



# Safe Ministry with Persons of Concern Procedure

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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To give a framework to implement the Safe Ministry – Person of Concern Policy.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This applies to all ministry centres where a Person of Concern (PoC) is identified.

## 3 PROCEDURE

### 3.1 Stage 1 - Identification

A PoC is identified. This can be by any of the following means:

- the person themselves,
- friends or relatives of the person,
- a victim or a person who makes an allegation,
- friends or relatives of a victim or person who makes an allegation,
- public sources such as newspapers, other media or court reports,
- Police, Parole Boards, Community Services or Department of Corrective Services,
- private information from third parties,
- records kept by the Professional Standards Unit,
- previous parishes or “employers” of the offender or suspect,
- predecessor senior ministers or other members of church staff.

All sources need to be carefully checked. No action should be based on rumour or innuendo. Inevitably, checking will ultimately require communication with the PoC concerned.

### 3.2 Stage 2 - Notification

The Minister in Charge notifies the Director of Professional Standards (DPS). The DPS then:

- a. confirms the presence of a PoC and commences initial risk assessment.
- b. informs the Bishop and the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) that a risk assessment is being undertaken
- c. Ascertains, in conversation with the Minister in Charge or governing group, whether there is capacity at the ministry centre level to implement interim Safety arrangements.

### 3.3 Stage 3 – Implement Interim safety arrangements (Interim Standards for Participation and Worship);

- a. The Bishop in consultation with the DPS and Minister in Charge will take into account the outcome of the initial risk assessment and if appropriate, the Bishop will offer the PoC a set of Interim Standards for Participation and Worship.
- b. The DPS and the PSC will assist the Minister in Charge and Churchwardens in the implementation of the Interim Standards.
- c. Developing Interim Standards is not an extended process. At a minimum, the Interim Standards should be whatever is required to protect people in the ministry centre from the risk of harm. It may include a direction that the PoC does not participate in the life of the ministry centre until the Process of Assessment (refer Stage 5) is completed, or until court processes or parole conditions are completed, and who in the ministry centre needs to be informed of the Interim Standards; what information should be given; and whether that information should include the identity of the PoC.
- d. If the PoC fails to comply with the Interim Standards, the Churchwardens are to inform the Bishop and the DPS, and they will decide what steps should be taken to minimise the risk of harm to people in the ministry centre and direct the Minister in Charge and Churchwardens to take those steps.

### 3.4 Stage 4 – Decide whether to proceed further

A PoC cannot participate in the life of a ministry centre on an ongoing basis unless he or she agrees to proceed with the Process of Assessment. In addition, the Bishop, DPS and Minister in Charge needs to consider whether the ministry centre has capacity to implement a permanent set of Standards for Participation and Worship to enable the PoC to participate in the life of the ministry centre.

The procedure for deciding whether to proceed with the Process of Assessment has the following components:

- a. The DPS shall meet with the PoC to explain the Process of Assessment and the likely implications for the PoC if participation in the life of the ministry centre is approved.
- b. If the PoC is willing to proceed with the Process of Assessment, the DPS shall meet with the Minister in Charge and Churchwardens to explain the Process of Assessment and the likely implications for the ministry centre if participation by the PoC in its life is approved.
- c. If the PoC is not willing to proceed with the Process of Assessment, the DPS shall inform the Bishop, and the Minister in Charge and the Bishop can offer alternative ministry.
- d. If the ministry centre is not willing or does not have capacity to proceed the DPS informs the Bishop and recommend what steps should be taken to minimise the risk of harm to people in the ministry centre.

### 3.5 Stage 5 – Conduct the Necessary Assessments (Process of Assessment)

#### a. Assessment of the PoC

- The DPS, after consulting the PSC and taking into consideration the view of the ministry centre, shall decide whether an Expert Assessment of the PoC is required. It may not be required, for example, when the PoC is perceived to represent a low risk of harm to people in the ministry centre.
- If an Expert Assessment is required, the DPS shall either obtain one that is current— exercising their judgement on the matter of currency—or arrange for an Assessment to be carried out.

#### b. Assessment of the ministry centre

The DPS shall arrange for a Situational Assessment of the ministry centre to be carried out. The Assessment should address the following issues:

- Does the ministry centre have the capacity to manage the PoC?
- What safe ministry infrastructure currently exists in the ministry centre?
- Are there suitable people willing to be members of any Ministry Centre Accountability Group?
- What activities does the PoC want to be involved in? Do any of these activities involve children? Do any of these activities take place off site?
- What activities is the ministry centre willing to have the PoC involved in?
- Is any person in the ministry centre a known survivor of abuse?
- Is a person in the ministry centre a member of the family of a known survivor of abuse?

