

Guide for Handling Responses to the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care Report (July, 2024)

1. Stay Calm and Compassionate, Non-judgemental and Non-protective of the Church:
 - Greet individuals with kindness and understanding.
 - Maintain a calm, composed, and compassionate demeanour throughout the interaction.
2. Ensure Privacy and Safety:
 - Invite the person to a private, comfortable space where they can speak freely.
 - Ensure they feel safe and secure.
3. Listen Actively and Respectfully:
 - Allow the person to express their feelings and concerns without interrupting.
 - Show empathy and understanding through nodding and verbal acknowledgments like "I'm deeply sorry to hear that" or "That sounds very difficult."
4. Acknowledge the Pain:
 - Validate their feelings and experiences by acknowledging their pain and anger.
 - Use phrases like "Thank you for sharing this with me" or "I appreciate your bravery in coming forward."
5. Apologise Sincerely:
 - Offer a sincere and heartfelt apology for the harm they have experienced.
 - Use phrases like "I'm truly sorry for what you've been through" or "I deeply regret that this happened to you."
6. Provide Immediate Support:
 - Ask if they would like to have someone else present for support, such as a friend, family member, or counsellor.
 - Offer resources for immediate support, such as contact information for counselling services or support groups (see '[Abuse in Care Report Support](#)' sheet).
7. Explain the Church's Position:
 - If appropriate, explain that the Church is taking the findings of the Royal Commission seriously and is committed to addressing past abuses and preventing future ones.
 - Share any actions the Church is taking in response to the report, such as implementing new safeguarding measures or offering support to survivors.
8. Gather Information Respectfully:
 - If they are comfortable, ask for details about their specific concerns or experiences to understand the situation better.

- Take notes with their permission, including their name, contact information, and specifics about their concerns.

9. Explain the Next Steps:

- Clearly explain the procedures and actions that will be taken to address their complaint or concerns.
- Assure them that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care and confidentiality.

10. Follow Church Protocols:

- We are aware that church protocols have protected perpetrators of abuse and the institution while maligning survivors of abuse. Therefore, we can expect distrust.
- We are relying on the support of survivors to have good protocols.
- Follow the church's specific procedures for handling complaints and concerns related to abuse (See '[Responding to Disclosed Abuse](#)' sheet)
- Inform the appropriate authorities within the church, such as vicar, diocese, or safeguarding officer.

11. Provide a Resolution Timeline and Give Regular Updates:

- If possible, give an estimated timeline for when they can expect a follow-up or resolution.
- Ensure that you follow up with regular updates, even if progress/ the schedule is running behind.

12. Thank the Person:

- Thank the person for their courage and for bringing their concerns to your attention.
- Use phrases like "Thank you for trusting us with this" or "We are committed to addressing these concerns."

13. Document the Complaint or Concern:

- Ensure that all details of the complaint or concern and the steps taken are documented accurately.
- Submit the documentation to the appropriate authorities within the church.

14. Follow Up:

- Follow up with the person after the issue has been addressed to ensure they are supported and informed about any actions taken.
- Offer ongoing support and resources as needed.

15. Stay Positive and Supportive:

- Keep a positive attitude focused on healing and resolution.
- Emphasise that there are people within the church committed to justice, healing, and preventing future abuse and who care.

Remember, handling responses to the Royal Commission's report with sensitivity and care is crucial for the healing process of individuals and for maintaining the integrity and trust within the parish community.

