



**Facing the past
Shaping a healthy future**

**ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF
NEWCASTLE**

**GUIDELINES FOR PARISH RECOVERY
IN THE EVENT OF ALLEGATIONS OF
SEXUAL ABUSE AFFECTING THE PARISH**

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References:

1. This document was developed in consultation with Tim Dyer from The Johnmark Extension
2. 'Healing in congregations after clergy sexual abuse' prepared by the Reverend Jan Erickson-Pearson, revised 2005.
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3. 'The prevention of sexual abuse and misconduct: prevention and response' – written by the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia

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Background

This document has been prepared at the request of Bishop Greg Thompson and Bishop Peter Stuart, as part of the Church's response to disclosures of clergy sexual abuse and its endeavours to, firstly, address any specific cases of abuse and, secondly, to work towards a healthier future.

Following Bishop Greg's recent invitation to victims and survivors of abuse to tell their stories, and his urging to others who may suspect or have knowledge of abuse currently or in the past to report this to the Royal Commission or Police, it is appropriate for the Diocese to develop a framework which allows for this to happen in an environment which is properly equipped to respond to such disclosures. This applies to disclosure of current or historical abuse.

In addition to her own experience in working with survivors of clergy abuse, the writer has relied on past experience of other similar organisations who have responded to this need, in particular referencing two documents cited below. This research shows what works best in dealing with trauma, and provides strategies which are known to minimize the lasting effects such abuse can have.

The writer would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance provided by Tim Dyer from The Johnmark Extension, whose prior experience has informed much of this process.

The importance of this work cannot be understated. If done well, not only will it create an environment in which complainants/witnesses of abuse can come forward in safe hands, it also sends a clear message that clergy abuse will not be tolerated, but will be brought into the light. It is simply essential that every effort is made to achieve the desired outcome of an environment where future generations of children are never again exposed to such a betrayal of trust.

It is intended that this framework will continue to be a work in progress, and that it will provide the flexibility to respond to the needs of any situation as it unfolds.

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Setting the scene

There is no doubt that disclosures of sexual abuse has rocked the Church, and the broader community, to the core. There is a sense of disbelief that such behaviour can exist in a place whose foundation is built on trust, integrity and care for the marginalized in our society.

It is therefore critical that the Diocese continues to respond quickly, compassionately and professionally to such disclosures, and that the significant affects, that ripple way beyond those who are directly involved, are recognised. This work adds to the work undertaken by the Director of Professional Standards and the Professional Standards Committee. We are continuing to learn and identify best practices. Willingness to try new options, must be demonstrated. The commitment is to provide healing by

- Responding quickly to all allegations made
- Telling the truth about what happened
- Dealing with anxieties, expectations and other feelings
- Providing intentional care for those most deeply wounded
- Building trust
- Making plans to move forward
- Learning from mistakes

The response to the disclosure of abuse has impact within a parish, deanery, diocese and beyond. The local life of the parish is of great significance, as is the diocesan family and community. The Bishop, as the chief pastor of the Diocese, exercises his ministries of pastoral care, mission, discipline and governance by being actively involved in overseeing and supporting the process of disclosure. The Bishop will appoint others to assist in this task with the expectation that they will work closely with and listen to the needs and insights of parish leaders. Experience has shown that, whether the disclosure of abuse is current or historic, the parish leaders will experience conflicts of interest as they develop strategies. Overseas experience indicates the long-term healing process for a congregation is greatly assisted by diocesan involvement and this expectation should be waived only in the most pressing circumstances. The Bishop, through the Bishop's Response Team, will be ensuring that the work of supporting the parish is connected with the work of the Professional Standards Office and the Diocesan Office.

