



Abuse Policy

New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga & Samoa Territory

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Issued To:	1.0 All Officers and Staff
Subject:	ABUSE COMPLAINTS RESPONSE POLICY

1 POLICY

- 1.1. The Salvation Army has a zero tolerance policy to abuse. Where an allegation of abuse is made The Salvation Army will respond.

2 CONTEXT

- 2.1. The Abuse Complaints Response Policy details how The Salvation Army will respond to allegations of abuse against individuals. This will be reflective of the beliefs and values The Salvation Army seeks to embody as a Christian organisation. This policy also reflects deep sorrow and sincere regret for the damaging impact of abuse on people's lives.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy is for all Salvation Army personnel (officers, employees, volunteers, cadets and other trainees). It is also available to the general public to ensure transparency and accountability.
- 3.2. This policy covers abuse committed by any Salvation Army personnel – living or deceased – and/or experienced by persons in connection with The Salvation Army in any setting at any time. This extends to historical abuse committed in Salvation Army-run institutions or programmes that have since closed.

4 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1. The Salvation Army has 'safeguarding systems' in place to prevent abuse. These are policies and procedures intended to stop abuse from occurring, to raise awareness of what constitutes abuse and how to report suspected abuse, and that set out how Salvation Army personnel must respond when people of any age or situation may be at risk of abuse or have experienced abuse.
 - 4.1.1. Safeguarding systems minimise the risk of abuse, but given the predatory nature of abuse, such systems can never eliminate this risk entirely.

- 4.1.2. The Salvation Army undertakes ongoing review and improvement of its safeguarding systems.
- 4.2. The Salvation Army recognises the courage it takes for survivors of abuse to make a complaint to the organisation where they were harmed, and so will respond in a way that does not blame or disbelieve survivors, minimise or excuse what they have experienced, or otherwise re-traumatise them.
- 4.3. The Salvation Army recognises the need for survivors to receive meaningful acknowledgement of the abuse they experienced, including its impacts on their lives and the lives of others.
- 4.4. The intent of this policy is therefore to give confidence to abuse survivors that:
 - 4.4.1. They can report abuse to The Salvation Army and be believed.
 - 4.4.2. The Salvation Army seeks to respond in a way that does not re-traumatise them, and that assists towards healing and peace.
 - 4.4.3. The Salvation Army recognises it is accountable for abuse caused in its care and/or by its personnel, and therefore endeavours to provide redress for such abuse.
 - 4.4.4. The Salvation Army will continue to review and improve its safeguarding systems against abuse.

5 KEY ASPECTS OF THIS POLICY

- 5.1. Whenever The Salvation Army receives allegations of abuse connected to any Salvation Army location and/or by any Salvation Army personnel, it will acknowledge these as soon as practicable but within five working days.
- 5.2. The Salvation Army's Personnel Referral Coordinator will be notified of all complaints of abuse to provide practical assistance and ongoing support for complainants.
- 5.3. The Salvation Army will avoid re-traumatising abuse survivors. Its representatives will listen without judgement and assume that people are telling the truth.
- 5.4. Abuse can lead to a disconnect from cultural/racial identity. This may create barriers for people reporting abuse and engaging with response and redress processes. The Salvation Army will therefore endeavour to respond appropriately to people's needs related to their cultural/racial identity (including values, beliefs and practices).
- 5.5. The Salvation Army will also be aware and sensitive to other aspects of survivor identity and lived experience, including religion, sexual orientation, disability, and mental and physical health.
- 5.6. The Salvation Army will encourage people to lodge a formal complaint for abuse with the Police and/or the Human Rights Commission. The Salvation Army will fully cooperate with any investigation.
- 5.7. The Salvation Army will take full responsibility for any of its actions and/or inactions that enabled abuse to occur. Its representatives will not minimise or

excuse complaints of abuse.