Abuse in Care Report - Support

Listed below are many organisations and groups that offer support to those effected by abuse. If you are worried about your or someone else's mental health, the best place to get help is from your GP or local mental health provider. *However, if you or someone else is in danger, or a person is endangering others, call the **police** immediately on **111**.*

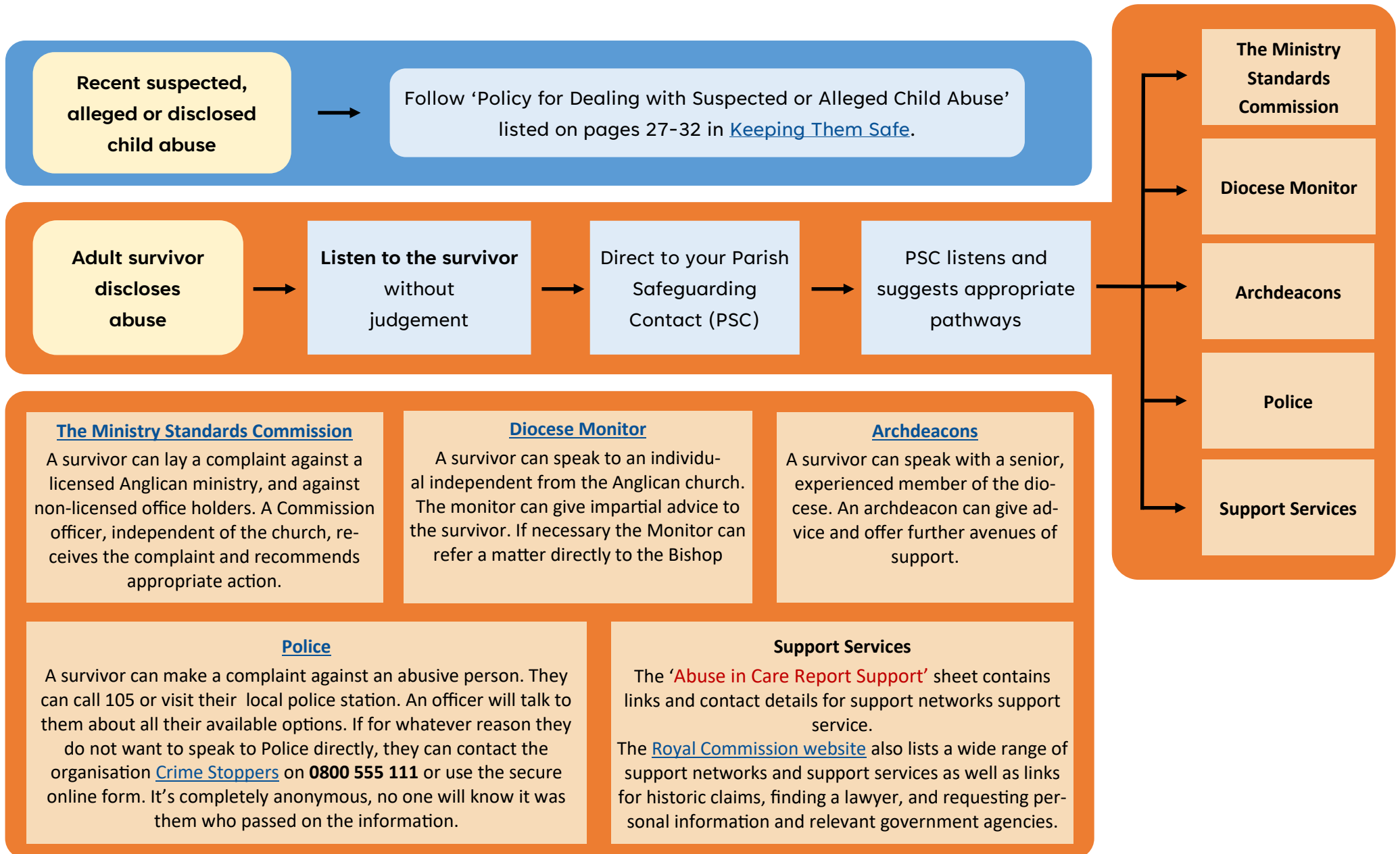
- [Alcohol and Drug Helpline](#) 0800 787 797 or online chat for people dealing with an alcohol or other drug problem; 10am-10pm
- [Anxiety phone line](#) 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)
- [AVIVA](#) 0800 28482 669 Christchurch based support for those wanting to live free from violence; 24/7.
- [Depression Helpline](#) 0800 111 757 or free text 4202 (to talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions)
- [Family Services 211 Helpline](#) 0800 211 211 for help finding (and direct transfer to) community based health and social support services in your area.
- [Family Drug Support Aotearoa New Zealand](#) 0800 377 877 Support for family and friends impacted by alcohol or other drug use by family or friends including counselling support.
- [HELP](#) 0800 623 1700 preventing sexual abuse and supporting survivors; 24/7.
- [Lifeline](#) 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)
- [Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Aotearoa New Zealand](#) Support services for male survivors of sexual abuse. Refer to website for the support organisation nearest to you.
- [Need to talk?](#) Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.
- [OUTline NZ](#) 0800 688 5463 (OUTLINE) provides confidential telephone support for sexuality or gender identity issues; 9am-9pm weekdays, and 6pm-8pm weekends).
- [Rape Crisis](#) 0800 883 300 (for support after rape or sexual assault)
- [Safe to talk](#) (Available 24/7) 0800 044 334, free txt 4334, email support@safetotalk.nz, live webchat on www.safetotalk.nz.

