

[Persons of Concern]Diocesan Council, 26 September 2013

RECOMMENDATION:

"That this Diocesan Council approves the Safe Ministry Policy with regard to persons of concern."

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle sees as a central part of the Church's mission: "To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom". As part of that Good News, we believe that Jesus Christ calls into his church all kinds of people – some who are vulnerable and also some whose brokenness has involved them causing sexual harm to others.

We firmly believe that the Church, as a part of God's Kingdom, is a place where people should be safe, nurtured, and protected from violence and any kind of harm.

This policy aims to create an environment where children, young people and vulnerable adults can participate with confidence in all church activities. To protect them we are committed to ensuring that persons who have been convicted of a sexual offence, or the subject of a negative finding by a board or tribunal of sexual misconduct involving a person under the age of consent, who seek to worship with us will be carefully monitored and managed.

Management will include meeting and making a written agreement with the person who has been convicted of a sexual offence, or the subject of a negative finding by a board or tribunal of sexual misconduct involving a person under the age of consent, to ensure that they are clearly aware of the limitations that will need to be placed on them. These limitations will be to protect them and others from being in situations where trust could be betrayed and abuse re-occur. Management will be a shared task between clergy and a small group of trusted members of the parish.

While always remaining vigilant and alert to danger, we seek to be aware of what God is doing to change and renew those who have offended, and what part we are called to play in this.

The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle is committed to the physical, emotional, spiritual welfare and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in the activities and programs offered in parishes. Each Parish will:

- Ensure that clergy and church workers are trained in child protection matters and are provided with information that assists with understanding sexuality and sexual deviation as specified in the Safe Ministry Practice Protocols.
- Adopt the identified Safe Ministry Practice Protocols which are to be undertaken by the parish clergy and church workers.
- Respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers and report to Director of Professional Standards.

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4. SAFE MINISTRY PRACTICES

1. A notification to a parish Priest could come from one of the following:
 - a. Self-Referral
 - b. Director Professional Standards
 - c. Samaritans Chaplain (Corrections)
 - d. Parole officer

2. Upon receiving notification, the Parish Priest will establish a small team to assist in the pastoral supervision and support of the person who has been convicted of a sexual offence, or the subject of a negative finding by a board or tribunal of sexual misconduct involving a person under the age of consent. This team, known as the Support and Accountability Team, is to ensure that the person who has been convicted of a sexual offence, or the subject of a negative finding by a board or tribunal of sexual misconduct involving a person under the age of consent is:
 - a. protected from those who may oppose them attending church;
 - b. compliant with the restrictions outlined in the Worship Agreement; and
 - c. compliant with parole and reporting conditions while attending Parish / Church activities.

It is important for the Support and Accountability Team try and discern what God is doing in the life of this person and what the role of the parish could be.

3. The Parish Priest and the Support and Accountability Team will meet with the person who has been convicted of a sexual offence, or the subject of a negative finding by a board or tribunal of sexual misconduct involving a person under the age of consent, and agree to a level of support. This ensures the necessary preparations have been made and that procedures and guidelines are in place to ensure that no person is at risk of abuse. This will vary according to the seriousness of prior or alleged offences, but could include:
 - a. to only attend specified worship services and other authorised activities;
 - b. to sit apart from children, young people and designated adults at specified worship services and other authorised activities;
 - c. to stay away from areas of the parish property where children, young people and designated adults meet;
 - d. to decline offers of hospitality where children, young people and designated adults will be gathered;
 - e. to never be alone with children, young people and designated adults in specified worship services and other authorised activities;
 - f. to never work with children, young people and designated adults in authorised activities;
 - g. to not be part of a parish activity that includes children, young people and designated adults;
 - h. to not attend any parish activity or camp where children, young people and designated adults may be present, and which requires participants to stay overnight;
 - i. to not accept nomination for election to any leadership role in the parish;
 - j. to meet regularly with Support and Accountability Team; and

The Diocese of Newcastle recognises the work of the Anglican Diocese of Perth in the formulation of the Policy.

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Parishioner's Commitment: [Delete those sections that do not apply.]

I acknowledge that I have been convicted of a sexual offence, or the subject of a negative finding by a board or tribunal of sexual misconduct involving a person under the age of consent. As a sign of my genuine desire to follow a Christian life and to ensure that no-one within the Worship Community is put at risk by my behaviour in the future, I make the following commitments:

1. I will adhere to all the conditions of my Parole in respect of association with children.
2. I will continue to demonstrate an attitude of respect to ALL those in attendance.
3. I will respect the leadership of, and follow reasonable direction given to me by, the Parish Priest and my Support and Accountability Team.
4. I will avoid any situation where I am alone, or likely to be alone with children, young people or designated adults.
5. I do not expect to be offered leadership positions within the Parish or hold any office including:
 - a. Leader of a prayer group
 - b. A reader at worship
 - c. Leader of a bible study group
 - d. Leader of a choir or Musical Director
 - e. Leader of Ministry team
 - f. Liturgical Assistant
 - g. Organiser or refreshments/catering
 - h. Coordinator of volunteers at a working bee, etc.
 - i. Church Treasurer
6. I do not expect to hold any office in any position pertaining to children's ministry, including:
 - a. Christian education classes for children and youth,
 - b. Children's gatherings during worship
 - c. Youth Group events
 - d. Children's musical or theatrical productions
 - e. Transporting children and/or youth to and from church outings
 - f. Participating in children's camps.
7. I will not ask for, seek access to, nor remove from the church any materials, files, directories or rosters listing children, young people or designated adults in the church.
8. I will not engage in any physical behaviour that may be deemed inappropriate or offensive (touching, kissing, and hugging).
9. I will not discuss my past offences or details of my criminal charges or convictions with those attending the Parish. If these matters are raised by an attendee, I will refer that person to the Parish Priest.