A SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE GUIDE

in PASTORAL VISITING

Pastoral Care

Much pastoral care occurs in the church in an informal and unofficial way as Christians seek to help in practical ways and to encourage one another in the faith.

Formal or official pastoral care is pastoral care carried out by church representatives on behalf of the church community, and this leaflet is intended for Pastoral Visitors appointed in this capacity.

Church members who are suffering illness, are housebound or in hospital may be offered visits from the Pastoral Care team. Pastoral visits are made to offer friendship, help, support and contact with the community of faith. These visits may include practical help, giving information and/or helping people to make their own decisions by listening to them articulate their concerns.

Listening well is fundamental to all good pastoral care. It is not intended that visitors should make people's decisions for them. The role of the visitor is not that of pastoral counselling or spiritual guidance which should be left for those with appropriate training. It is, however, appropriate for Pastoral Visitors to give account for the hope within them if asked by the person whom they visit. It is also appropriate and natural for spiritual encouragement to flow from those who know and love the Lord to those who seek more of him.

The Pastoral Team Leader ('the PTL')
The PTL at St. Etheldreda & St Luke is:

Fr Darren Collins 07453 624061

Recruitment and Selection

The PTL is responsible for the selection, induction, support and supervision of all Pastoral Visitors. Pastoral Visitors will be selected and invited to join the Pastoral Care Team by the PTL. New Pastoral Visitors will be asked to complete an Application Form, Confidential Declaration Form and be subject to DBS clearance. References will also be requested. New Pastoral Visitors must have attended St Etheldreda's or

St Luke's Church regularly (at least once a month) for at least six months and be on the Church Electoral Roll. The new Pastoral Visitor must be accompanied on all visits by another experienced Pastoral Visitor for the first five visits. An informal programme of induction and continuing development will also be undertaken. This includes regular Pastoral Care Team meetings which provide an opportunity to talk through any pastoral care issues in a confidential setting and to formally record details of visits, etc.

Records

The only records which are kept as part of pastoral care will be names and contact details, date of visits, and any relevant notes. Notes of visits should be completed within 48 hours of a visit. All records are kept securely on church premises.

Home Visits, Lone Visiting and Risk Management

Lone Pastoral Visitors face increased risks because they do not have the immediate support of others. The Diocesan Lone Working Policy states that all workers and volunteers should avoid working alone if it is not necessary, however at the same time it recognises that lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and other authorised lay personnel. The policy states that it is essential that the additional risks associated with lone working are fully understood in order that they can go about their daily work in relative safety.

Following consultation with, and the support of, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, the PCC has decided to permit volunteer members of its Pastoral Care Team to undertake lone visits subject to adherence with this Code of Conduct, which contains various risk management measures to facilitate the assessment and mitigation of associated risks. All members of the Pastoral Care Team must have read the Diocesan Lone Working Policy, taken due account of the advice given, and in particular must:

- only visit if they have been authorised by the PTL and Rector to carry out lone visits

- not visit someone by themselves if they have any question or concern whatsoever about whether it is safe so to do

- work in pairs on a first visit and perform a visual risk assessment (in line with guidance provided by the PTL), of the person being visited (and their environment), and then discuss this with the PTL in order that they may authorise lone visits going forward

- visit only in the morning or early afternoon

- take a switched-on mobile phone and inform the PTL (or if unavailable, the Rector) about a visit before it takes place and again after it has been completed

- leave two Parish Visitors calling cards detailing their name and the name, address and phone number of the church, its Rector and the name and contact phone numbers for the PTL, Safeguarding Officers, and also the church website address

- leave a calling card on each visit where the PTL believes the person being visited may have a 'dementia-like' condition

- ask the person being visited to give one card to a family member so they are aware of the Pastoral Care Team's involvement

- discuss situations where they believe there is a material change in a visited person's wellbeing or mental health with the PTL before making any further lone visits

- always refer to the PTL if they feel the level of risk has increased

- never visit a child or young person in their home unless another adult is present

The PTL is responsible for overseeing that risk is being assessed and this Code of Conduct is being properly adhered to by all concerned and should report to PCC accordingly.

Looking After Yourself and Others

Pastoral Visitors need to be aware of the danger of becoming overloaded by pastoral demands and of neglecting their own need for rest and leisure and the needs of their own families.

