**National Safeguarding Standards**

The leadership of the Catholic Church in England and Wales has adopted a common set of national safeguarding standards for the safeguarding and protection of children, and adults who may be vulnerable or at risk.  One of the ways in which church leaders will demonstrate accountability for safeguarding is through the CSSA audit process, which will test compliance with the standards.

Adoption of these national standards represents the commitment of Catholic Church bodies in England and Wales to the ‘One Church’ approach to safeguarding, and to achieving cultural change and improved safeguarding practice throughout the Church.

The standards operate as a coherent whole, which together form an overarching framework within which all church bodies [**[1]**](https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguarding-standards/#_ftn1) are expected to operate.  They represent the expected level of practice that is to be applied by church bodies for the purpose of safeguarding the children and adults with whom the Church has contact.

There are 8 standards which require church bodies to:

1. Embed safeguarding in the Church body’s leadership, governance, ministry and culture
2. Communicate the Church’s safeguarding message
3. Engage with and care for those who report having been harmed
4. Effectively manage allegations and concerns
5. Manage and support subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)
6. Implement robust human resource management
7. Provide and access training and support for safeguarding
8. Quality assure compliance to continuously improve practice

Underpinning each standard are criteria which set out the critical elements that contribute to fulfilment of the individual standard.  There are also examples of the evidence that could be used to demonstrate compliance.  The suggested evidence is deliberately limited so as not to limit church bodies in the range and type of evidence that could be put forward to demonstrate how the standard is met.

The standards will be subject to ongoing review and refinement as a result of ongoing learning from their implementation.

[[1]](https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguarding-standards/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref1) The term “Church body” is used to refer to a diocese, or a member of Religious Life Safeguarding Services (RLSS)