Free and confidential information and support from trained counsellors for people affected by sexual harm in any way.

- [Samaritans](#) 0800 726 666.
Skylight, 0800 299 100 for trauma, loss and grief; 9am–5pm weekdays
- [Shine](#) 0508 744 633, free to call from any phone in NZ, and taking calls 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Call for confidential support, information, advice and referrals.
- [Skylight](#), 0800 299 100 for trauma, loss and grief; 9am–5pm weekdays.
- [SNAP - Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests](#) Providing peer support for women and men wounded by religious and institutional authorities.
- [START](#) Christchurch based for early intervention, counselling and support for children, youth and adults and their families who have experienced sexual violence or other trauma.
- [Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO).
- [Supporting Families in Mental Illness](#) For families and whānau supporting a loved one who has a mental illness. Auckland 0800 732 825.
- [Victim Support](#) This free service provides emotional and practical support, information, financial assistance, referral to other support services and advocacy for the rights of victims.
- [Wellington HELP](#) 0800 FOR HELP supports anyone and everyone who has been impacted by sexual violence. Call anytime.
- [Youthline](#) 0800 376 633, free text 234 or email talk@youthline.co.nz or online chat.

Other support services are listed on the [Abuse in Care: The Royal Commission of Inquiry website](#). They include links for support with legal representation, historic claims of abuse, requesting personal information, and various government agencies.

Responding to Disclosed Abuse



At a Glance Guide to Handle Responses to the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Abuse in Care Report at a Ministry Unit (July 2024)

Stay Calm and Compassionate, Non-judgemental and Non-protective of the Church

Ensure Privacy and Safety

Listen Actively and Respectfully without interrupting

Acknowledge the Pain and Anger

Apologise Sincerely, e.g.: “I am sorry to hear about this situation.”

Provide Immediate Support (Support Person and Resources)

Offer ‘**Abuse in Care Report Support Contacts**’ sheet

If Appropriate, Explain the Church’s Position

Gather Information Respectfully

Explain the Next Steps

Follow Church Protocols

Provide a Reasonable Resolution Timeline and Give Updates

Thank the Person

Document the Complaint or Concern

Follow Up

Stay Positive and Supportive

Remember, your safety is the top priority.

Do not hesitate to take immediate action to protect yourself if you feel threatened.

Things for a Ministry Unit to Consider:

1) How would one respond to a survivor of abuse triggered by the Report who had never reported the abuse they had experienced?

- a) Please refer to 'Guide for Handling Responses to the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care Report at a Ministry Unit'.
- b) Most survivors are not angry people looking for physical confrontations.
- c) Ken Clearwater has offered to be an independent point of contact for survivors of abuse. He is the head of National Advocate at Male Survivors Aotearoa. Email: mssat@survivor.org.nz . For more information, visit: Ken Clearwater [TEDx Talk](#).