- 5.8. The Salvation Army will provide redress that is meaningful and that makes a difference for survivors moving forward. This is an important measure of justice and accountability for abuse caused in Salvation Army care and/or by Salvation Army personnel.
- 5.9. Formal disciplinary processes of offenders connected to The Salvation Army will occur. Documented processes exist for officers (ordained ministers), and for employees/volunteers.
- 5.10. The Salvation Army will seek to learn from every instance of abuse, reviewing and improving its safeguarding systems to prevent future harm.

6 UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

- 6.1. The abuse of any person, in any circumstance, is always wrong and indefensible. Any form of abuse has lifelong impacts.
- 6.2. Abuse is the harming (physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual), ill-treatment or neglect of any person – in isolation or in combination. Disregarding people's human rights also constitutes abuse.
- 6.3. Physical abuse is a non-accidental act that results in physical harm.
- 6.4. Emotional abuse is a person acting in a way that seeks to isolate, control, demean or scare someone. A variety of behaviours can be described as emotional abuse, including intimidation and threats, criticism, undermining, emotional manipulation, and seeking to exert control over someone's actions and activities.
- 6.5. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities. It also includes grooming, sexual harassment (including propositions of an unwanted sexual nature, and degrading or humiliating remarks related to a person's gender or sexuality, including their orientation).
 - 6.5.1. Sexual abuse includes the following:
 - sexual harassment
 - inappropriate touching (hugging, cuddling, etc.)
 - viewing pornographic material
 - sharing or requesting images, including of nudity or genitalia
 - masturbation
 - oral sex
 - penetration (oral, vaginal or anal)
 - rape
 - incest.
 - 6.5.2. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child is always wrong and unacceptable.
- 6.6. Spiritual abuse can occur in a church-based setting and/or be perpetrated by professing Christians. This causes significant spiritual harm and is a betrayal of God's will and direction. Abuse of any kind can distort people's views of

themselves, but abuse experienced within a church context can also distort people's views of God. Survivors may struggle to trust the church and its representatives. People may also experience a consequent loss of faith.

- 6.6.1. The Salvation Army's Positional Statement on Spiritual Abuse states: 'Spiritual authority is given for the care of God's people and its misuse is a betrayal of the Spirit of Christ, contrary to biblical principles of servant leadership, and ultimately destructive both of Christian community and of individual Christians.' In defining 'spiritual abuse', The Salvation Army states: 'In human relationships there are areas of legitimate authority. When power or control is exercised beyond the appropriate boundaries of such authority, whether in the context of a religious organisation or in individual relationships where spiritual authority is claimed, this constitutes spiritual abuse. This can happen when spiritual authority is misused to manipulate peoples' emotional responses (such as fear, guilt or shame) or loyalty, for the benefit of the church, institution or of another individual. Spiritual abuse may also include or underlie other forms of abuse such as sexual, physical, verbal, psychological or emotional abuse when these take place within the context of a religious organisation.' (Source: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/positional-statements/spiritual-abuse>)
- 6.6.2. People may fear they will not be believed when disclosing abuse that occurred in a church setting, especially when abuse was committed by clergy, who are seen as God's representatives and therefore held in high regard.
- 6.7. Neglect is failure to attend to people's basic needs.
- 6.8. Abuse carried out by Salvationists (Officers, Soldiers and Adherents, all of whom profess to follow Jesus) represents hypocrisy and a failure of Christian integrity. Such abuse also constitutes misconduct. It is therefore subject to disciplinary processes.
- 6.9. Consent is never an acceptable defence when there is a dynamic of unequal power relations.

7 COMPLAINTS RESPONSE STEPS

7.1. Disclosure of Abuse

- 7.1.1. The Salvation Army will provide a range of ways for people to disclose abuse, with access to information on the response process that follows such disclosure. This information will be published on The Salvation Army's website, intranet, and made available in printed form at all Salvation Army corps/centres, with translations into the languages of the main people groups in New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.
- 7.1.2. Salvation Army personnel will be advised how to receive disclosures of abuse in a way that does not re-traumatise survivors.
- 7.1.3. All abuse complaints will be passed to The Salvation Army's Personnel Referral Coordinator at Territorial Headquarters. This role provides a centralised contact and support point for survivors throughout their engagement with The Salvation Army.