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Bishop's Response Team

The Bishop (or, in his absence, the Assistant Bishop) will call the team together following all disclosures of sexual abuse by a member of the clergy or church worker. The team will have oversight of the Response Process. The team will be made up of:

- The Bishop
- Assistant Bishop
- Diocesan Business Manager
- Director of Professional Standards
- Diocesan Communications Manager
- Archdeacon of Newcastle
- Bishop's Advisor/Parish Recovery Team Coordinator

Responsibilities (as necessary, dependent on specific circumstances)

- Implement the Response Process
- Assist the Bishop(s) with the Staff and Parish Briefings
- Meet with staff and lay leaders, separately and/or together as they respond and make plans for ongoing ministry
- Provide resources such as communication guidelines and materials
- Where the matters involve a currently serving priest
 - Preach and preside at worship the following Sunday after Parish Briefing
 - Provide spiritual leadership, including preaching, leading worship, intercessions, and bible study
 - Provide immediate pastoral care for those with urgent needs
 - Identify any immediate special care required – weddings, baptisms, funerals, special events, urgent and chronic needs
 - Onsite presence, if required, over a weekend
 - Meet with small groups/ministries
- Where the matters are historic, involve a retired priest, or involve a lay member of the ministry team (and the like) to work in consultation with the local leadership to identify the best way to support parish ministries
- Conduct education/skill building sessions, as required, with clergy/lay leaders
- Build up and affirm the gifts, skills and leadership already present
- Respond to requests to help with problem solving

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- Provide a safe place (emotional zone or relationship) in which leaders can vent their feelings and questions
- Provide access/connections to support required
- Listen, support and affirm in a calm and supportive manner

Parish Recovery Team

As soon as the Bishop's Response Team is able to communicate allegations of clergy sexual abuse, 2-3 consultants from the Parish Recovery Team (PRT) will be appointed by the Bishop's Advisor/PRT Coordinator. These consultants will respond to a parish in crisis, to provide the coaching/facilitation/mentoring support that is required during this period. Consultants will be selected from throughout the Diocese, trained and supervised by the PRT Coordinator (at least in the short/medium term), will be external to the Parish in crisis, and will be committed to providing support in the months following the revelation of abuse. These teams of 2-3 consultants may be in place for about 8 months and would complete their work with a formal report containing recommendations for ongoing healing for the Parish.

It is anticipated each small team would be made up of 50/50 clergy and lay people; 50/50 male and female. They will not be expected to progress from one crisis to another – there should be enough people available to allow for a break between assignments, and only those parishes in significant crisis will require intervention by a team.

Parish Healing Team

In conjunction with the Parish Recovery Team, a Parish Healing Team will be established if necessary, for a fixed period of time. This team will consist primarily of key lay people from within the Parish, who will be responsible for leading the implementation of recommendations made by the Parish Recovery Team consultants, with the approval of the Bishop.

To allow for the continued focus on the overall health and vitality of the Parish, the Priest may choose to delegate his/her authority and assume an oversight role of this team.

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Pastoral Care

It is critical that an appropriate level of pastoral care is provided to all those involved, including the complainant and the respondent. This may also include professional counselling support. Examples of pastoral care include:

Primary complainant; family members of complainant and respondent

- a) Opportunity to meet with Bishop – primary purpose to express deep pastoral concern. The complainant should not be required to repeat painful information in this meeting.
- b) Suggestions for future pastoral care (to address spiritual concerns)
- c) Provision of expert counselling support if required, or access to the Employee Assistance Program

Parish priests/staff members

- a) Education and assistance for their work in managing the crisis in the parish
- b) Attention to work and work loads
- c) Advocacy for appropriate time off
- d) Prayers and preaching that reflect the situation
- e) Regular opportunities for prayer
- f) Further debriefing opportunities

Lay leaders; parish members and wider community

- a) Prayers and preaching that reflect the situation and the repercussions
- b) Intentional opportunities for pastoral care and support
- c) Follow up unexplained absence from worship
- d) Regular opportunities for prayer

External providers of professional counselling services are outlined on the Diocesan website at <http://newcastleanglicanhealthyfuture.com/seeking-support>

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Response Process (this will vary dependent on circumstances)

