congregations and organisations. (From 9th January 2023, [Audit forms and guidance notes can also be found here.](#)) The **SCSSA** will receive all completed audit forms for analysis and will prepare summative reports for dioceses.
- ❑ **DIOCESES** will forward audit materials to parishes and will provide advice and support, where required. Dioceses will reflect on the submitted parish audits before submitting their own Diocesan Audits and Action Plans by the agreed dates. They will also provide feedback to parishes on issues emerging from Parish Audits.
- ❑ **Religious Congregations** and **Catholic Organisations** requiring further support to complete their audits should email: audit@scssa.org.uk.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE AUDIT FORM



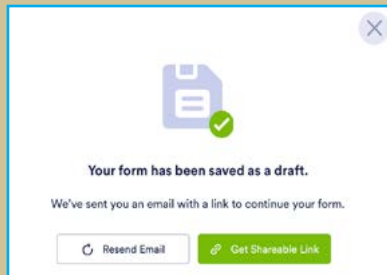
1 To access the online audit form, you need to click on the link provided by the SCSSA. This will open the audit form that is hosted by Jotform. To complete the audit form, you do not need to use any particular software. Any desktop computer, laptop, or tablet (PC or Mac) should work, as long as it linked to the internet via a browser such as Google Chrome, Safari etc.

5 NB Emails sent via Jotform can sometimes be regarded as "Spam" or "Junk". If you are waiting on an email response from Jotform, please check these folders within your email account.

2 Page 1 of the form asks for some basic information about your community and about the people who are responsible for organising Safeguarding.

3 Questions on the remaining pages are built around the 8 Safeguarding Standards of 'In God's Image'. To move on to the next page, click on the **Next** button at the bottom of the page.

4 You can **SAVE** the form as you complete it at any time by clicking on **SAVE** at the bottom of each page. You should then see a screen message, saying: "Your form has been saved as a draft". If you are continuing to fill in your form at this stage, you should click on the X (top right corner) to clear this box.



5 An email message⁵ will be sent to the email address that you have entered on page 1. This will provide a link that will allow you to return to your saved form and to continue with its completion. You may **SAVE** the form and return to it again and again, but **you must use the link provided**.

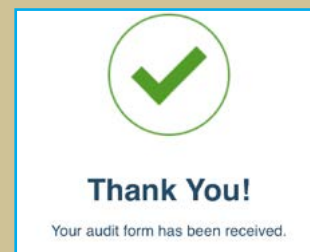
6 You must provide answers to ALL the questions. Please note the following:

- If a question asks for a numerical answer, only enter a number in the answer box (e.g., 0, not "none").
- Some questions may ask for an extended answer. Even if the form appears not to provide sufficient space for your answer, everything that you type will be retained in your completed form.
- If you wish to make a comment which doesn't appear to be relevant to one particular question, you will find that the final question in Standard 8 will provide an opportunity to provide your comment.

7 Please ensure that you provide details of the **IMPROVEMENTS** that you aim to introduce in 2023. You are asked to relate any planned improvements to one or more of the 8 safeguarding standards, using the text boxes supplied. The format can be quite simple, as illustrated here.

8 When you are satisfied with all your answers, you should **SAVE** your form (see note 4). If you wish to **PRINT** a copy of what you are submitting, click on **Print Form** to open your Printer settings, if you are connected to one.

9 When you click on **SUBMIT FORM**, you should immediately see a message on screen, confirming that your form has been submitted. Shortly afterwards an email message⁵ will be sent to the address you provided. Attached to the message will be a PDF copy of your answers to the questions. If you wish to amend any answer, you can use the **EDIT LINK** that will be included in the text of the email message. If you click on this link, you will be able to edit your submission. When you are satisfied with your amended answer, you must again click on **SUBMIT FORM** to ensure that your amended submission is received.



HOW CAN YOU GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR AUDIT?

The SCSSA will analyse the information that is provided in all audits completed by parishes, dioceses, religious congregations and Catholic organisations to check compliance with the Church's own Safeguarding standards. When analysing these and compiling summary reports, it will identify any significant issues or trends that should inform its planning for taking further action and developing training, resources and other forms of support.

DIOCESES should use the information from completed Parish Audits, collated in the summary reports provided by the SCSSA, to identify any significant issues that will inform its planning for developing appropriate training and other forms of support. Dioceses should share these plans with Parish clergy and Safeguarding volunteers.

The **Conference of Religious in Scotland**, through its Safeguarding Commission (CRSSC) should use the summary report provided by the SCSSA to identify issues that are specific to Religious Congregations and, with the SCSSA, make plans for relevant training and support. The CRSSC should share these plans with Religious communities.

Catholic organisations will be invited to participate in SCSSA training events that will be developed in response to the needs that they have identified in their completed audits.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE SCSSA




Save the Date!

Annual Day of Prayer for those who have suffered abuse

On **Friday 24th February 2023** the Catholic Church in Scotland will observe its annual Day of Prayer for those who have experienced abuse. Members of Catholic communities will be asked to recognise the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind or spirit and to lament the great harm caused by those in the Church whose task it was to protect the vulnerable. Resources will be available to encourage prayers in all Catholic communities.

Safeguarding Training Advisory Group




Our new **Safeguarding Training Advisory Group** is now in development. Its members will consist of: an experienced PSC or Trainer from every diocese, a DSA, a member of the clergy and a Religious representative. The SCSSA Board member who chairs the Education and Training Sub-Committee will work with Helena Rameckers, Head of Safeguarding Training, to ensure that STAG will meet its objectives.

In the first instance, STAG will evaluate the existing safeguarding training resources to ensure that they remain relevant and up-to-date.

STAG will then use a prioritisation matrix, and audit responses, to prioritise the many requests for safeguarding training which have been received via feedback from the National Conference, last year's audits, and through personal communication with the SCSSA. Once prioritised, a plan will be developed for the creation of both online modules and in-person training sessions, which STAG will quality assess prior to implementation. Experts in a variety of fields will be invited to assist STAG with their work as the need arises.

Youth Safeguarding Forum



We are developing a forum for young Catholic adults - in the first instance to look at the current safeguarding training and resources for people in youth ministries, to discuss ideas which have been proposed for development, and ultimately to create a comprehensive package of training and resources for ministries involving young people. We will be joined at some online meetings by experts on particular aspects of Church teaching such as Theology of the Body and Catholic Social Teaching, to ensure that all work created is in line with our safeguarding instruction ['In God's Image', which can be downloaded here](#).

If you are between the ages of 18 and 25 and would be interested in joining this forum, or would like to know more, please email Helena Rameckers training@scssa.org.uk or phone 07394 862 279 by Friday, 9th December. Please note that we have a small number of spaces on the forum for older adults experienced in youth ministry!

This is the **10th** newsletter published to provide information about national developments in the safeguarding practice of the Catholic Church in Scotland. If you have suggestions for topics to be covered in future issues, please email these to: comms@scssa.org.uk