



Person of Concern Policy

POL-0009

Statement

The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, is committed to providing safe places where all people are cared for, nurtured and sustained and commits itself to the care, protection and safety of all people, particularly those who are vulnerable. As part of this commitment the Uniting Church aims to be inclusive of all people. However, the need to protect the vulnerable remains paramount.

Scope

This policy applies in the event a Congregation and/or Ministry Agent becomes aware a Person of Concern is identified and interacting in Church activities. This policy does not apply to agencies, regulated business, colleges and schools of the Church.

Principles

1. The Church has a primary responsibility to care for children and those who are vulnerable in the Church; and will seek to ensure they are safe and protected from harm. God's forgiveness and grace is recognised and celebrated, and it is affirmed that all people are loved by God and are called into relationship with God and God's people, through God's church.
2. Mindful of the church's absolute commitment to providing a safe place and the need to manage the assessed risk a Person of Concern presents a Safety Agreement may be entered into with the Person of Concern, the congregation, Presbytery and Synod.
3. A Safety Agreement may only be entered into where the responsible Council believes that through a Safety Agreement the Church is able to reasonably manage the risk the Person of Concern's participation in the Church's activities.
4. The principles of natural justice will be observed.
5. The Person of Concern is entitled to presumption of innocence unless and until there is a proper finding otherwise.
6. Subject to statutory exceptions, a Person of Concern may only participate in the life of the Church according to the terms of a Safety Agreement that has been entered into between the Person of Concern, congregation, presbytery and synod.
7. Consideration must be given to assessing the suitability of the Person of Concern holding any leadership position.

Dictionary

Term	Meaning
Congregation	Means a congregation or faith community within the bounds of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.
Ministry Agent	A ministry agent is any person who is determined within the Uniting Church in Australia Regulations (2.2) definition of specified ministries: ministers (of the word and deacons); pastors; lay pastors; lay preachers; youth workers and community ministers. The ministries of Lay Pastor, Youth worker and community minister were closed for entry by Assembly some years ago. Anyone still operating in one of those now closed ministries is a ministry agent.
Person of Concern	Means a person who is currently facing charges or has been convicted of a criminal offence of a sexual nature or has been released into the community after a period of imprisonment for a criminal offence of a sexual nature and wishes to establish, maintain or foster any relationship with any activity of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod; a person who has been issued a negative Blue Card notice, been refused a positive Blue Card notice or has had their Blue Card suspended and has not subsequently



	received a positive Blue Cared notice or had any negative Blue Card notice revoked. Despite not being included in this definition, an individual may voluntarily request to be treated as a POC for their own safety.
Safety Agreement	An agreement between a POC, Congregation, Presbytery and Synod establishing the terms and conditions for the POC to participate in the life of the Congregation.
Congregation Minister	Means the person inducted or commissioned by the Presbytery to serve in the role recognised as the minister of a congregation, whether the person is a Minister of the Word, Deacon, Pastor or in no specified ministry.
Presbytery	Means the Presbytery that has oversight of the congregation in which the Person of Concern is a member, adherent or member in association
Synod	Means the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod
Church	Means the Uniting Church in Australia
Leadership position	Includes any position or performing any function with the actual or apparent authority of a Church authority or Church body. This includes without limitation any of the following positions – leader of a prayer group, leader of a bible study group, leader of a choir, youth leader or worker, Sunday school teacher, leader of ministry team, worship leader; leader of a fellowship group.
Criminal offence of a sexual nature	Any offence of a sexual nature, including criminal offences involving rape, sexual assault or indecent assault, sexual offences against children, including the criminal offence of child grooming and those related child pornography and the possession and distribution of indecent images. For the purposes of this policy, this term shall not include the offence of unlawful prostitution.

References & Related Documents

Safe Ministry with Children Policy
Privacy Policy

Revisions & Reviews

#	Date	Reason	Author / Reviewer	Approved
1.0	7 September 2017	New policy	D Fender, Associate General Secretary L Drew, Safe Ministry, Legislative and Compliance Officer D Davies, Senior Legal Officer	Synod Standing Committee (#17.197)