

**GENERAL SYNOD 2019
RESOLUTION**

Resolution Number A128

Subject: Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter and Protocols

Moved By: The Ven. Robert Camara

Seconded By: The Ven. Tanya Phibbs

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. Adopt *The Anglican Communion Charter for the Safety of People* and the *Protocol for the Disclosure of Ministry Suitability Information between the Churches of the Anglican Communion*;
2. Commend the *Charter* to dioceses and other bodies of The Anglican Church of Canada for use in the revision and creation of policies and training materials for safeguarding and right conduct;
3. Direct Council of General Synod to review the policy base of the General Synod in light of the *Charter*, reporting back to the General Synod of 2022 on developments and with revised policies;
4. Offer its gratitude to the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission for its work in creating the *Charter for the Safety of Persons* and its *Protocols*; and
5. Direct the Council of General Synod to include discussion of safe church policy and practice in the agenda of each triennium.

Source: Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee

Submitted By: Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee

Does this motion contain within it any financial implications? **Yes - Possibly** No

Possible implications involving staff and other personnel time for meeting for the work, though the work could be done within the already-scheduled meetings of Officers and the Council of General Synod.

If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications? Yes **No**

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND

The Anglican Communion Charter for the Safety of People, along with the Protocol for Disclosure of Ministry Suitability by Provinces of the Anglican Communion was adopted in October 2012 by the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-15). The Charter is the result of several years of work by the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network and can be seen as a model for best practice standards. Both lay persons and clergy of the Anglican Church of Canada were active participants in this global initiative that led to the Charter.

As set out in the *Charter*, the witness of Scripture recognises and affirms God’s love for all members of the human family and the priority given in Jesus’ ministry to children and the vulnerable of society. The five *Commitments* provide a framework for effective Safe Church policies and procedures.

What is the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission?

The Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission (ACSCC) is an international body which was established at the request of the Anglican Consultative Council at its meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, in 2016 (ACC-16). Its creation was recommended by the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network with an objective of developing “International Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons—especially children, young people and vulnerable adults—within the provinces of the Anglican Communion... The establishment of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission was requested in one of four safeguarding resolutions approved by ACC-16. Its creation builds on the adoption by ACC-15 of the Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion”. The Commission, made up of thirteen representatives of the provinces of the Communion, including Ms. Mary Wells of Canada, has produced draft *Guidelines for the Safety of People*.

These *Guidelines* will be presented for approval at the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC 17) in Hong Kong in April/May 2019, with a view to being presented at the Lambeth Conference in 2020.

The following are the relevant resolutions of ACC 16:

Charter:

The Anglican Consultative Council recognising and affirming:

- a) *the witness of Scripture to God’s love for all members of the human family and the priority given in Jesus’ ministry to children and the vulnerable of society;*
- b) *the resolution of the Lambeth Conference in 1998 that each member Church represented make an intentional effort to work toward eliminating abuses affecting women and children (Resolution 1.3);*
- c) *the commitment of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2005 to the highest standards of care for all young and vulnerable people, seeking to ensure their protection (ACC Resolution 13.50);*
- d) *the testimony of the Lambeth Conference in 2008 to the many forms of abuse of power within society as well as the church from which women and children suffer disproportionately, and the challenge to reclaim the gospel truth of the dignity of the human person and to exercise power in ways that would always be life giving*
- e) *e) the call of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2009 to member Churches to take appropriate steps to assist the healing of indigenous families, including the protection of women and children from violence and human trafficking (ACC Resolutions 14.19 and 14.33);*
- f) *the statement of the Primates in 2011 that our churches must accept responsibility for our own part in perpetuating oppressive attitudes towards women, and in penitence and faith we must move forward in such a way that our churches truly become a living witness to our belief that both women and men are made in the image of God (Letter to the Churches of the Anglican Communion);*

commits itself to promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the member churches of the Anglican Communion, and to this end calls upon all member churches to adopt and implement the Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion, and report to the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council as to steps taken to adopt and implement the Charter.