Step	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Phase one			
1	Provide care for the complainant on disclosure. Address privacy concerns	Day 1	Director of Professional Standards
2	Engage legal process – police, Royal Commission, mandatory report (if required)	Day 1	Director of Professional Standards
3	Take appropriate action with respondent, provide pastoral support	Day 1	Director of Professional Standards, Professional Standards Committee and Bishop or Assistant Bishop
Phase two			
4	Convene Bishop's Response Team meeting	Day 1	Bishop or Assistant Bishop
5	Identify key stakeholders, considering current circumstances of respondent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clergy/lay leader/lay person b. Still serving in parish c. Serving in another parish d. Serving in another diocese (national/international) e. Served in other parishes f. Retired g. Died 	Day 3	Bishop's Response Team
6	Develop response and communication strategies, pastoral care requirements to reflect the needs of specific situation	Day 3	Bishop's Response Team
7	Customise standard communication resources	Day 4	Diocesan Communication Manager and Assistant Bishop

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8	Meet with Regional Archdeacon and Parish Priest to advise them of allegations and review with them the pastoral and communication strategies (see Staff Briefing) Brief Diocesan office staff	Day 5	Bishop's Response Team Bishop to initiate meeting
9	Organize pastoral care for families, close friends, children, colleagues of those involved – including the person to whom the abuse was disclosed	Day 5	Regional Archdeacon Parish Priest PRT Coordinator
10	Consider others who are likely to have been involved – review whether the complainant's family should be advised	Day 5	Regional Archdeacon Parish Priest PRT Coordinator
11	Provide any emergency assistance required	Day 5	Regional Archdeacon
12	If the respondent is a serving priest, arrange for interim leadership	Day 5	Regional Archdeacon
13	Identify and meet with Parish Recovery Team consultants	Day 7	Bishop or Assistant Bishop Regional Archdeacon Director of Professional Standards (if necessary) PRT Coordinator Parish priest
14	In conjunction with Parish Recovery Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify those most directly affected Contact and meet with other staff/parish council/lay leaders (see Staff Briefing) 	Day 9	Bishop or Assistant Bishop Regional Archdeacon Director of Professional Standards PRT Coordinator
15	Contact and meet with parish (see Parish Briefing)	Day 10	Diocesan leader appointed by Bishop PRT Coordinator Parish Recovery Team consultants
16	Advise all clergy Media statement to go if necessary	As req'd	Bishop and Diocesan Communications Manager
17	Attend worship in the parish for an ordinary service within a fortnight of announcement. Discuss the liturgy with the parish priest and consider additional ministries such as anointing at that service	Day 14	Bishop or Assistant Bishop

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Phase three			
18	Debrief/incorporate learnings Written Assessment Report supplied to Parish and Bishop Consider any requirement to run any other training (eg 'Safe Places'; conflict resolution)	Day 30	Bishop's Response Team Parish Recovery Team consultants
19	Ongoing support provided to the Parish Healing Team by members of the PRT consultants, Bishop's Response Team, as well as professional supervisors/spiritual directors as required.	Ongoing	PRT Coordinator
20	Regular reporting (weekly/monthly/quarterly as appropriate) from Parish Healing Team to Bishop	12 months	Parish Priest or Interim Priest

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Staff Briefings - structure

This will occur as a two-step process. Initially, members of the Bishop's Response Team will meet with the Regional Archdeacon and incumbent priest (assuming not the respondent). The Bishop will provide as many details as possible regarding the disclosure, and the group will then develop the timeline for Staff and Parish Briefings.

Following this, a second meeting will be conducted by the Bishop or his representative, accompanied by a member of the Bishop's Response Team. Participants include other staff, parish council and lay leaders.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- advise of the allegations made
- introduce the crisis intervention team
- provide clarity on various roles of those involved
- provide timeline for Response Process
- ensure ownership and buy in to the process
- provide an opportunity to react and respond
- provide resources including pastoral care
- introduce Parish Recovery Team consultants
- provide Behavioural Commitments

Parish Briefing - structure

This meeting is led by the Bishop or his representative, accompanied the Parish Recovery Team consultants. It is a parish meeting conducted separately from the worship service with no children under the age of 16 in attendance, nor the respondent, primary complainant or their families (under normal circumstances). Depending on the nature of the allegations, it may be appropriate to include youth. It is essential there is broad based attendance at this meeting and, depending on the size of the parish, it may be conducted in two smaller sessions.