- Would the location or layout of the church buildings make monitoring of the PoC difficult?
- What forms of support would there be for the PoC?
- Are there any special circumstances, for example, the known presence of other Persons of Concern?

c. Outcome of the Assessments

- i. The DPS shall discuss the Expert Assessment and the Situational Assessment with the PSC. The DPS together with the PSC decide whether the PoC may participate in the life of the ministry centre and, if they decide the PoC can, under what conditions.
- ii. Generally, the PoC will not be permitted to participate in a leadership role such as reading the Bible or leading prayers in services, leading any youth or other group, or providing pastoral care.
- iii. It is important to recognise that if a PoC has a leadership role they will be perceived not to pose a risk to the safety of children and vulnerable adults.
- iv. The DPS and PSC shall decide:
  - whether the PoC should be required to sign Standards, and if they should, the terms of these Standards;
  - whether the ministry centre should form a Ministry Centre Accountability Group.
- v. Keep a record of decisions in writing.
- vi. If it is decided that the PoC may participate in the life of the ministry centre, the DPS shall inform the Bishop, the Minister in Charge and Churchwardens.
- vii. If it is decided that the PoC may not participate in the life of the ministry centre, or the PoC is not willing to accept the conditions for participation in the life of the ministry centre, the DPS shall inform the Minister in Charge and Churchwardens and the Bishop and recommend what steps should be taken to minimise the risk of harm to people in the ministry centre.
- viii. The DPS, in consultation with the the Bishop, Minister in Charge and Churchwardens, shall decide:
  - who in the ministry centre needs to be informed of the decision;
  - what information should be given; and
  - whether that information should include the identity of the PoC.
- ix. If it is decided that the PoC may participate in the life of the ministry centre, DPS arranges with the Bishop for written Standards to be produced.
- x. The Standards will include;
  - (1) acknowledgement of past conduct or allegations and consequent risk;
  - (2) acknowledgement of the need for others to be informed of the risk, such as key leaders or parents if necessary; and
  - (3) The boundaries agreed to by the DPS, the PoC and Ministry Centre Accountability Group (refer Stage 6) should include, but are not limited to;
    - which services and activities he or she may and may not attend. In extreme cases of high risk, consideration should be given to complete exclusion from parish activities altogether;
    - the buildings and rooms into which the PoC may go;
    - the times the PoC can be on church premises;
    - who the PoC may associate with at church;
    - details of the supervision and accountability which has been put in place;
    - acknowledgment of consequences of failure to comply i.e. exclusion;
    - an undertaking to notify of attendance at or move to another church service or parish; and
    - permission from the PoC for information to be passed on to the DPS and to another parish in the case of transfer.

### 3.6 Stage 6 - Establish the Necessary Safeguards

- a. The DPS shall arrange for the signing of the permanent Standards by the PoC, the Bishop and Minister in Charge and provide signed copies to the DPS, Bishop, Minister in Charge and the PoC.
- b. Where deemed appropriate a *Ministry Centre Accountability Group* is appointed by the *Minister in Charge* and Churchwardens in consultation with the DPS. This group monitors the participation of a *PoC* in the life of the Ministry Centre, including whether the *PoC* continues to meet the conditions of the *Standards*.
- c. The DPS or the PSC or their delegate shall provide training and support for the members of any Ministry Centre Accountability Group (or monitors). (Note: Standards will be provided to a new Rector and new Churchwardens.)
- d. If the *PoC* refuses to comply with the Standards, the Minister in Charge and/or the Churchwardens shall inform the DPS and the Bishop, who shall recommend what steps should be taken to minimise the risk of harm to people in the ministry centre.
- e. The *Minister in Charge* together with the Churchwardens are responsible for the implementation of the Standards in their Ministry Centre.
- f. When required, the *Minister in Charge* consults with the DPS and *Bishop* about the appropriate form of *Alternative Ministry* to be offered to a *PoC*.
- g. The *Bishop* receives information about *Persons of Concern* and, when required, provides advice about the form of *Alternative Ministry* to be offered to *Persons of Concern*. When required the *Bishop* will:
  - decide whether a *PoC* should continue to participate in the life of the Ministry Centre;
  - decide whether a *Standards* should be terminated; and
  - direct the *Minister in Charge* and Churchwardens to take whatever steps are necessary to minimise any risk of harm to people in the Ministry Centre.
- h. The procedure requires the *PoC* to co-operate with the process for determining and managing their participation in the life of the Ministry Centre. The *PoC* can terminate their involvement by:
  - refusing to proceed with the *Process of Assessment*; or
  - refusing to agree with the conditions of any proposed Standards

### 3.7 Stage 7 - Monitor the Arrangements Made

- a. DPS at least once a year, review the operation of the permanent Standards.
- b. If at any time it is considered that the Standards are inadequate to protect people in the ministry centre from the risk of harm, or otherwise requires variation, the Minister in Charge or Churchwardens consult with the DPS or PSC.
- c. If after this consultation the DPS or PSC decide that the Standards should be varied, they shall meet with the *PoC*, the Minister in Charge and Churchwardens of the Ministry centre to explain your decision, and they shall arrange with the Bishop documentation of the proposed changes.

## 4 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

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Administrator	Diocesan Registrar
Next Review Date	

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