CURRICULUM FOR TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

Introduction

This document has been developed by the Professional Standards Commission as a curriculum for training of Professional Standards Committees and Professional Standards Boards or their equivalent.

Purpose of the curriculum

The purpose of the curriculum for training Professional Standards Committees and Boards is to ensure that Committees and Boards undertake their functions in a consistent, fair and informed manner.

Recommendations for delivery of the training

This curriculum addresses the specific content of training of Committees and Boards. It is good practice for this training to occur in a face-to-face workshop setting.

Each diocese should ensure that:

- Committees and Boards undertake training which gives effect to this curriculum;
- the content of its training takes into account the applicable diocesan legislation;
- workshop presenters are appropriately qualified and experienced.

Curriculum

1. Understanding sexual abuse (refer to Guidelines for Risk Assessment)
   a. What is sexual abuse?
      i. Sexual assault
      ii. Sexual exploitation
      iii. Sexual harassment
   b. Who are sexual abusers?
      i. From every social group
      ii. Paedophilia
   c. What are the characteristics of sexual abusers?
      i. Wanting to offend
      ii. Giving themselves permission
      iii. Creating the opportunity to offend (eg grooming)
      iv. Overcoming the victim’s resistance
   d. What is the impact of sexual abuse? (refer to Faithfulness in Service 6.15)
      i. How abuse affects the person and their relationships
ii. How abuse affects secondary victims

iii. How abuse affects ministry

Recommended resources as found on the General Synod website, www.anglican.org.au search Professional Standards

i. Faithfulness In Service

ii. Guidelines for Risk Assessment relating to sexual abuse
   (includes Appendix 4, bibliography of useful resources)

2. Understanding the Professional Standards process

All participants in the process should be well informed about the process and their role in it – Committee members, Board members, Director of Professional Standards and the Bishop

a. Function of Committee
   i. To receive complaints & information and where appropriate arrange for an investigation or other action
   ii. Provides assistance to a board

b. Role of a Committee member
   i. To ensure receipt of complaints and investigations comply with the diocesan legislation/ordinance
   ii. To determine following the investigation whether a matter should be referred to the Board

c. Function of Director of Professional Standards
   i. The executive officer for the committee

d. Function of the Board
   i. To determine fitness for office and when ministry should be subject to conditions

e. Role of a Board member
   i. To make findings and recommendations regarding fitness for office
   ii. President will inform the non-legal members about the procedures
   iii. President will determine any questions of law or procedure

f. Role of support person
   i. To help the complainant/respondent to understand the process and support them through it

g. Role of Bishop
   i. Decides how to act on the recommendation of the Board

h. Diocesan legislation/ordinance
   i. Professional Standards Ordinance and protocols
   ii. Faithfulness In Service
   iii. Other relevant documents containing standards of the Church eg Ordinal
i. Managing the expectations of complainants and respondents
   i. Ensure complainants, respondents, support persons and legal representatives are informed as to the processes and procedures as they impact on them
   ii. The complainant is a witness and does not determine the process. Because at a Board hearing the focus is on the respondent’s fitness for office, complainants may think their complaint is minimised
   iii. The focus for the respondent is on their fitness for office, not their “innocence or guilt”
   iv. A support person is not an advocate

3. Conflict of Interest
   a. General principles
      i. Occurs when the member of Committee/Board has connections with a person that inhibit them from properly performing their function or role
      ii. May also occur when a person is serving in multiple roles which give rise to conflicting requirements
      iii. Members of Committees and Boards will be screened including a National Register check
   b. Understanding boundaries – relationships with complainant, respondent and other interested persons
      i. Explicit instructions will be given to all participants regarding contact between parties
      ii. Guidelines to maintain appropriate boundaries
         - Board and Committee members should not permit informal contact from the complainant or respondent
         - Bishop will delegate pastoral responsibilities for the complainant and respondent.
         - Support person also needs to maintain appropriate boundaries

   It is suggested that scenarios be used to illustrate appropriate boundaries

4. Investigations
   a. The process for the Committee to give instructions for the investigation and the content required (clarity and scope)
   b. The content of the investigation report
   c. The rules of the Church that are applicable to an assessment of fitness for office
   d. The use of the investigation report in determining whether to make a reference to a Board

5. Procedure of a hearing
   a. Steps in the hearing process
   b. Procedural fairness
i. No bias
   ii. Notifying respondent of allegations material that may impact upon assessment of fitness for office and giving opportunity to adduce evidence

c. Sensitivity to witnesses (adults and children)

d. Principles for determining whether a hearing or any part of a hearing is closed or open

e. Receiving relevant material (evidence)

   f. Examination of witnesses

6. Making decisions & recommendations

   a. Weighing evidence

   b. Testing evidence (burden of proof)

   c. Relevance of codes of conduct and other standards

   d. Fitness for office/continuation in ministry including any conditions

   e. Personal accountability and the place of forgiveness (repentance does not necessarily mean that a person is fit for office)

   f. Assessment of risk (including likelihood of reoccurrence of behaviour) and appropriate recommendations

   g. Writing decisions and recommendations (necessity for giving sufficient reasons to explain decisions and recommendations)

7. Self-care

   a. Recognition of impact of hearing/viewing disturbing material on well-being of people involved in the process

   b. System of support such as de-briefing or supervision will be provided as a matter of course

8. Communications

   a. Public communications

      i. Who will make public communications on the matter?

      ii. When will public communications be made?

      iii. What content will be included in public communications?

      iv. Who will be advised of the decision and recommendations?

   b. Internal communications

      i. Method, confidentiality and security of communications between Committee/Board members (including use of electronic devices)

   c. Storage of communications

      i. How documents generated by the Committee/Board will be managed and stored