



RESPONDING TO CONCERNS POLICY

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide guidance on how to respond to various types of concerns relating to ministry centre workers or users, including current or past members of the Diocese of North West Australia (“the Diocese”).

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to information, concerns or disclosures in relation to a grievance, a work concern, misconduct, current and/or historical abuse allegations (whether about a child or adult) as well as providing a process for managing safe ministry to persons of concern.

3 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 This policy is designed to help ministry leaders and the Diocese respond in a pastorally appropriate way to information, concerns or disclosures of a grievance, a work concern, misconduct or abuse occurring within the church, whilst fulfilling the requirements of government statutory bodies and Diocesan legislation.
- 3.2 In implementing this policy,
- our primary concern is for the care and welfare of those who have suffered **harm in the church**¹ and we will strive to provide **appropriate support**² for them;
 - in dealing with concerns about or disclosures of child abuse, we will fulfil our legislative requirements in reporting to statutory bodies; and
 - in dealing with disclosures of adult harm, we will support those who have suffered harm in reporting this to the Police, or where this is not possible, we will report the disclosures to Police in accordance with legislative requirements.
- 3.3 Where concerns or disclosures involving our own workers are of an abuse or misconduct nature, the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities according to the Reporting a Concerns Procedure.
- 3.4 Where a person who alleges they have been harmed by a member of the Diocese and are seeking redress, the matter will be referred to the Director of Professional Standards.

¹ **Harm in the church** means that whilst being a member of a church in this Diocese or attending a church event or ministry program in this Diocese or engaging with Diocesan personnel within the context of their professional or vocational role, the person has suffered physical, sexual or emotional harm.

² **Appropriate support** is determined in consultation with the person who has suffered harm and may include, but is not limited to, provision of a pastoral support person, professional counselling, support with Police, and/or Diocesan process and/or redress.

- 3.5 Where the concern refers to a grievance, the Grievance Procedure will be activated.
- 3.6 Where the concern is in relation to worker performance and not related to child abuse or adult misconduct, the Work Concerns Procedure will be activated.
- 3.7 Where the concern relates to a request for a Person of Concern to be part of a church community within our Diocese, the matter will be referred to the Director of Professional Standards, who may implement the National Policy for Safe Ministry with Person of Concern.
- 3.8 Where a worker believes in good faith on reasonable grounds that an officer, employee, volunteer, or contractor has breached any provision of civil law, or church law, or the organisation's regulations, or its code of conduct, or generally recognised principles of ethics, the Whistleblower Procedure will be activated.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Diocesan Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance of this policy

Reporting

- 4.2 Compliance with this policy is reported to Diocesan Council by the Diocesan Safety Officer.

Records management

- 4.3 The Registry maintains all records relevant to administering this policy using its recordkeeping system.

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the Diocesan Glossary.
- 5.2 A **grievance** refers to:
- a disagreement (including a conflict) between two or more people where at least one person is a member of the Diocese.
 - a perceived offence has been caused by a member of the Diocese.
 - a perception by one person that they have been bullied by a member of the Diocese.
- 5.3 A **work concern** includes, but is not limited to:
- Dissatisfaction in relation to fulfilling clearly defined job description or role expectations.
 - Concerns about management or ministry style.
 - Incompatibility between church workers and their supervisors.
 - Information in relation to the general functioning of a church worker, including but not limited to physical and mental health concerns.
- 5.4 A Person **of Concern** is a person who is currently participating or wishes to participate in the life of a parish or congregation and whose presence constitutes a risk of harm from sexual abuse to others in the parish or congregation.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Government legislation:

Children and Community Services Act 2001 (WA)
Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 (WA)
Child Care Services Act 2007 (WA)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)

Church legislation:

Professional Standards Statute 2016
Episcopal Standards Statute 2016
Disclosure of Information Canon 2017
Redress for Survivors of Abuse Canon 2017

Other related documents:

Faithfulness in Service, located at: <https://anglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1442-FIS-Consolidated-November-2016-current-at-190918.pdf>

Reporting a Concern Procedure

Governance Procedure

Work Concerns Procedure

Worker Support Procedure

General Synod Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern

Whistle Blower Procedure

Privacy Policy

7 FEEDBACK

7.1 Church members may provide feedback about this document by emailing registrar@anglicandnwa.org.

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Diocesan Council
Administrator	Diocesan Registrar
Next Review Date	19/02/2025