2) How would one respond to the negative and distressing comments about the church and Christians in general?

- a) Acceptance that this is part of our shared history as Anglicans and global church.
- b) The Royal Commission of Inquiry reveals abuse across all sectors of society including the State.
- c) Our stance is: Abuse was not okay, abuse is not okay, abuse will never be okay.
- d) Ministry Standards Commission developed to better support those disclosing an abuse.
- e) Spread Safeguarding content across multiple weeks during notices at a service:
 - i) Please do not preach on the topic of abuse as it is a trigger/traumatic subject to those affected by it. See 5(b) for discussing topics related to the Royal Commission Report.
 - ii) Introduce Parish Safeguarding Contacts (PSC) and clergy as points of contact.
 - iii) Point out A Safe Church for Everyone posters displayed.
 - iv) Clergy are available to listen and talk to anyone who wants to approach.

3) How staff, Parish Safeguarding Contacts, and clergy manage their own emotional and mental responses to the Report?

- a) Special staff meetings to discuss Royal Commission Report how we are feeling and how we can support each other:
 - i) Larger Ministry Units can do so inhouse.
 - ii) Smaller Ministry Units combine with other Ministry Units e.g. rural parishes.

b) An intentional topic during supervision or spiritual direction.

4) How are clergy and staff encouraged to process the Report as a group and support each other as they manage their own emotions while being the face of the church in the community?

- a) Make time to discuss at the next staff meeting
- b) To discuss at the next archdeaconry meeting
- c) To show integrity
- d) Be proactive in best practice towards safeguarding of all.

5) How do we support the emotional and mental stress (and disgust) of our congregations once they know what is in the Report?

- a) Clergy available to listen and talk to anyone who wants to approach them regarding any topic related to the Report. This may occur in any informal setting.
- b) Create an opportunity to discuss in a well-planned small-scale group (not a home group or a Bible study group) on topics of concern raised by the Royal Commission Report:
 - i) Give plenty of advance notice
 - ii) Hold small scale meetings (4-10 people)
 - iii) Possibly held offsite of a Ministry Unit
 - iv) Any opportunities to organise would be expected to include participation of Clergy
 - v) Begin any meeting with a trigger notice (which acknowledges the topics may be triggering to individuals).
 - vi) Mention specific support is available for specific situations:
 - (1) Hand out the list of Abuse in Care Report Support Contacts
 - (2) Offer telehealth contacts (online audio/video calls e.g. Zoom) for parishioners impacted by any form of abuse. This will allow them to obtain confidential, accessible and non-judgemental support.
- c) Attend the 'Liturgy of Lament and Tears'.

6) How will the church listen to what is needed going forward for staff and clergy to be safe in the future.

- a) Feedback from Ministry Units via archdeacons to the bishop is welcome
- b) Diocesan media officer to monitor letters to the newspaper and any comments made on our diocesan website and social media.

Prayers for Use in Sunday Intercessions

Almighty God and Everlasting God,

You are the author of all mercies, and the God of all comfort.

We pray this week for those who have been abused within our churches and faith-based organisations across our nation.

Have compassion upon all who have suffered the injustice, humiliation and pain of abuse – sexual, physical, emotional, spiritual and all other forms of sinful conduct.

In the midst of their distress, give them courage to speak. May your perfect love drive out fear and anxiety. In your mercy, create opportunities for these men, women and children to share their pain, reveal their struggles and expose the hurtful actions of others.

Give grace, sensitivity and wisdom to all who will minister to the victims and survivors of abuse. Strengthen those who have been abused and their careers with the certainty of your love for them. In all things, we ask that your name be glorified and that we – your people – do justice, love kindness and walk humbly before you.

We humbly plead these things in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the King of compassion,
Amen.