Protocol:

Recognising that:

- 1. Clause 4 of the Charter for the safety of people within the churches of the Anglican Communion adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in October 2012 contains the following commitment: "We will have and implement policies and procedures to assess the suitability of persons for ordination as clergy or appointment to positions of responsibility in the church including checking their background."*
- 2. Clergy and lay persons who have undertaken ministry in one Province regularly undertake ministry in another Province.*
- 3. It is essential that those persons or bodies with responsibility for authorising clergy and lay persons to undertake ministry in their Province have accurate and complete information for the assessment of their suitability for ministry from the Province or Provinces in which they have previously been authorised for ministry.*

This Council approves the following Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion, and requests each Province to implement the Protocol and report to the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council as to its implementation. Protocol for the disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion

PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION (G)

In the normal course, an ordinary motion must be passed by a majority of the members of General Synod present and voting together. Six members of General Synod may, prior to the question being put, require a vote by Orders, with a majority of each Order being necessary to pass.

If a question passes on a Vote by Orders, any six members (two from each of three different dioceses) may immediately before the next item of business require a vote to be taken by dioceses. A motion passes if a majority (or a tie) of dioceses vote in favour.

Source: Sections 4 and 5 of the Declaration of Principles and sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Rules of Order and Procedure.

I. Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion

1. Pastoral support where there is abuse

We will provide pastoral support for the abused, their families, and affected parishes and church organizations by:

- (a) listening with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns;
- (b) offering spiritual assistance and other forms of pastoral care.

2. Effective responses to abuse

We will have and implement policies and procedures to respond properly to allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel that include:

- (a) making known within churches the procedure for making complaints;
- (b) arranging pastoral care for any person making a complaint of abuse;
- (c) the impartial determination of allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel, and assessment of their suitability for future ministry;
- (d) providing support for affected parishes and church organizations.

3. Practice of pastoral ministry

We will adopt, and promote by education and training, standards for the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and other church personnel.

4. Suitability for ministry

We will have and implement policies and procedures to assess the suitability of persons for ordination as clergy or appointment to positions of responsibility in the church including checking their background.

5. Culture of safety

We will promote a culture of safety in parishes and church organizations by education and training to help clergy, other church personnel and participants prevent the occurrence of abuse.

II. Protocol for the disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion

1. Definitions

- In this Protocol: “Assessing Province” means the Province in which a Church authority is to assess whether the Church worker should be authorised for ministry;
- “Authorising Province” means the Province or Provinces in which the Church worker is authorised, or has previously been authorised, to undertake ministry by a Church authority;
- “Church authority” means the person or body responsible for authorising Church workers to undertake ministry in the Authorising Province or the Assessing Province;
- “Church worker” means a member of the clergy or a lay person who:
 - is authorised, or has previously been authorised, to undertake ministry by a Church authority of the Authorising Province; and

- has applied to undertake authorised ministry, or has been nominated for appointment to a position or office involving the undertaking of authorised ministry, in the Assessing Province.
- “Ministry Suitability Information” means a written statement by a Church authority of the Authorising Province about the Church worker that discloses:
 - whether or not there has been; and
 - if so, the substance of any allegation, charge, finding or admission of the commission of a criminal offence, or the breach of the Authorising Province’s rules regarding the moral conduct of clergy and lay persons undertaking ministry, including rules relating to sexual conduct and conduct towards children and vulnerable adults;
- “Province” includes part of a Province.

2. System for the disclosure of Ministry Suitability Information by the Authorising Province

The Authorising Province will have and maintain a system for the disclosure of Ministry Suitability Information about a Church worker of the Province to the applicable Church authority of the Assessing Province that includes the following requirements:

- a. the applicable Church authority of the Province is to promptly deal with an application by the applicable Church authority of the Assessing Province for the disclosure of Ministry Suitability Information; and
- b. the applicable Church authority of the Province is to disclose the Ministry Suitability Information to the applicable Church authority of the Assessing Province. System for assessing the suitability of a Church worker for authorised ministry in the Assessing Province

3. The Assessing Province

The Assessing Province will have and maintain a system for the assessment of the suitability of a Church worker to undertake authorised ministry in the Province that includes the following requirements:

- a. the applicable Church authority is to make an application to the Authorising Province for Ministry Suitability Information;
- b. the applicable Church authority is not to authorise the Church worker to undertake ministry in the Province unless and until it has carried out an assessment of whether the Church worker is a risk to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of people that takes into account the Ministry Suitability Information disclosed by the Authorising Province; and
- c. the applicable Church authority is to keep the Ministry Suitability Information confidential, except where its disclosure:
 - i. is required by law; or
 - ii. is reasonably believed to be necessary to protect any person from the risk of being harmed by the Church worker; or
 - iii. is necessary for the purpose of undertaking the assessment of whether the Church worker is suitable to undertake authorised ministry in the Province or any disciplinary action against the Church worker.