

Pastoral Visiting Guidance

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Outline

1. Pastoral care of one another is something we hope happens naturally within the church family, and especially within Home Groups (HG). The Incumbent is always available to meet and pray, especially at times of greater or more urgent need. For church members not in HGs or in situations that may require clergy support, a team is available to offer pastoral support. This pastoral support which is delivered by a church team remains distinct from existing friendships within the church which remain the usual means of care in the church.
2. There are also occasions when members of the public request the church visit a relative either in their home or at a care home of some sort, because they are concerned and/or unable. This is also an appropriate occasion for the church pastoral team to offer support.
3. The following guidance applies to any situation where we offer care to a church or community member through the Parish’s administration, rather than through natural friendships and homegroups. The Pastoral Team Leaders (currently Susie Bartlett and Rosie Cunliffe) are the point of contact for anyone seeking pastoral care from the minister or from the church’s pastoral visiting team. They can be emailed directly at: pastoralteam@stjohnssouthbourne.com
4. This guidance is not, therefore, intended to cover the help for friends or neighbours that any reasonable person would offer.

Guidance

Practical and prayerful support can make a huge difference to those who are going through a difficult time, or who are close to someone who is. Being able to visit, phone, pray, or even keep in touch with some messages can be a lovely way of people feeling cared for and supported.

The pastoral role is not intended to replace or remove the need for professional support such as social services when relevant. One aspect of the pastoral team may be to signpost people to appropriate support, please contact the Pastoral Team Leaders for signposting suggestions.

Pastoral situations often involve vulnerable people, or those people who should be considered vulnerable in their present circumstances. Therefore, duty of care provided should be guided by National Safeguarding Guidelines. These require:

Safeguarding training to the appropriate level, as advised by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) in accordance with the latest guidelines.

DBS check (see below) DBS checks give some boundaries to what pastoral visitors may do to help.

But in any case, this guidance precludes activities such as:

Personal (Hygiene) Care; defined as those who provide or prompt an adult with physical assistance with eating; drinking; toileting; washing or bathing; dressing; oral care or care of skin, hair or nails due to the adult's age, illness or disability.

Offering Financial Advice, managing accounts, making financial arrangements or medical appointments

A volunteer with DBS with 'adult barred' list approval check may

1. Assist with a person's cash, bills, or shopping
2. Drive someone to an appointment where they receive healthcare, personal, or social care.

A volunteer with DBS without a 'barred' list check may still

1. Visit someone at home
2. Phone individuals
3. Prepare food (but not physically feed a person)
4. Offer physical assistance to a person, such as getting into a car passenger seat.

Accountability

1. Team members should meet regularly for training and support.
2. Visitors should keep a record of visits – and let someone know who and when they are visiting. There is a pastoral team whatsapp group which can facilitate this.
3. It is important that a pastoral team member record any incidents and concerns and pass these on to the pastoral team leaders or vicar, or in the case of a safeguarding concern - to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Records should be signed, dated and stored according to the Church's Data Protection Policy (available on the policy page of the Church website).
4. Always consider the activity that you will be undertaking before proceeding. If unsure, please check with the pastoral team leaders as everyone's safety is paramount.

Wider Issues

The Parish also needs to consider other related legal and insurance guidance and opportunities and weigh these against the care we aspire to offer.

1. According to EIG, church members over the age of eighty need to be aware that they are unable to claim under personal accident insurance.
2. The Lone workers policy (see policy page of website) needs to be read before making pastoral visits.
3. Lay Ministers of Communion should also have the level of safeguarding training advised by the PSO.

Reviewed: June 2026

Review: June 2029 and then every 3 years