Research shows that these meetings should last approximately one hour, preferably conducted on the church premises, with everyone encouraged to attend. The length of the meeting will be determined by the circumstances – historical abuse may not require such lengthy debriefing. Representatives of the media should not be present.

This meeting will be followed by a second meeting, most probably within 8-10 days, to facilitate the healing process, and will be conducted by the Parish Recovery Team consultants.

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Parish Briefing Meeting - example agenda (to be modified, dependent on circumstances):

Topic	Minutes
Welcome by Bishop (or his representative)/Rector	1
Prayer/scripture reading (Bishop or Rector)	2
Bishop's address, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> statement (read twice), and pastoral address Opportunity for quiet reflection Prayer Introduce PRT consultants 	10
Break for refreshments (Bishop departs)	10
Consultants briefly explain their role, and share how parishes can respond in situations like this (to be defined in each situation), eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> earnest prayer and care for those immediately impacted pray for and support one another – share, listen and encourage, seek to build each other up refrain from speculation (gossip) Outline of process for care and recovery for the parish, which may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pastoral care for families involved pastoral debriefing and support for staff, ministry team members counseling and care for those particularly impacted several parish gatherings over next weeks/months 	10
Opportunity for process-related questions	10
<i>Potential use of historical timeline – who was part of this Parish at the time?</i>	
Break into small groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your concerns, as individual and as a parish? What are the immediate steps we need to take 	15
As a whole group, capture main points/priorities on flipchart/whiteboard	10
Prioritise action steps (eg contacting those not in attendance)	10
Duty of care – check that everyone is well enough to go home	1
Close with prayer (Rector)	3
Allow people to gather to talk and pray together, share questions or concerns	10

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Second Meeting - example agenda*(to be developed by the Parish Recovery Team consultants):*

Topic	Minutes
Welcome and prayer by Rector	3
Introduce the evening process (PRT)	2
Overview of what will be covered during the meeting	5
Mapping exercises, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact line (with future focus on what healing looks like) • Concerns prioritisation 	25
Small group discussions (eg one for each priority)	15
Brainstorming – ‘what will it take for us to heal?’	10
Agree specific action points, and follow up	10
Prayer/close by Rector	3
Duty of care – check that everyone is well enough to go home	1
Allow people to gather to talk and pray together, share questions or concerns	10

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Skills required – (Bishop's Response Team and Parish Recovery Teams)

There is a broad range of skills which are necessary in providing support. It is not intended that these skills are found in any one individual, rather it is important that there is a team of people available who have expertise in the following areas:

- ✓ Understanding child abuse
- ✓ Facilitation skills
- ✓ Building trust
- ✓ Creating a safe place for healthy interactions
- ✓ Appropriate assertiveness
- ✓ Broadening perspectives – respect and value differences; keeping a global perspective
- ✓ Dealing with resistance
- ✓ Handling challenging emotions
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Active listening, empathy
- ✓ Dealing with rumours
- ✓ Setting healthy boundaries
- ✓ Understanding spiritual consequences of betrayal – loss of faith in church, teaching, God
- ✓ Responding to difficult questions
- ✓ Empowering others, building on strengths and gifts
- ✓ Understanding of trauma, grief and loss
- ✓ Responding to suicidal ideation
- ✓ Setting goals
- ✓ Promoting healing
- ✓ Role modeling healthy behaviours (taking care of self)
- ✓ Completion of 'Safe Places' training

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Behavioural commitments

Whilst many of these may seem obvious, communication in high-pressure situations can sometimes become strained. These commitments are designed to be a reminder of what behaviour is important during such times.

