

Where to Use This Process?

- A person tells you they have committed a sexual offence (including sexual misconduct).
- In the course of your due diligence checks for recruitment, a person discloses they have committed a past sexual offence.
- If you are aware that a person has had an allegation of a past or current sexual offence, including sexual misconduct.
- A person is deemed to be a risk to the safety of children and / or vulnerable adults because of an adverse risk assessment.

Is this a Christian Response?

A Christian congregation can be one of the few places where sexual abusers, as the recipients of God's forgiveness, can mix with a Christian community. However, that forgiveness does not mean immunity from temptation to re-offend.

The forgiveness and grace of God, mediated with supervision and clear guidelines through a local church, can be a vital part of that journey.

This demonstrates the Australian Baptist Churches' mission and commitment to provide a safe place for children and other vulnerable people to grow and shine, as well as an awareness of, and care for, those offended against.

Note: The principles of this process can also be applied for physical abuse or where a person is assessed as a risk to others.

Who Should We Contact?

Your Professional Standards or Safe Church Liaison person:

Baptist Churches of South Australia & Northern Territory

08 8357 1755

Baptist Union of Victoria

03 9880 6100

Queensland Baptists

07 3354 5600

Baptist Churches Western Australia

08 6313 6300

Baptist Churches of NSW/ACT

02 9868 9200

Tasmanian Baptist Churches

03 6391 2202

An Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern



Individual Accountability and Safety Agreements



Why do we Need a Process?

From time to time, you may face the situation where a person of concern has been worshipping and been involved, or wishes to, in your church. While demonstrating genuine compassion and justice, you must take steps to protect the whole church community, and especially those who have been offended against.

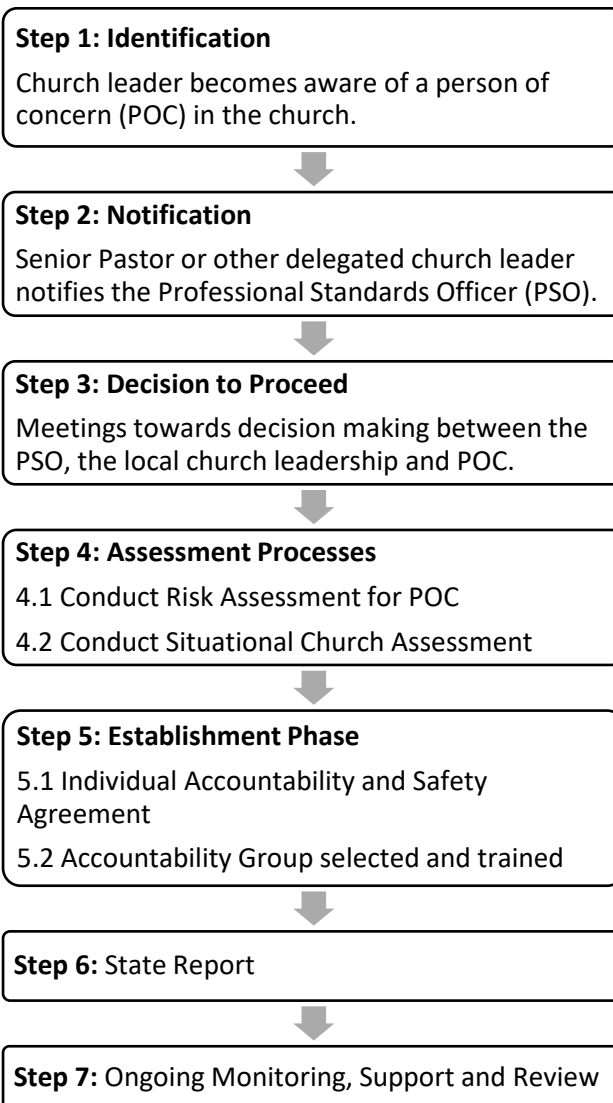
This process aims to ensure that all reasonable measures have been put in place to facilitate safe ministry with four key objectives.

1. Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.
2. Create pathways for a person of concern to participate where possible.
3. Document the risk management processes to assist the church in fulfilling their legal obligations.
4. Express our theological and moral belief in the gospel within a framework of safety.

Ministry to a Person of Concern acknowledges:

- That there is a high level of community feeling and fear about sexual abuse.
- The duty of care we have to provide safe environments for all people in our churches.
- That there is no one type of person of concern, therefore Individual Safety and Accountability Agreements are necessary.
- There are survivors of abuse in congregations, and we seek to care for them effectively.
- The issues of forgiveness and a person of concern's right to privacy.
- Liability issues around a person of concern reoffending.
- The need for denominational support, training, monitoring and oversight in this process.

Flowchart



The Person of Concern Process Would Apply Where a Person:

1. Has pleaded guilty to, been convicted of, or has admitted to a sexual criminal offence.
2. Has been found to have sexually offended, arising through due diligence checks related to recruitment (screening).
3. Is currently charged with a sexual offence (including sexual misconduct).
4. Has been the subject of an allegation of a sexual offence or misconduct which has not been properly investigated in accordance with the relevant State association's procedures.
5. Has been found to have received an adverse risk assessment conducted in accordance with the relevant State association's procedures that arises from sexual misconduct or repeated wandering across other people's sexual boundaries.

What Does an Individual Accountability and Safety Agreement Mean?

An individual accountability and safety agreement is an agreement between a person of concern, the local church and a denominational officer, establishing the terms and conditions for the person of concern to participate in the life of the church.

An individual accountability and safety agreement makes clear what steps the church and person of concern are taking to reduce real and potential risks associated with ministry to the person of concern.