



PCS Counselling for Affected Persons in Relation to Breaking the Silence

Counselling support is provided through the Presbyterian Counselling Service (PCS) for persons affected by abuse within the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales (PCNSW). Referral procedures and payment provisions for counselling services are facilitated by the Conduct Protocol Unit (CPU).

Counselling can play a significant role in working through personal issues. Payment of counselling is a tangible recognition of the seriousness of matters dealt with by the CPU.

ELIGIBILITY

The CPU may refer individuals to PCS for counselling at any time. When this referral is made, CPU may provide a subsidy for the counselling session where any of the following criteria are met by the referred person:

1. They are an aggrieved person
 - There is a clear connection between the alleged abuse, the person in a position of authority within PCNSW, and the individual;
2. They are an alleged offender
 - The individual is subject to a disciplinary or investigation process being undertaken by the church; and/or
 - The process is causing significant distress, and the individual is not eligible for a counselling subsidy through Ministry & Mission.
3. They have a relevant association with a church matter
 - The individual has been seriously affected by the incident of abuse and is directly involved in the matter, either as a support person, family member, or member of the supervisory body dealing with the matter.

CPU funding towards counselling sessions is at the discretion of the CPU Director.

COUNSELLOR SELECTION

Individuals referred by the CPU to PCS will be provided with recommendation of a PCS contracted counsellor/s.

In some circumstances, an individual may nominate a preferred counsellor.

A non-PCS counsellor may be approved where appropriate. The counsellor must have appropriate qualifications, current insurance and an ABN. The non-PCS counsellor must be approved by the PCS Coordinator.



SUBSIDY AND PAYMENT PROVISIONS

Standard Provision

The CPU may assist with payments in the following ways:

1. Full payment of the counselling session fee for up to 6 (each of maximum 60-minute duration) counselling sessions. If further sessions are required, PCS may require a brief recommendation from the counsellor. CPU may approve an extension of payments provided the total cost remains within the maximum payment limit; or
2. If the counsellor is an approved Medicare Provider, the referred individual may obtain a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP). CPU may pay the gap between the Medicare rebate and the session fee for the duration of the MHCP. If sessions continue beyond the MHCP in the calendar year, an extension may be requested. Approval is at the CPU Director's discretion and must remain within the maximum limit.

Maximum Payment Limit

Payments for counselling sessions are capped at \$5,000 per referred individual. The cap will be reviewed regularly and adjusted for CPI where appropriate.

Discretionary Subsidies

CPU may offer to subsidise counselling sessions above the maximum payment limit for persons involved in a church investigation or Code of Discipline process, at the discretion of the CPU director or Jericho Road CEO.

The Jericho Road CEO and/or CPU Director may approve additional hours on a case-by-case basis, considering counsellor recommendations and factors such as support networks, financial concerns, other health issues, and changes in circumstances by an aggrieved person.

Non-admission of Liability

All payments made by the CPU are made entirely without prejudice and must not be taken to imply or constitute any admission of liability, fault, or wrongdoing by the PCNSW or any affiliated entity.