A commitment to:

- model and encourage healthy communication, honouring to God
- listen and be available
- take the crisis seriously and provide resources to deal with it
- move forward in trust and confidence that God will continue to go before us
- provide appropriate disclosure, to not cover-up facts that can be known
- provide information in a timely manner about plans for the ongoing work of the church, and about ministry activities needing coverage
- be present in worship and at parish activities, as required
- provide details about where to take additional concerns, and how other victims might bring their information forward (when requested)

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Communication resources

- Core message for various audiences
- Invitations to Parish Briefing
- Letters from Bishop to key stakeholders, eg
 - other parish priests
 - neighbouring pastors of other denominations
- Media statement
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Parish handouts – eg Safe Connections, Definition of Clergy Abuse. Provision of resources in variety of formats – print, video, conversational – available over time
- Useful phone numbers, such as are outlined on the diocesan website
<http://newcastleanglicanhealthyfuture.com/seeking-support>
- Website/Encounter updates (as required)

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Core message

- All allegations of a criminal nature are referred immediately to the Police and the Royal Commission.
- Our policy is to be as transparent as possible, within the confines of our legal obligations.
- We have a particular responsibility to respect the confidentiality of victims and survivors, and to ensure they are not in any way further traumatized by the process of disclosure.
- Matters dealt with under the Professional Standards Ordinance must be dealt with in accordance with procedures as the outcome must be legally and ethically sound, and open to scrutiny.
- This process may appear lengthy but it is critical that the principles of procedural fairness are met and due process followed.
- We provide as many details of the allegation as we can without hampering ongoing investigation or support.
- We have an obligation to protect the privacy of the persons involved, as well as the integrity of the investigation.
- We recognise that these matters have a ripple effect throughout our community and we are endeavouring to put appropriate support mechanisms in place to minimize further stress.

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Invitation to Parish Briefing

Dear brothers and sisters,

A few months ago I raised with the diocesan family the need to face the past and shape a healthy future. I took that initiative because I was aware that, across the Diocese, there are members of the church, and former members of the church, who have been affected by sexual abuse. As a result of that initiative, people have been coming forward to share their experience and to receive counselling and support.

It has come to my attention that there are historic matters relating to your parish and <I would like><I have asked ...> to come and talk with you about them.

I know that a letter like this may raise anxiety for you, and that your first concern will be for the wellbeing of those who have raised these matters with Diocese, and those most directly affected. I can assure you that processes are in place to look after them.

I have arranged with <Parish Priest Name> for a special pastoral meeting of parishioners to be held <time><day><date><place> at which <bishop ... or delegate> will be present along with <other key names>. This is a private meeting for members of the parish and their families. It is not appropriate for children to attend this meeting.

Please feel free to speak with <Parish Priest> if you feel the need. He/she will not be in a position to provide information before the meeting but if you or your family need care he/she will be there for you. As always our Director of Professional Standards, Michael Elliot, is available to receive information and provide assistance. He can be contacted at <insert details>.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and I encourage you in your praying for one another, and for those most directly affected.

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Invitation to Parish Briefing

(when it is resolved that the parishioners should know details in advance in writing)

Dear sisters and brothers,

It is with profound sadness that I write to you and, as you read this letter, I know that you will also be saddened.

I have been advised by the Director of Professional standards that he has received and verified information that would indicate <Title and Name> who <details of service> engaged in serious misconduct. <Title and Name><indicate status – e.g.has been stood down, has been charged by police, died x years ago>.

I know that your first concern will be for the wellbeing of the person who has raised the concern, and those most directly affected. Our commitment to their care and privacy means that we will not be disclosing information about them. I know you will also be concerned for <Title and Name> as well as his/her family and relatives. The Director of Professional Standards has ensured the provision of counselling and support services where he can.

It is important that, as a parish family, there is an opportunity to come together to be together, to share as much information as we can and to deepen our care for one another. A meeting has been called for <time><day><date><place> at which <bishop ... or delegate> will be present along with <other key names>. This is a private meeting for members of the parish and their families. It is not appropriate for children to attend this meeting.

In the coming days you may recognize that you have information which would assist the Director of Professional Standards <or the Police> in their work. You can and contact by <contact details>.