<http://thebriefing.com.au/2012/11/prayers-for-those-suffering-abuse/>

A Prayer for Survivors and Those who Abuse

God our redeemer and sustainer, we pray for the survivors of violence, abuse and neglect. Be with them in confusion and pain. Give your power to the powerless, your fullness to the empty of spirit.

Heal their wounds, free them from fear and restore them to true health. Strengthen them to face the future with faith in you. We ask this through Jesus your Son, who was himself a survivor of abuse and yet in his resurrection, triumphed over the oppression.

Likewise, God of justice, judge of all the earth, we bring before you those who abuse and mistreat others. Turn the hearts of the exploiters from the way of evil. Open their eyes to the truth of their conduct and fill them with hatred for the damage they do. And so by your Holy Spirit bring them to true repentance and amendment of their lives.

And now, may your Spirit draw us together, both in our church, and in the community. May we face our mistakes with complete honesty. But preserve us from unhelpful speculation and gossip. Help us reach out, care for the hurting, and support each other. Strengthen us with the gospel of your grace, for Jesus' Christ's sake. **Amen.**

<http://thebriefing.com.au/2012/11/prayers-for-those-suffering-abuse/>

PRAYER OF LAMENT, CONFESSION AND HOPE

This liturgy is offered for churches to use as a response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Our desire is to hold the stories of survivors with compassion and care and pray that we, individually and as a church, will not turn away from all that God calls us to do in response.

Please do what is needed to make yourself safe during this time of prayer, including stepping away from the space if necessary.

We keep silence as we enter and sit.

A candle is lit as a symbol of God's presence.

God of the chaos before the light,
we bring to you our horror
at all the harm
of which humanity is capable.

We hold before you all those
whose trust has been broken
whose innocence has been robbed
whose bodies, minds and souls have been damaged
whose voices have been silenced.

We cry out for justice and plead for healing for the lives that carry these scars
God, hear our cry

We grieve for those whose lives have been shattered by others' actions
God, hear our cry

We grieve that our communities have not been safe places for all
God, hear our cry

As a church we have failed
to listen and to respond:
turning away from claims of abuse
refusing to admit culpability
ignoring or condoning abusive behaviour.

In silence we call to mind our sins.

Silence

As a church, we confess our sins:

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned
in what we have thought and said,
in the wrong we have done
and in the good we have not done.
We have sinned in ignorance:
we have sinned in weakness:
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry.
We repent and turn to you.**

We come in our brokenness and in need of your redemption, assured of the promise that you offer forgiveness to those who truly repent. Forgive us, renew us and reshape us as your people.

Give us courage to change:
to hear what needs to be said
to honour the stories entrusted to us
to be honest with and about ourselves
to be ready to work for truth, justice and reconciliation

O God, who is light, break through into our darkness.

You speak into the chaos and pain
Illuminate your world and rekindle our hope.

You see our shame and love us still
Illuminate your world and rekindle our hope.

You care for us and love us into being
Illuminate your world and rekindle our hope.

God, who gathers up
the broken pieces of humanity
and holds them with love,
**breathe your healing and hope
into our dark spaces.**

We commit ourselves to living in the light
to creating safe places
to listening and learning
to taking courageous action
to bringing healing and reconciliation.

Gracious God, we commit ourselves to You.
Strengthen and guide us by your Holy Spirit
towards more justice, more truth, more love
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

Go now to love and serve the Lord. Go in peace.
Amen. We go in the name of Christ.

Guidelines for use:

These prayers can be used for both corporate and private prayer.

You may wish to add additional elements of silence, music or response.

Please be mindful of how we talk and pray about abuse in corporate settings. Please only use this liturgy in the context of an opt-in space, where people have been advised in advance that the topic of abuse will be covered.

A suggestion for those using this prayer, is to pray it for themselves first, in preparation.

Acknowledgments:

This liturgy was developed through a collaborative process. We especially wish to thank and acknowledge Rev Jean Malcolm, Roger Wigglesworth and Hera Clarke-Dancer for their contributions.