



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. POLICY OVERVIEW

Safeguarding is a priority for La Sainte Union (internationally known as Holy Union Sisters), ensuring its integration in our ministries and communities and creating a culture of care, protection and prevention. (Strategic Plan 2025-2029)

La Sainte Union (LSU) is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. For LSU Sisters 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 on from the safeguarding reviews in 2020 we are committed to the One Church Approach to safeguarding by implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to victim/survivors promptly and compassionately.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all within LSU - Religious, Lay, Voluntary or Staff, regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.

2.2 It is the responsibility of LSU Sisters to prevent, whether by action or omission, abuse. Abuse in this policy refers to: physical; sexual; emotional; spiritual; neglect; self-neglect; organisational; material; psychological; financial; domestic or verbal. 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 in Section 6.

3. TRAINING

3.1 All LSU Sisters in England and Wales will undergo Safeguarding Training in relation to both Children and Adults as well as any other training relevant to their role. Listed below are the minimum standards for training in each role:

- Roles 1–x Training
- Provincial / Superior / Leader – RLG Leader Training (equivalent to Level 2)

- Safeguarding Lead – Safeguarding Lead Training (equivalent to Level 3)
- Board members – Trustee Training (equivalent to Level 2)
- Community Members who work with public – Advance Safeguarding Training (equivalent to Level 2)
- Community members who do not work with public – Basic Safeguarding Training (equivalent Level 1)

3.2 All Sisters will be visited annually by the Safeguarding Lead in their local Area Communities for in-person bespoke safeguarding training.

3.3 Staff at Shalom will have induction training on Adult Safeguarding and regular refresher safeguarding training at least annually.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Trustees

The Board of Trustees has a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of Safeguarding in line with this policy and national guidelines. Certain functions of the Trustees will be delegated to congregation/staff members, as indicated below.

4.2 The Anglo Hibernia Area England and Wales Co-Ordinators

The Anglo Hibernia Area England and Wales Co-Ordinators are responsible for ensuring appropriate policy, procedures and best practice are in place for the effective delivery of safeguarding, including any related due diligence checks. Certain functions of the Co-Ordinators will be delegated to Sisters/staff, as indicated below.

4.3 The Safeguarding Lead

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

4.3.1 The Safeguarding Lead may delegate some of this responsibility to the RLSS by passing the case to them but will remain as key contact for the case duration unless another individual is identified to assume case responsibility.

4.4 All other roles

All Sisters/staff have an obligation to ensure they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns by being familiar with the content of this policy and the procedure contained within it and any other associated policies/procedures.

4.5 General

Everyone involved in the work of LSU has a duty to disclose to the Safeguarding Lead / Co-ordinators any safeguarding concerns that have been raised about them. A concern regarding the Safeguarding Lead can be raised to a Co-Ordinator. An allegation against a Co-Ordinator should be reported to the General Council in Rome.

5 PRACTICE GUIDANCE

5.1 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

5.2 Action must also 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.

5.3 LSU is committed to Integrity in Ministry and has a Dignity and Respect Policy to ensure behavioural standards for ethical, safe and professional conduct.

5.4 Sisters must report safeguarding concerns directly to the Safeguarding Lead or contact a Coordinator who would then make immediate contact with the Safeguarding Lead to pass on the concern (within 24 hours).

5.5 Staff or Sisters at Shalom must report safeguarding concerns to management who will then contact the Safeguarding Lead immediately (within 24 hours).

6 PROCEDURE

6.1 If LSU becomes aware of a safeguarding issue, they should contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team and pass the concern and all associated records to them immediately. Ensure the person who made you aware of the issue knows you are doing this.

6.1.1 The RLSS or Safeguarding Lead at LSU who has 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 are recorded
- Inform the leadership Co-ordinators 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 Co-ordinators in leadership

6.1.3 When the concern needs to be reported to a statutory agency, the individual making the referral must be informed that all information about safeguarding will not be kept confidential, and that the details must be passed on to the police and any other appropriate

body but they may be able to remain anonymous depending on the circumstances. The RLSS or Safeguarding Lead should be supportive of the individual making the disclosure but should not seek more details than necessary for an initial statutory referral.

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

6.3 Safeguarding Bodies (not exhaustive)

- Internal Safeguarding Structures within the Catholic Church
- Local authority Safeguarding team – Adults
- Local authority Safeguarding team – Children
- Police 999
- Police 101
- GP
- Crisis Team
- RLSS Out of Hours Team
- Community Psychiatric Nurse
- Charity Commission
- CSSA
- Local Safeguarding Commission
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- NSPCC
- DBS

7 WHISTLEBLOWING

7.1 LSU will encourage and enable anyone with a serious concern, to raise the concern without fear of victimisation, or disadvantage.

7.1.1 If that concern is in regard to malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions at the LSU or other religious institution relating to safeguarding, then the RLSS should be made aware.

7.2 . The action taken by the RLSS will depend upon the nature of the concern referred. 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 RLSS.

8 RECORDING AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND CASE FILES

8.1 Primary responsibility for the management of documents and safeguarding case files sits with the Safeguarding Lead / RLSS, who will ensure an accurate, auditable, and secure record of any safeguarding concern or allegation referred to LSU are maintained.

8.1.1 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 LSU or RLSS and from statutory agencies.
- Rational for actions and or outcome of case

8.2 All records are potential evidence in a criminal trial civil case or statutory/public Inquiry and must be stored in a safe and retrievable format with an auditable record of provenance and integrity.