When making pastoral visits, it is good practice to suggest how long the meeting might be for and to check whether this is a convenient length of time for the other person. Failure to maintain clear time boundaries can result in both parties feeling unsafe and out of control.

Where a person's needs are recognised as being outside the Pastoral Visitor's competence, they should seek the agreement of the person to refer them to someone who can offer appropriate help.

Personal Safety

Home visits can be potentially risky situations therefore Pastoral Visitors must take care to deal cautiously with persons who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs

and persons who are suffering from mental illness or impairment. They must not put their personal safety, or that of others, at risk.

Pastoral visitors should always carry a switched-on mobile phone on a home visit, and ensure that they have informed the PTL (or if unavailable, the Rector) about a visit before it takes place and again after it has been completed. Calling cards (as described under 'Home Visits, Lone Visiting and Risk Management') should be left on the first few visits, and where possible encourage the person whom they are visiting to talk to and pass on a calling card to other family members and/or friends about the visit. If the PTL believes the person being visited may have a 'dementia-like' condition then a calling card must be left at every visit. Any new people being visited for the first time will be visited by two people. All visits should be conducted in the morning or early afternoon.

Male visiting Female and Female visiting Male Considerations

Where there are concerns about visiting someone of the opposite sex (in line with guidance provided by the PTL), then the team member should discuss this with the PTL in order that they may make alternative arrangements or, after consideration, authorise the visit to go ahead.

Confidentiality and Respect

Whatever a Pastoral Visitor is told by a person to whom they are offering pastoral care must be treated with respect and kept confidential. Pastoral Visitors are encouraged to seek advice from the Rector/ PTL or Parish Safeguarding Representative when faced with ethical dilemmas regarding confidentiality and the law. However, if there is a risk of harm, Pastoral Visitors should consider it their duty to break a confidence.

Pastoral visitors should respect the views of every person to whom they provide pastoral care. They will not exploit financially, emotionally or sexually any person to whom they are providing pastoral care.

Touch

The appropriate use of touch is a key aspect of maintaining ethical boundaries in pastoral care. Touch can show care in unique and important ways that communicate much more deeply than words. However, the reality of sexual abuse in our culture increases the need for awareness of how easily physical expressions of care and comfort may be misunderstood. Men more than women may feel that the only safe option is to avoid all but the most formal physical contact. However, in moments of deep human distress, such as bereavement, a rigid avoidance of physical contact may in itself be damaging. If there is hesitation or refusal of touch this should always be accepted without question.

Gifts

It is not unusual for people being visited to offer gifts, such as an ornament or trinket. Tactful refusal is always appropriate, not simply because it can compromise the role of the Pastoral Visitor but it could also lead to future concerns that items have been taken dishonestly. Be particularly mindful that by innocently admiring ornaments or jewellery, you may unwittingly prompt people to offer the item as a gift.

Pastoral Visitors should also be mindful that offering even small gifts to people they visit could compromise the visitor's independence and objectivity, and could also create a feeling from the person visited that they must offer something in return.

Safeguarding Administration

All adults working with children and/or adults who may be vulnerable in a church or faith based context should strive for the highest standards of practice. Adults who have contact adults who may be at risk of harm as part of their work, are in a position of trust whether they are paid employees or volunteers and irrespective of the setting. These church workers and volunteers therefore have a duty of care towards those with whom they come into contact.

In view of this, we ensure that the procedures we have in place not only safeguard vulnerable groups, but serve to protect staff and volunteers from unsubstantiated allegations, improper conduct and misunderstandings.

Further information can be found in the Diocesan Guide to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, one copy of which is available at the back of St Etheldreda's Church, and one from the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Please confirm you have received, read or completed the following:

Safer Recruitment Forms DBS Certificate

Diocesan Guide to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Pastoral Visitors Guide (this document)
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults training (e-learning module).
Diocesan Lone Working Policy

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Volunteer)

Signed: _____ (Pastoral Team Leader)

Reporting Concerns

If you have any concerns regarding the welfare and protection of vulnerable people or groups or if there are any concerns expressed to you by any other person, they should be immediately raised with the Pastoral Team Leader, or if they are not available or if the concern concerns them, the Parish Safeguarding Officers, or the Rector, who will ensure that concerns or issues are addressed effectively and passed onto the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Caroline Roberts, Safeguarding Officer (barleycroftgreen@hotmail.com)

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March 2024