

Complaints Procedure

How concerns and complaints are received, handled and resolved

Reference	FMM – CP – v1
Status	Approved
Applies to	Anyone wishing to raise a complaint about the Institute's safeguarding conduct or service
Policy owner	FMM Trustees, through the Regional Superior and her Council
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Approved by	FMM Trustees
Next review	One year from approval, or sooner on a significant change to guidance or law

Approval and sign-off

This document is approved on behalf of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. The Regional Leadership endorses and the Trustees approve, as recorded below.

Name	Title	Signature	Date
Barbara Veeramallay-Permaul	Prepared by, Safeguarding Assured by BVPSkills	<i>BVPermaul</i>	18/08/26
	Endorsed by the Regional Superior (FMM)	<i>LCherallier</i>	24/08/2026
	Approved by, on behalf of the FMM Trustees	<i>Mary Fitzpatrick</i>	24/08/2026

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1. Purpose and scope

This procedure explains how the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in England and Wales, (i.e. Franciscan Missionaries of Mary UK CIO), receive and handle complaints about their safeguarding conduct, service or the behaviour of those connected with the Institute. It supports CSSA Standard 6 (reporting and managing concerns) and is designed to be fair, accessible and prompt. It applies alongside the Whistleblowing Policy and the Reporting and Escalation Procedure.

2. Principles

- **Accessible.** Anyone can raise a complaint, and we make it easy.
- **Fair.** We handle complaints impartially, and we treat everyone involved with respect.
- **Prompt.** We acknowledge and respond within clear timescales.
- **Learning.** We use complaints to improve, and we record them so we can identify themes.

3. What this procedure covers

This procedure covers complaints about the way a safeguarding matter has been handled, the conduct or attitude of a person connected with the Institute, or the standard of a service. It does not replace the safeguarding reporting route, and it is not used to investigate allegations of abuse, which follow the Allegations and PiPoT Procedure.

4. Safeguarding concerns come first

If a complaint reveals a safeguarding concern

If, at any point, a complaint suggests a child or adult at risk may be at risk of harm, it is treated as a safeguarding concern immediately.

It is referred to the DSL and handled under the Reporting and Escalation Procedure, alongside the complaint.

5. How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Sr Mary Fitzpatrick, at safeguarding@fmmuk.org, in writing or in conversation. If the complaint is about the DSL, you can make it to the Regional Superior or directly to the RLSS, so no one is asked to consider a complaint about themselves. It helps to include what happened, when, who was involved, and what resolution is sought.

6. The stages

6.1 Stage 1, local resolution

Most complaints are best resolved quickly and locally. The complaint is acknowledged and considered, and a response is provided. Many matters are settled at this stage.

6.2 Stage 2, formal review

If the person raising the complaint is not satisfied, a senior person not previously involved formally reviews the matter, considers the complaint, the response, and any further information, and provides a written outcome.

6.3 Stage 3, independent oversight

Where the matter remains unresolved, the person may request independent oversight through the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) or pursue an external route as appropriate.

7. Timescales

Stage	Action	Timescale
On receipt	Acknowledge the complaint	Within 5 working days
Stage 1	Respond with an outcome	Within 20 working days
Stage 2	Complete a formal review	Within 20 working days of the request
Throughout	Keep the person informed	Regularly

8. If you are not satisfied

At any stage, a person who is not satisfied can ask that the matter proceed to the next stage, or seek independent advice from the RLSS or an appropriate external body. Where the complaint concerns a registered charity matter, the person may also contact the Charity Commission.

9. Support and confidentiality

Anyone making a complaint is treated with respect and offered appropriate support. Complaints are handled confidentially, with information shared only with those who need it. Neutral descriptors are used, and no survivor or respondent is named beyond a strict need-to-know basis.

10. Records and learning

The DSL records complaints and their outcomes in the complaints log, held securely in line with the Information Governance, Confidentiality and Records Policy. The Safeguarding Committee reviews themes to improve learning and practice.

11. Review

This procedure is reviewed one year after approval, or sooner if guidance or law changes. The Trustees own the review, supported by the DSL.

12. Mapping to the CSSA standards

CSSA standard	Where addressed	Status
6. Reporting and managing concerns and allegations	Sections 3, 5, 6, 8	Addressed
4. Responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations	Sections 4, 6	Addressed
8. Quality assuring compliance	Section 10, Annex A	Addressed