9 SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE (refer to Safer Recruitment Policy)

9.1 The LSU will ensure that staff are subject to the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (including enhanced DBS) in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements.

9.2 Appointments will be based on the person's experience, skills and ability to meet the set criteria and job specification for the specific role. It is essential to ensure that all documentation relating to the applicant is stored in a secure place and remains confidential.

9.3 Appointment to a role will not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS Disclosure check has been received and previous two employment references confirmed as being acceptable.

9.4 Following Interview, on appointment, all new employees should be provided with and sign to say they understand all relevant policy and procedures, including a copy of this document and their responsibilities within it highlighted.

9.5 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.

10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Flow Chart - responding to allegations of abuse or concerns

APPENDIX 2: Flow Chart – allocation of roles and responsibilities

5 POLICY REVIEW

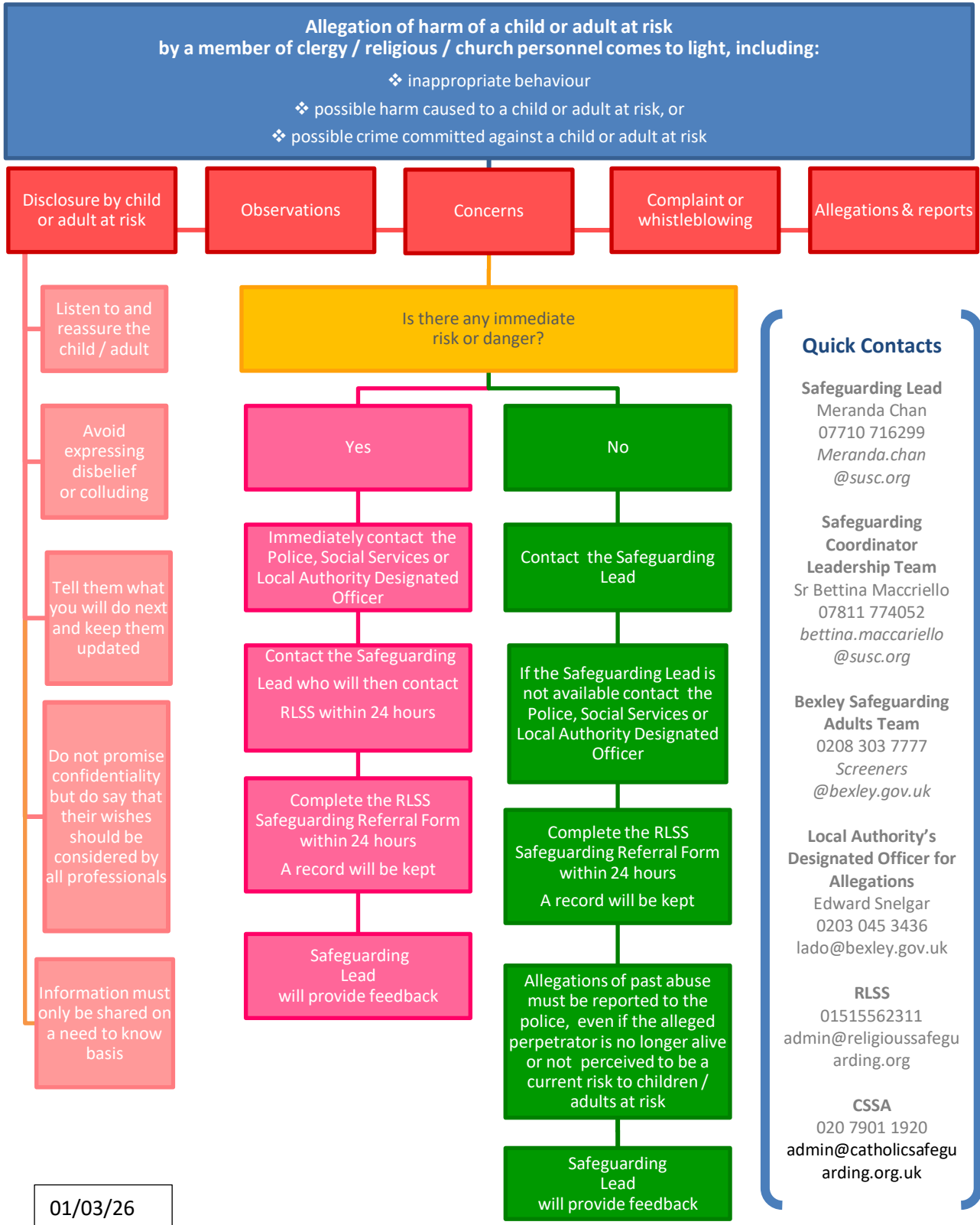
5.1 This policy is approved by the La Sainte Union Board of Trustees and will be subject to an initial review in and then annually or sooner, where there is a significant change or need.

Policy last updated: March 2026

Date of next review: March 2027

APPENDIX 1: Flowchart - responding to allegations of abuse or concerns about children and adults at risk

All concerns must be brought to the Safeguarding Lead. Never delay taking action. If you are unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead you can contact the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) or the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) for advice. You may also contact the Co-ordinator with responsibility for safeguarding on the Leadership Team or the Shalom duty manager to support you in contacting the Safeguarding Lead.



APPENDIX 2:

Flowchart – Allocation of Roles and Responsibilities in the Safeguarding Team