7.2. Response and Ongoing Engagement

- 7.2.1. The Salvation Army will acknowledge all disclosures of abuse as soon as practicable but within five working days.
- 7.2.2. The Salvation Army will respond to survivors in a way that does not blame or re-traumatise them. This includes adhering to the five principles of trauma-informed care:
 1. **Safety:** Providing an environment of safety and wellbeing support in all interactions to ensure the physical and emotional safety of survivors.
 2. **Empowerment:** Ensuring survivors feel validated and affirmed.
 3. **Collaboration:** Sharing power by making decisions with survivors, not for them.
 4. **Choice:** Informing survivors about the choices available to them so they can choose which they prefer.
 5. **Trustworthiness:** Ensuring clarity around expectations of The Salvation Army's abuse response process and maintain respectful interpersonal boundaries.
- 7.2.3. The Salvation Army will facilitate meetings, ensuring suitable venues and informing survivors that they may attend with independent support people of their choice.
- 7.2.4. Salvation Army representatives will not wear formal Salvation Army uniforms or branded apparel when meeting with survivors (unless survivors request this).
- 7.2.5. Conflicts of interest must be avoided. This may require engaging external resources, particularly when an officer is under investigation to avoid the perception or reality of The Salvation Army 'protecting its own'.
- 7.2.6. The Salvation Army will seek to understand what happened and how the abuse occurred, as well as its impact on survivors.
- 7.2.7. The Salvation Army will encourage people to make a Police complaint for abuse of a criminal nature and will fully cooperate with any Police investigation. This may require The Salvation Army to pause its own investigations, resuming after any legal process has concluded.

7.3. Redress

- 7.3.1. Redress is an opportunity to make a meaningful difference for survivors moving forward, and will be in a form that is acceptable to them.
- 7.3.2. Redress also signifies accountability by The Salvation Army for abuse experienced by persons in any setting at any time.
- 7.3.3. The Salvation Army's redress process will respect the right to privacy of survivors.
- 7.3.4. Redress typically may include:
 - acknowledgement of the abuse and its harm
 - a personal apology from The Salvation Army (in person and/or a verbal apology, depending on survivor preference)
 - a monetary sum
 - referrals to Salvation Army social services or those of other organisations

counselling or other psychological care (independent of The Salvation Army).

- 7.3.5. Redress may include ongoing support or follow-up from The Salvation Army when requested/welcomed by a survivor.
- 7.3.6. Survivors can seek a review related to the adequacy of the redress offered or of redress previously accepted.
- 7.3.7. While The Salvation Army will keep confidential the details of survivor redress settlements, there is no legal requirement for survivors to do so. They may speak freely about the redress process and their settlement.
- 7.3.8. Full details of The Salvation Army's Redress Process are attached.

7.4. Discipline of Offenders

- 7.4.1. When abuse is proven and an offender is still in The Salvation Army's employment/service, the relevant disciplinary process will be followed, whether for officers, or for employees/volunteers.
- 7.4.2. The Salvation Army will prioritise justice for survivors. The Salvation Army will not cover up abuse.
- 7.4.3. There will be ongoing monitoring of any abusers that remain connected to The Salvation Army. This is in accordance with The Salvation Army's Minute (Policy) on the Management of Sex Offenders in Salvation Army Fellowships.
- 7.4.4. Discipline of offenders extends to ensuring that convicted abusers do not feature positively in Salvation Army publications or other forms of posthumous recognition.

7.5. Safeguarding Improvements

- 7.5.1. The Salvation Army is committed to ongoing review and improvement of its safeguarding systems to prevent future abuse.
- 7.5.2. The Safeguarding Committee will undertake ongoing review and improvement of The Salvation Army's safeguarding systems, with its minutes tabled at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 7.5.3. The Territorial Governance Board will receive summary reports for all abuse complaints (without the inclusion of any identifying details of survivors). This supports a culture of empathy, accountability and responsiveness.

Mark Campbell
Commissioner
Territorial Commander

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