

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

All Souls Parish Church Harlesden

1. What is pastoral care?

- It embraces many activities that flow from our commitment to love one another because God first loves us.
- It might involve supporting others during prolonged periods of difficulty or immediate need, with practical help and/or being “a listening ear”, encouraging others on a journey of healing and wholeness, or helping others to consider reconciliation with God, themselves or others.
- It can happen formally in planned and organised ways or informally through everyday spontaneous moments.
- It is not counselling – that should only be done by those specially trained as counsellors.
- It is the ministry of the whole church, not just the clergy. We all have a God-given responsibility to care for others.

2. Some Biblical values for pastoral care

- We are called to value each person, regardless of ethnic origin, sexual orientation or religious belief, as uniquely created in the image of God (Genesis1:27) with the purpose, potential and capacity to live life to the full (John10:10).
- It is inspired and enabled by Christ to equip God’s people to do his work (Ephesians4:11-16), and it is foundational to the Church’s mission (John17:21)
- Those who care pastorally are called to be burden-bearers and burden-sharers with and for others, whilst not creating unhealthy dependency or denying the responsibility of the one being supported (Galatians6:2)
- They are to be more ready to listen than to speak and aware that their words should be spoken carefully (James1:19)
- They are aware of the need for confidentiality and discretion (but see Section 5 below) (Proverbs11:13)

3. How do we give pastoral care?

- For all of us, we look out for people who may need particular support. For example, has someone been absent from church for a few weeks, and no one knows why? Have they said something significant which should be brought to the attention of the clergy or the pastoral care team?
- In particular, Pastoral Team leader and members are encouraged to look out for team members who may need pastoral care and support.
- For those who the PCC authorises to give pastoral care in a more focused way, who have been DBS checked and suitably trained, it may include home, hospital or care home visits (one-off or regular), giving home communion or co-ordinating some form of practical support.

- Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults is paramount at all times and all involved in pastoral care must confirm that they have read and will abide by our Safeguarding Policy.

4. Visits

- Where a person is being visited in their own home, arrange the visit in advance, if possible, with the person directly or through a competent family member. If you are visiting alone, ensure that someone in your household (or the Vicar) knows when and where you will be going and that you take a fully-charged mobile phone.
- Brief details of the visit should be reported (verbally or in writing) to the Vicar and Pastoral Team leader. This can be done by giving the name of the person visited, date and time of the visit and a short summary of the nature of the visit in one or two sentences.
- All offering pastoral care in a home, hospital or care home are required to confirm that they have read and understand the latest guidance from the Church of England on [Personal Risk Factors for Clergy, Church Workers and Volunteers](#)

5. Confidentiality

- All information given by a person receiving pastoral care should be treated with respect, kept confidential, and not disclosed to anyone else apart from the clergy. Confidentiality, outside of safeguarding issues, rests solely with the Vicar.
- At the start of a meeting, it should be clear that anything said may be communicated to the Vicar.

6. Prayer

- Public and private prayer is at the heart of our pastoral care.
- All who offer pastoral care should pray for those they are supporting and for God's help and guidance for themselves as givers of pastoral care.
- If appropriate, at the end of a visit, they may offer to pray for the person visited. This should be offered sensitively and never imposed. In many cases, it may be the best pastoral care simply to offer a loving presence, silently witnessing God's love for each of us.
- If (and only if) requested by the person concerned or a member of their family, their name can be added to our Intercessions List.
- The Staff Team of the church undertake to pray regularly for pastoral needs and those giving pastoral care.

This Policy was last discussed and approved by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on 11th September 2024

Signed: *Revd Dr Adam Dobrzynski*