



## Person of Concern information

**LAST UPDATED 16 JANUARY 2018**

### **Person of Concern information**

The Church strives to be a safe place for all people. In light of the national Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and community expectations, the Synod Standing Committee has adopted a range of Safe Church policies.

One of these is the *Policy and intervention for Persons of Concern*. This gives guidance for managing the risk posed by having a known sex offender in a congregation. This Policy and Intervention are put in place only in consultation with the Synod General Secretary and the Synod's Culture of Safety unit.

### **Who is a Person of Concern (POC)?**

A POC is a person who wishes to establish, maintain or foster a relationship with any Uniting Church congregation, community of faith, agency, event or fresh expressions ministry AND:

- Has pleaded guilty to, been convicted of, or has admitted to a sexual criminal offence
- Has been found (through due diligence checks related to recruitment/screening) to have sexually offended or is known by legal fact on the public record to have sexually offended
- Is currently charged with a sexual offence
- Is a registered sex offender pursuant to the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (VIC) or Sex Offenders Registrations (Amended) Regulation Act 2007(TAS)
- Is a person who has received a Negative Notice (for a Category A [Vic] or Schedule 1 [Tas] offence) upon application for a Working with Children Check/Registration.

Where there are reasonable concerns that a person is behaving or has behaved in a sexually abusive or inappropriate manner the policy must also be applied. People receiving Negative Notices under Category B or C (Vic) or Schedule 2 (Tas) must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the determination made by the General Secretary as to whether a Safety Agreement is required.

### **When is this process used?**

When a congregation or other entity learns that a POC is worshipping and involved, or wishes to worship and become involved, in the life of the congregation or other entity, the

POC Policy **must be initiated**. This is intended to protect children and the whole church community, as well as the POC.

The Synod General Secretary **MUST** be informed immediately a POC has been identified in a congregation or other entity.

No POC should be invited into (or allowed to continue in) any congregation or other Church activity until a Safety Agreement or Interim Safety Arrangement has been implemented. It is the responsibility of the presbytery minister and Synod General Secretary to enter into a Safety Agreement.

### **What to do?**

If you believe you have a POC in your congregation, you are **required** to contact the General Secretary immediately. You may do so by contacting the Synod's Culture of Safety Unit on (03) 9251 9288 or [Culture of Safety Contact <cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au>](mailto:cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au)

| Document Review History |         |  |                        |                             |
|-------------------------|---------|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Version Number          | Date    | Reason   | Developed by           | Approved under SC17.17.4D   |
| POC1v1                  | 07.2016 | Part of Keeping Children Safe process (SC17.17.4D) | Culture of Safety Unit | Associate General Secretary |
| POCv2                   | 01.2018 | Update   | Culture of Safety Unit | Associate General Secretary |
| Next Review             | 06.2018 |  |                        |                             |