Insert church logo/name

**Pastoral Care Policy**

First Issued: ***Date***

Last Reviewed: ***Date***

Next Review Due: ***Date***

Where relevant, the content of this policy should be read in conjunction with your contract of employment, the Parish Handbook and key policies pertaining to your role. Should you have any queries and/or questions, please discuss these with your line manager in the first instance.

As part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, The Parish of  *(INSERT)*  PCC pledges that our policies will seek to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and volunteers

The Pastoral Care Team of *INSERT* , aims to facilitate the provision of quality counselling and pastoral care within the local community.

**Definition and Scope of Pastoral Care**

Pastoral Care at *INSERT NAME OF PARISH*:

* flows from the attitude and commitment to love one another because we ourselves are loved by God;
* is concerned with developing healthy relationships and enabling one another to recognise, follow and become more like Jesus;
* involves participating in God’s missional activity to reconcile the world to Himself;
* involves supporting one another in both the gathered and dispersed Church (e.g. in our church, in our homes and other places);
* may involve: sustaining others through prolonged difficulty or immediate need; enabling the journey of healing and wholeness; helping others through the process of reconciliation with God, self and others; offering guidance on available resources and enabling different perspectives
* may take the form of listening, encouraging, visiting, hospitality, advocacy, mentoring, befriending, celebrating, providing practical help, prayer, comforting and/or enabling;
* may occur formally in planned and organised ways or informally through everyday contact between members of our Church family, and
* may be offered by an individual, through a small group or particular ministry (**e.g., Mothers’ Union, Home Groups, etc**.), through an outreach project, or by individuals who engage with welcoming others into our building (e.g. at Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Special Events etc)

**Biblical Values for Christian Pastoral Care and Pastoral Carers**

**Pastoral Care** that is inspired and enabled by Christ will contribute towards:

* the equipping of God’s people to serve Jesus and His Church;
* the building up of the Church, the Body of Christ;
* the health, growth and maturing of Christians within the Body of Christ;
* God’s mission for the Church; and
* (*Ephesians 4:11-16*; *John 17:20-23*; *Acts 2:44-47*; *Acts 6:1-7*).

**Members of the Pastoral Care Team**

All Christians are called to care for one another but some people have specific roles and responsibilities to care to a greater extent and in specific ways. The Pastoral Care Team at *INSERT NAME OF PARISH*, is overseen by the Clergy and a nominated Leader, who will oversee the official pastoral care provided by *INSERT NAME OF PARISH* through those who have offered to use their gifts, availability, and motivation to serve the Church in this ministry.

Members of the Pastoral Care Team at *INSERT* are called to:

* value each person as created uniquely in the image of God (*Genesis 1:27*), with purpose, potential and capacity to live life to the full (*John 10:10*);
* love others through Christ-like love (*John 13:34-35*; *Romans 12:10*; *Romans 13:8*), be led and live by the Holy Spirit, manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit and be informed by the indwelling Word of God (*Galatians 5:13-26* and *Colossians 3:12-17*);
* be those who are burden bearers and burden sharers with and for others, whilst not creating dependency or denying the person their responsibilities and capabilities (*Galatians 6:1–5*);
* relate to others with an emphasis more on listening than speaking, and be mindful and careful of the words that they speak (*James 1:19–27*; *Proverbs 18:19*); and
* exercise confidentiality and discretion (*Proverbs 11:13*; *Proverbs 20:19*).

If a member of the Pastoral Care Team believes they are unable to provide assistance to a person, they will ask the person concerned if s/he would like to meet with someone else who has more experience and expertise. Members of the Pastoral Care Team acknowledge that they are not Counsellors or able to provide specialist help and should never seek to give this impression.

**Roles of Pastoral Care Team Members**

Members of the Pastoral Care Team will:

* work closely with Clergy to support them in their pastoral work;
* provide pastoral care to members of the community supported by *INSERT PARISH*, either formally or informally;
* visit members of the community in their homes or at a designated venue (usually in pairs) by arrangement;
* visit those who are ill in hospital;
* take Holy Communion to residential care homes; and
* take Holy Communion to those unable to attend church (e.g. because of illness).

**Health Warning Notices**

In the event of a local, national, or international health warning notice being issued by Government or Health Care authorities or organisations (e.g. the Covid 19 Pandemic of 2020/2021) then the Pastoral Care Team will follow all advice, guidelines and/or instructions as issued by the controlling authority or organisation at that time.

Every effort will be made by the Pastoral Care Team to continue to provide contact with and support for all those who they are currently working with as well as any other individual, deemed as being vulnerable or at risk, from within the community who may require such contact or support whilst working within any advice, guidelines and/or instructions that are currently in force.

The use of all types of communication should be considered when attempting to remain in regular contact with individuals (e.g. telephone, social media, video conferencing, etc.) utilising whichever is the most appropriate and acceptable by the individual. Face to face meetings, where allowed, with appropriate social distancing may also be an option dependent upon the circumstances of the individual and the health warning involved.