Please be assured of my prayers for you, and I encourage you in your praying for one another and for those most directly affected. Whenever these difficult times come I am reminded of Jesus in the boat with his disciples, when the violent storm came. They learnt that they could turn to him and trust him. In the midst of this storm Jesus is present with those in need.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

(to be tailored as necessary for individual circumstances)

1. What is the nature of the allegation?

We have provided as many details of the allegation as we can without hampering ongoing investigation or support. We have an obligation to protect the privacy of the persons involved, as well as the integrity of the investigation. Be assured that our policy is to be as transparent as possible, within the confines of our legal obligations.

2. Why are the allegations not being dealt with by the police?

All allegations of a criminal nature are referred to the police. Sometimes the complainant does not want the matter to be dealt with by the police so, with the agreement of the police, the Diocese can investigate the allegations internally. The allegations may involve conduct that is not criminal but does not meet the standards of conduct expected in the community. The conduct may not satisfy the test of criminal behavior but may meet the community standard of professional misconduct.

3. Are the allegations of a criminal nature?

All allegations of a criminal nature are referred to the police.

4. Who are the victims of abuse?

We have a responsibility to respect the confidentiality of victims and survivors, and to ensure they are not in any way further traumatized by the process of disclosure. We know them to be people who are or were part of the church.

5. Did the alleged misconduct occur in this parish?

You have been briefed because the person responding to the allegations had an association with the parish. The people who have provided information may be associated with another parish or parishes. No further details are able to be provided at this time, to protect the privacy of the persons involved, as well as the integrity of the investigation. Be assured that our policy is to be as transparent as possible, within the confines of our legal obligations.

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6. Who is caring for the respondent and his/her family?

Pastoral care and professional counselling has been offered to the respondent.

7. How long will the matter take?

It is not possible to place a timeframe on this as each matter is different. The Director of Professional Standards will ensure that the matter is dealt with as quickly as possible, for the benefit of all involved. The resolution of this sort of matter can take many months.

8. What happens if the allegations are shown to be true?

Disciplinary action will result, any further actions will be determined by the recommendation/s made to the Bishop by the Professional Standards Board – it would not be appropriate to preempt any recommendation the Board may make.

9. What happens if the allegations are found not to be true?

The parish will be properly informed of the outcome so that the respondent can return to the parish, without concern, as soon as possible.

10. What will happen to the complainant of the allegations are found not to be true?

No action can be taken against complainants. Sadly, allegations of this nature are difficult to prove because of the passage of time and the secrecy which surrounds matters of sexual misconduct. The complainant remains in need of our prayers, care and concern.

11. How long has the Diocese known about this?

Matters dealt with under the Professional Standards Ordinance must be dealt with in accordance with procedures as the outcome must be legally and ethically sound and open to scrutiny – this may mean the process appears lengthy but it is critical that the principles of procedural fairness are met and due process followed.

We need to comply with all legal processes, balancing the need for transparency with respectful care for all those involved, particularly the complainant.

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12. Why has something not been done about the allegations previously?

This can only be answered in relation to the specific context – however it may be appropriate to say that persons who have been harmed may take some years to come forward and can only do so when they are emotionally ready and feel safe to do so.

13. What about repentance?

Genuine repentance does not preclude justice and the obligation to accept responsibility for the harm done, with the acceptance of consequences for misconduct. Experience shows that where a perpetrator recognizes the harm they have done and shows genuine remorse, the victims and survivors have a greater chance of healing.

14. What about grace?

The grace of God enables light to shine and truth to be revealed. The procedures of the courts and the professional standards processes of the church are designed to ensure that there can be proper enquiry into allegations. Those involved in making an assessment of the evidence are conscious of the weighty responsibility bestowed on them to judge with fairness and impartiality.

15. If the allegations are not substantiated, how will restitution or reparation to the respondent be made?

The parish will be properly informed of the outcome so that the respondent can return to the parish, without concern, as soon as possible.

16. What financial assistance is available to the parish to engage locums?

Assistance may be available from the Diocese and contact should be made with the Diocesan Business Manager if necessary.

17. Shouldn't we forgive, isn't this the Christian thing to do?

These allegations are of a very serious nature, and the processes must ensure that justice and fairness. It is the hope that all people will recognize their sins and failing and be moved to genuine repentance but this does not preclude the obligation to accept responsibility for the harm done, with the acceptance of consequences for misconduct.

