

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OFFICE

CHARTER OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Professional Standards Office exists to promote ethical behavioural standards through providing a high level of support and direction for officers, employees, ministry workers, volunteers, members and adherents in the prevention, investigation and management of abuse and serious misconduct whether past or present.

The Professional Standards Office responsibilities arise from The Salvation Army's God given commitment to protect the vulnerable by promoting a safe physical and emotional environment for all persons who come within its sphere of influence.

Professional Standards Office Responsibility:

The Professional Standards Office meets its responsibility by;

- Actively developing strategies to promote ethical behaviours and standards for the safety of all persons who are associated with The Salvation Army.
- Listening and responding to complaints, information or allegations in respect to matters of abuse or serious misconduct.
- Receiving positive and/or negative feedback in respect to the handling of inquiries.
- Providing professional, transparent and impartial investigations relating to relevant matters of abuse or serious misconduct, whether past or present.
- Partnering with and resourcing Divisional Commanders to address these issues
- Ensuring a pastorally based response with a focus on healing and restoration.

Proactive Responsibilities:

Learning from past mistakes is critical. To that end the Professional Standards Office seeks to maximise the use of proactive strategies in dealing with abuse and serious misconduct by;

- Establishing and strengthening effective partnerships with other churches.
- Complying with government legislation.
- Providing relevant training and education.
- Fostering and developing safe and ethically healthy behaviour within The Salvation Army.
- Contributing to wider policy and procedural issues.
- Engaging with internal departments and external agencies to ensure effective information exchange.

Reactive Responsibilities:

The Professional Standards Office will, on occasions receive information which may necessitate further inquiry and/or investigation.

The Professional Standards Office responses may include further inquiry, case management, and/or full or partial investigation of recent or historical matters deemed to involve conduct of a serious or abusive nature.

The Professional Standards Office is oversighted by the Secretary for Personnel and may partner with the Organisational Risk Manager on specific matters of concern.

Restorative Responsibilities:

God created all persons in His image and to live in relationship with Him and in harmony with each other (Genesis 1:27).

Because abuse and misconduct can disconnect people from God and from each other, the Professional Standards Office works within an ecclesiastical framework with a focus on healing and restoration. (Luke 15 21-24)

To this end the Professional Standards Office will;

- Be consistently aware of the need for prayer and our reliance on God.
- Provide a framework for the recovery and healing of congregations and workplaces.
- Submit reports to, and participate in the Personal Injuries Complaints Committee and the Professional Standards Committee.
- Ensure that counselling and support are available when needed.
- Assist in the management of known offenders with a view to minimising their social exclusion.

Complaint Handling Responsibilities:

All persons are entitled to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Privacy and confidentiality.
- Due process.
- Receive efficient, prompt and timely service.

The Professional Standards Office will;

- Respect every person's right to make a disclosure or complaint.
- Deal impartially with disclosure and complaints.
- Not tolerate retaliation against any person who makes a report in good faith (protected disclosure).
- Listen carefully to all complaints and/or concerns, regardless of circumstances.
- Be sensitive to the beliefs and concerns of persons making a complaint or disclosure.
- Ensure a focus on pastoral concerns and support for all parties involved.
- Ensure individuals are aware of their rights.
- Make appropriate external referrals and mandatory reports as required.
- Provide support and advice in matters that are determined to be of a criminal nature.
- Formally assess all disclosures or complaints to determine the most effective way to reach satisfactory outcomes for all stakeholders.
- Deal with matters in a timely manner and provide appropriate feedback during the process.

- Deliver services in accordance with The Salvation Army's values.

Quality Control

At any stage in the process of the Professional Standards Office handling of a matter, The Salvation Army invites comments or concerns about the processes or integrity of any inquiry or investigation.

This can be done by contacting the relevant Investigator/Case Manager, or the Territorial Director of Professional Standards Office.

Appendices

- A. Safe Salvos Statement
- B. Is Something Wrong? Booklet
- C. Organisational Chart
- D. Initial Response Framework
- E. Harassment in the Workplace Policy

It should be noted that The Salvation Army's *Harassment in the Workplace Policy* is distinctly different to that of the procedures relating to those of serious misconduct or abuse. The *Harassment in the Workplace Policy* is meant to only cover discriminatory attacks or behaviour in the workplace against employees (officers, paid or unpaid staff and clients), however matters handled or managed by the Professional Standards Office cover situations which are deemed to be serious or extreme, and if taken outside this policy could result in criminal charges.

If there is doubt as to which policy applies to the situation, clarification should be sought from the Professional Standards Office.

SAFE SALVOS POLICY

Our mandate comes directly from God. God identified classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (Exodus 22:21-22; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Jeremiah 22:2-4; James 1:27). The protection of vulnerable people is our responsibility.

This policy takes into consideration all vulnerable people who come to The Salvation Army, whether they be children; young people; the elderly; those with disabilities or the emotionally and/or spiritually vulnerable (i.e. those under the authority of church leaders). We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times.

We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety. Our policy has been developed to help us live out our biblical mandate and our responsibilities under NSW, QLD and ACT legislation.

Our policy has the following goals:

- To minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within The Salvation Army.
- To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.
- To ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- To ensure that all people are respected and valued, irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, socio-economic background or ability.

SAFE LEADERS

We commit to:

a) Safe recruitment of leaders

We will screen all prospective workers (paid and unpaid) before they are appointed.

For those working with children we will recruit them using the NSW or QLD Working With Children Check or equivalent for ACT workers.

b) Adequate training of leaders

We require that all leaders attend a Safe Salvos (or Safe Church Training Agreement endorsed) workshop within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

c) Continued supervision of leaders

We commit to the ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders. All leaders will agree to follow our Safe Salvos' Code of Conduct.

d) Responding to allegations of risk of significant harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct

All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to their state or territory legislation, by using the procedure in the Safe Salvos manual.

Where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them we will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate help for a just and fair resolution.

SAFE PROGRAMS

We commit to:

a) Safe emotional environments in our programs

We will offer participants, including children, an opportunity to provide input in the programs and the activities in which they participate by; fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation in all areas of the life of the corps or centre, as far as is sensible and practical.

We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

b) Safe physical environments

All leaders will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates in the Safe Salvos manual for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in The Salvation Army.

A Safe Salvos team or person will be appointed in each corps or centre to ensure that the following areas are incorporated into establishing and maintaining a safe physical environment; fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety practices, risk assessment for activities, transport, critical incident and emergency recommendations.