

December 2025



End of year message

As we head into the festive season, we reflect on what we have shared with you throughout the year.

We are grateful to speakers who have shared their research on safeguarding strategies that are being used across the globe. The research has been conducted globally as well specifically in England, Wales, Germany and Australia. And in a range of contexts, including early education, ministry, social work and welfare services.

We would like to thank Douglas Russell for coordinating the speakers and choosing presentation times that work best for everyone considering the international time zones - quite a feat.

And we would like to thank the speakers themselves: Gabby Hunt, Douglas Russell, Marcus Pound, Katharina Ahmadi-Wachter and Carlene Firmin. We hope that their presentations have given you tools to strengthen strategies and practice in your field, and confidence that you are making a difference in the lives of children, young people and vulnerable people. Read more about the webinars: [Global Safeguarding Alliance](#)



Spotlight on Associate Professor Marcus Pound

Associate Professor Marcus Pound is based in the UK and is part of the Centre for Catholic Studies, Durham University. Driven by compassion, fearlessness and courage, he and his colleagues explored the biggest scandal to hit the Church in the UK through a research project in England and Wales to understand Catholic attitudes towards child sexual abuse in the Church.

[Read more](#)



Webinars for 2026

We have begun planning presentations for 2026 that will cover a range of issues related to safeguarding children and young people. We would also like to cast our net a little wider for 2026 and present speakers recommended by you. Do you want to suggest a speaker? Do you know about a researcher or practitioner who is conducting groundbreaking work in safeguarding? We'd love to hear from you.

Please get in touch



WISE survey of women in safeguarding practice

We are inviting women to take part in a survey for the WISE project – Women's Insights in Safeguarding Efforts in the Catholic Church. We know very little about safeguarding in a church setting from the point of view of women. WISE aims to fill this gap by collecting insights from women all over the world.

You can participate if you are a nun, a sister or a lay woman active in Church life as volunteers or staff. The study will explore your experiences with current safeguarding measures, your ideas for improvement, and your views on the risks posed by both men and women within Church settings.

The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of how safeguarding is implemented and will inform future policy and practice across global Church communities.

Please complete the survey or share the link to the survey with women in your network.

Take part in the WISE survey

Selected publications of GSA members

- Hunt, G. R, Higgins, D. J., & Willis, M. (2025). **"Just tick the box and move on": Religious leaders reflect on safeguarding practices in their setting.** *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 167, art. no. 107591.
- Kooyoora, with Stewart, J., Higgins, D. J., & Lindsay, L. (2025). **"It takes a village" Strengthening safeguarding through organisational cultural change: An abuse prevention through cultural change framework.** Report prepared for the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse: Kooyoora.
- Lazing, H. B. M., Geybels, H., & Zollner, H. (2025). **Two Dimensions of Transparency in the Digital Age: Material and Spiritual Aspects in Addressing Clergy Sexual Abuse.** *MST Review*, 27(1), 104-140.
- Mathews, B., Finkelhor, D., Malacova, E., Higgins, D. J., Collin-Vézina, D., & Do, H. P. (2025). **Characteristics of first disclosure of child sexual abuse: age, delay, recipient, and feeling of support.** *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 170, 107803.
- Mathews, B., Walsh, K., Finkelhor, D., Parvin, K., Burton, M., Nicholas, M., ... & Flynn, A. (2025). **Disclosure of online child sexual victimisation: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study.** *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 165, 107493.
- Russ, E., Morley, L., Higgins, D., Harries, M., & Lonne, B. (2025). **"Suiting up": Preparing workforces to take on the mantle of preventing child maltreatment from a public health perspective.** *Children and youth services review*, 168, 108029.
- Russell, D. H., Trew, S., Dickson, J., Hunt, G. R., & Higgins, D. J. (2025). **The risk and protective factors, response to disclosure, and interventions for sibling sexual abuse: A systematic review.** *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 162, 107136.



Help us grow the alliance

We invite you to invite your colleagues to subscribe to the Global Safeguarding Alliance. It's free and open to all. And it means we can share information about the most recent research findings with more people around the globe. Help us promote better practice in keeping children and young people safe regions.

We invite you to **forward this newsletter** to people in your network and invite them to **sign up as subscribers** so we can spread our news on safeguarding.



Christmas greetings

We are sending this message from Australia where we celebrate Christmas in the summer wearing shorts and sandals. In contrast, you might be pulling on your boots and coats bracing against a winter, getting warm and snug.

Wherever you are, we wish you a very merry Christmas, we wish you time to reflect on the deep meaning of Christmas, and we wish you time to enjoy the company of your family and friends.



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