Where an individual is located within an environment that is under the control of a Health Care Authority or Organisation (e.g. Hospital, Residential Care Home, etc.) then the Pastoral Care Team will follow all advice, guidelines and/or instructions that are in place for that setting.

**Confidentiality**

The members of the Pastoral Care Team are accountable to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of *INSERT PARISH* and are fully committed to working within the legal confines of the General Data Policy Regulations (GDPR) and the Privacy Policy adopted by the PCC, a copy of which is available from the Church Office upon request.

When engaged in the provision of Pastoral Care, members of the Pastoral Care Team will:

* establish trust and a safe place for a person, and for God to work;
* protect the privacy of the person receiving pastoral care thereby maintaining the integrity of pastoral work at *INSERT PARISH*;
* maintain confidentiality about anything shared in a pastoral conversation, unless the person involved clearly gives permission for what they say to be disclosed to others; and
* ensure that confidentiality is not confused with secrecy (i.e. by concealing information which could be significantly harmful to others) or collusion (i.e. by explicitly or inherently cooperating with illegal or unethical behaviour.

The **important exception** to maintaining confidentiality will arise:

* if the person providing pastoral care believes that the person being cared for, or someone else, is or may be at risk of harm or injury – especially if a criminal act is involved and there is a requirement based on legislation or a Court of to disclose information either to the Police or Court of Law.

Confidentiality also extends to:

* any written or electronic records and the safeguarding of these to protect the privacy of the person; and
* compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations – any records will need to be accurate, up to date, adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are intended.

**Ethical Values for Pastoral Care**

Members of the Pastoral Care team will:

* be clear from the onset whether they are meeting on behalf of *INSERT PARISH* or not;
* respect the rights and dignity of every person as a unique individual, equal with them in the sight of God regardless of race, religion, nationality, language, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, size, employment, income, disability, health, abode, or criminal record;
* seek to accept a person without judgement and allow them the safety, freedom and space to express themselves and to make their own decisions without force or manipulation, even when they disagree with the persons thinking, actions and life-style;
* be careful to ensure that they do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them by a person, and not exploit someone they are helping in any way;
* not subject any person to physical, psychological, financial, verbal or spiritual harassment and will not tolerate such behaviour by others. (Harassment can include: physical, psychological, emotional, financial, sexual or spiritual abuse including insults, unwelcome sexual behaviour, language or jokes, display of offensive materials, words, pictures, symbols, behaviour, gestures, or signals);
* be careful not to create unhealthy dependencies for either themselves or the people they care for pastorally;
* ensure that the person is safeguarded as far as is practically reasonable and that appropriate steps are taken to seek appropriate medical, legal or other professional assistance where required;
* seek to be honest and open and act with integrity; and
* seek to hold appropriate boundaries and be confidently assertive when required without being aggressive.

**Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

Members of the Pastoral Care Team may find themselves working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. They should therefore:

* make themselves aware of the contents of the current *INSERT PARISH* Safeguarding Policy;
* be aware of the person who holds the role of Safeguarding Officer(s) at *INSERT PARISH* and know how and where to access them and when it is appropriate to do so;
* undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check; and
* must, on receiving a confession or allegation of abuse or reason to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult has in the past been abused, or might be at risk of abuse or is currently being abused, act promptly as outlined in *INSERT PARISH* Safeguarding Policy.

**Training in Pastoral Care**

The Pastoral Care Team will avail themselves of appropriate Pastoral Training events provided through the Diocese, or at events offered by other organisations working in the field of Pastoral Care.

**Care for the Pastoral Carer**

Pastoral Care Team Members will need:

* to ensure they are taking care of their own health and well-being as they offer care to others – especially by allowing sufficient regular space in their lives to grow in relationship with God, mature in faith and develop self-awareness through reflective practice;
* to ensure they are working within their abilities and competencies and not working out of their depth in a detrimental way to themselves or the person to whom pastoral care is offered, and be prepared to refer a person to others when needed;
* to ensure that the person for whom they are caring is aware they are not offering counselling and need to be prepared to refer a person to a trained Counsellor where needed and desired;
* to be accountable to the Clergy at *INSERT PARISH* and be resourced themselves through regular, appropriate oversight and support for their pastoral care work;
* to feel safe themselves and have the right to decline offering care or seeing someone (e.g. a person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who is acting aggressively);
* should not offer care to a person when their own functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties (e.g. illness, alcohol, drugs or any other reason); and
* to establish and access a source of support involving oversight and/or supervision for their role as a member of the Pastoral Care Team – bearing in mind that it may be appropriate to access support from those outside *INSERT PARISH* providing confidentiality is not compromised.

**Complaints**

Any person wishing to make a complaint with regard to any aspect of the pastoral care received – or being received - should raise their concerns with a member of the Clergy or the Pastoral Care Team Leader.

**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.**

*Matthew 11:28*

Check with safeguarding re complaints