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We have also learnt that forgiveness cannot and should not be demanded. The harm experienced by some people and their families has often been grievous and has occurred over a long period. Our first concern for victims and survivors should be their healing.

In some circumstances, perpetrators of abuse have been known to ask for forgiveness as a way of ending proceedings against them.

Any process involving forgiveness and reconciliation requires careful planning, counselling and support to ensure the wellbeing of all involved.

18. The statement referred to sexual misconduct, this could be anything from a hug to rape, we don't really know what to think? What are we actually talking about here?

No further details are able to be provided at this time, to protect the privacy of the persons involved, as well as the integrity of the investigation. Be assured that the allegations are of a serious nature. Our policy is to give you as much information as possible, within the confines of our legal obligations.

19. What will happen to this church, who will lead us?

An interim priest will be appointed as soon as possible. In the short term, the Regional Archdeacon will step in to lead the parish.

Or

The parish leadership remains unchanged as these are historic matters not affecting current ministry staff.

The ministry leadership is receiving additional support from the Diocese at this time.

20. This is just a witch hunt, this person can't possibly have done anything like this.

We must remember the legal requirement of procedural fairness – that respondents have the opportunity to answer all allegations put to them. Incidents such as these are often difficult to prove – the legal standard of proof (used for example by the Royal Commission in relation to redress) is that there is a 'reasonable likelihood' the events occurred.

It is important that everyone has an open mind. This is especially hard when we care deeply for the people we know who may be directly involved.

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21. Where do we go for pastoral support?

There are numerous avenues available for pastoral and counselling support. You can speak to your priest, a member of the Parish Recovery Team, and there is a comprehensive range of counselling options available via our website <http://www.newcastleanglicanhealthyfuture.com/>

22. Complainants are only ever after money.

In our experience this is highly unusual. It is very distressing to bring such allegations into the light, and the need for spiritual and emotional healing is the overwhelming need for the complainant. Financial compensation is often the last thing on their mind.

23. What redress is available for victims?

The Diocese is committed to providing a direct personal response to survivors of Church abuse, depending on their wishes. This includes an apology from us; the opportunity to meet with Bishop if desired; the provision of counselling and psychological care; access to apply for a redress.

24. What are the effects of abuse on people?

A person who has been abused has had their power and autonomy taken from them. Their dignity and their sense of self-worth have been eroded. Many have become anxious and fearful. Many find their memories confronting and scary.

As they have battled with their experience they have often struggled with other aspects of their life like school or work. They have not done as well at these as they or others expected.

In order to keep themselves going they have often resorted to prescription and non-prescription medication. They have used alcohol and drugs to desensitize themselves from their pain.

Many who have been abused were deprived of the opportunity to develop their sexual identity in the same ways as others so they can be filled with doubt or uncertainty. This affects them as they try to start or sustain relationships.

Some of those who have been abused already had difficult lives. They may have had violent homes or been homeless. They may have been struggling in their friendships, with mental illness or grief. The experience of abuse has compounded those struggles.

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When abuse has been perpetrated by a religious person, this can often result in a broken relationship with God.

25. Why is the Diocese acting without a criminal finding?

With our commitment to safety and transparency, we are obliged to inform the church and wider community of these allegations in a way that offers the most respect for all involved. In the past, the church has been under great scrutiny for holding such information in secrecy, which has led to further traumatization for complainants.

26. What happens if a person cannot answer the allegations?

The Diocese has a responsibility to ensure that all information in its possession is passed on to Police and the Royal Commission. Our role is to accept each complaint, provide pastoral and professional support for all those involved, and let the legal process follow its course. It should be noted that the standard of proof utilized by the Royal Commission is one of 'reasonable likelihood'.

27. Can we know the details of the allegation and make up our own minds?

It is not our responsibility to make a judgement on these matters; that is the role of the court. When a person comes forward with information about abuse they are often vulnerable. They are entitled to dignity and privacy. It is our practice not to release information which may identify a person who has been abused, or their family.

