

**ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH BOLNEY, PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**Expectation of conduct for Clergy and Volunteers engaging in Pastoral visits.**

Caring for one another is the responsibility of the whole Church and is an extension of the justice and love of the Incarnate God disclosed in Jesus Christ. Compassion is essential to pastoral care. The clergy should enable other members of the worshipping community to share in this pastoral care, ensuring that they are recruited safely, and have the appropriate training and supervision for the tasks involved, including current training in safeguarding in accordance with the guidance issued by the House of Bishops.

Clergy should seek to ensure that churchwardens, PCCs and the wider congregation understand their responsibilities and roles in making every church a safe place for all.

In their ministry, pastoral care and working relationships, the clergy/volunteers should offer equal respect and opportunity to all. They should be unbiased in their exercise of pastoral care, especially when caring for one party in a dispute between two or more people. In some cases they may need to ask another appropriate person to provide pastoral care to one of the parties.

The clergy/volunteers should discern and acknowledge their own limitations of time, competence and skill. They will need to seek support, help and appropriate training and, on occasion, to refer to specialist agencies.

The clergy/volunteers should be aware of the help available from accredited agencies so that it can be commended where appropriate.

Clergy/volunteers should always be conscious of the power dynamics involved in their pastoral care, noting both the position of trust which they hold and the power which they exercise.

At no time should they provide formal counselling for those in their pastoral care, even when they are accredited as counsellors in other settings. Those who wish to work as accredited counsellors should seek appropriate advice about how to maintain proper boundaries between this and their role as ordained ministers or volunteers.

Similarly, where the clergy are supervising employed members of staff, or mentoring or coaching church members, there needs to be absolute clarity about the role in which they are engaging with them. The responsibility for pastoral care must not be confused with any other role.

There is risk in all pastoral work. The appropriateness of visiting and being visited alone, especially at night, needs to be assessed with care. The same assessment should also apply to other "out of hours" contact (especially through telephone calls and social media).

Consideration should be given to:

- the place of the meeting;
- the proximity of other people;
- the arrangement of furniture and lighting; and
- the dress of the minister, appropriate to the context

which are important considerations in pastoral care. The perceptions of others need to be considered at all times, taking particular care to assess the extent to which others may experience or perceive behaviour to be inappropriate.

At times it may be appropriate to advise a third party in advance of any appointments which have been made. Keeping accurate records of appointments is helpful and good practice.

It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided. The clergy/

volunteers need to be aware of what is appropriate when meeting people from different cultural traditions.

The clergy/volunteers should be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral relationships. Manipulation, competitiveness or collusion on either side of the pastoral encounter should be avoided. Self-awareness should be part of the relationship. The responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries always rests with the clergy/volunteers, however difficult or challenging the pastoral relationship may prove to be.

The clergy/volunteers must always put first the interests of those for whom they are pastorally responsible, and act to protect them even where this requires them to override personal and professional loyalties. It is their duty to raise concerns where they believe that someone's safety or care is being compromised by the practice of colleagues, or by those in authority, or by the systems, policies or procedures with which they are expected to work. They must also encourage and support the development of a culture in which they and their colleagues can raise concerns openly and honestly. Those in authority should listen carefully to their concerns and act upon them where they are justified, enabling those who have the best interests of others at heart to raise concerns without fear of detriment to themselves.

The clergy/volunteers are required to have appropriate and current training in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Church of England's national and diocesan policies, guidelines and requirements must be known and observed. If they become aware that someone known to have a conviction for offences against children or vulnerable adults attends their church, they must follow the guidelines for ministering to such offenders.

Clergy/volunteers should be clear about the circumstances in which information about abuse of all forms, or the risk of abuse, must be reported to the statutory authorities (that is, the police or local authority children's or adult services). Children or adults who provide information about abuse need to know that their concerns will be taken seriously and that the clergy will work with them in making the referral, in order that a proper investigation can be undertaken and appropriate help be obtained.

It is essential that clergy/volunteers maintain an accurate and factual written record of any safeguarding concerns or actions. They should be aware of the dangers of glossing over the conduct of fellow clergy, or even of collusion with it.

All the clergy/volunteers should be aware of the circumstances in which information can and should be disclosed to third parties. To that end, they should refer to the national and diocesan safeguarding policies. When preparing for such a disclosure, the clergy/volunteers should seek appropriate legal and other specialist advice, for example from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Whenever a safeguarding referral is made, clergy should always inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Similar requirements apply if the conduct of a colleague appears inappropriate, when advice should always be obtained and action taken.

The clergy/volunteers should ensure that all communications they may have with or about children or vulnerable adults are appropriate in their tone and that they comply with relevant national and diocesan policies and guidance. This refers to the use of any means of communication, written, spoken or electronic. Anything published online is public and visible to everyone.

The clergy/volunteers should take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life just as much in the use of social media as in "real life" encounters. They should recognise the importance of knowing themselves and their own emotional needs. Working with a

spiritual director or pastoral supervisor can greatly help the development of this insight, which is difficult to achieve when working alone.

**Adopted July 2018 / Review annually: 2nd meeting after each APCM**