28. What does 'grooming' mean?

For a person to be abused they must be sufficiently isolated from other people they might trust. An abuser will identify a child, young person or adult over whom they can exercise power. They will groom that person by lowering their defenses with compliments and gifts. They will create opportunities to be alone with them in a car, in a home, in an office or a secluded place. They will create what seems a strong relationship with the person's family or peers so that their suspicions drop or uncertainties diminish.

29. What is the church doing about all of this?

We are creating a culture of awareness in which children, young people and adults understand appropriate behavior and recognise inappropriate behavior. We have a process of educating people and a process of reviewing people's conduct. We cooperate with the police and other

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civic authorities. We believe people who have been harmed when they come forward and offer counselling and redress.

30. Was there paedophile ring?

Within our diocese we have had allegations of abuse and misconduct against a number of people who appear to have known each other very well and socialized with each other. We don't yet know whether some of these people deliberately acted together.

31. Are those who abused cared for as well?

When a person is accused of abuse they are offered a support person and access to professional help. If the findings are sustained against them, the Professional Standards Board makes recommendations about their future ministry, if any. In some limited circumstances a person may be able to return to ministry. This is never possible with child abuse. Where this happens a restoration plan is put in place. When a person is limited from further ministry we seek to negotiate an agreement with them and their local parish for care, support and supervision.

32. Are abusers excommunicated?

No one who has been convicted of abuse has been excommunicated but they may be expected to come to terms with their offending and attend to their relationship with God in congregations where there are no children, and under strict supervision. We affirm that every person is better than the worst thing they have ever done. We affirm the importance of personal repentance which can be demonstrated, in part, by a person recognising that by accepting stricter limits and boundaries they help others deepened their sense of safety and wellbeing.

33. Are the victims/survivors part of this parish?

We understand why people want to know if their parish was directly affected by the behaviour of this respondent/offender. We have shared this information with you as a result of his association with your parish. We fully appreciate the preference to know more about the survivors, often stemming from a desire to be able to help and support them. But we also know, from survivors themselves, that even speculating where, or who, they are is not helpful to their healing (unless, of course, they choose to disclose that themselves), and often leads to further trauma. In keeping with our commitment to respect people's privacy we cannot give greater detail at this time. All we can share is that we fully anticipate survivors will continue to come forward and that there is a real possibility they are, or have been, associated with your parish.

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34. What's the difference between the Criminal Standard and Civil Standard?

The Criminal Standard of proof is 'beyond reasonable doubt'. The Civil Standard (used by the Royal Commission and Professional Standards) is based on the balance of probabilities, which is still bound a legal standard of proof of 'reasonable likelihood'. Witnesses are contacted, and the balance of likely/unlikely is weighed very seriously.

35. What do I do if someone discloses abuse to me?

It is important that the individual feels listened to, and cared for. If possible, encourage the individual to make contact with the relevant authorities, which are outlined in the 'Facing the Past, Shaping a Healthy Future' booklet. Offer support to enable them to take this step. If they are not ready to do so, there are a number of agencies outlined on the website which are able to offer professional counselling support, many of which are government funded.

36. If I suspect someone has been abused, should I ask them?

It is important that victims/survivors are able to disclose abuse, only when they feel ready to do so. Whilst we can certainly talk in general terms about what is happening throughout the Diocese, we should refrain from asking a direct question. People will disclose when, or if, they feel ready, and it is important that they do not feel any pressure to do so.

37. Are the sacramental actions of a priest in doubt when they are accused of misconduct?

Throughout the history of the Church there have been occasions when people have questioned the conduct of the clergy and then wondered whether the baptism, eucharist, absolution or blessing from that priest were valid. These questions were in the air in 1562, when the 39 Articles of Religion were agreed. Those articles still guide the Anglican Church of Australia. Article 26 is devoted to this question. It teaches us that the clergy misconduct does not take away from Christ's institution and promise. The unworthiness of clergy does not hinder the effect of the Sacrament.

38. Question

Answer

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