

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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The primary aims of these guidelines are:

- to ensure the welfare and the protection of individuals and groups with whom the clergy work;
- to ensure the welfare and the protection of the clergy and of their families;
- to encourage the clergy to aspire to the highest possible standard of conduct;
- to provide safe and effective boundaries for clerical ministry;
- to encourage personal and corporate ministerial development;
- to encourage others to offer themselves for service in the ordained ministry of the Church.

**1. “You must keep the Good shepherd always before you as the pattern of your calling, following him wherever he leads.”**

1.1 Clergy are entrusted with the privilege and responsibility of being servants and leaders in the ministry of the Church. As pastors, spiritual guides and public representatives of the Christian faith, they are in a position of trust in their relationships with those for whom they have pastoral care. These Guidelines provide the framework of professional conduct for all clergy as both an encouragement and an affirmation of good practice.

1.2 Clergy will often find themselves in the powerful position of meeting people at the limits of their vulnerability. The Guidelines seek to safeguard and reassure such people so engendering trust, without which ministry cannot take place.

1.3 Professional and personal conduct is bounded by law and legal sanction. Clergy, at ordination, and on being licensed or instituted to new responsibilities, make a declaration of Canonical Obedience to the bishop and his successors. However, response to a vocation to serve as an ordained minister signifies the voluntary undertaking of obligations of sacrificial self-discipline above and beyond the requirements of secular and ecclesiastical law. The Ordinals describe these undertakings and thus guides conduct, and so it is the Ordinals which have been used to provide the inspiration and the framework for these Guidelines.

**2. “You are to care for all alike, especially the poor, the sick, the needy and those in trouble.”**

2.1 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

## **Professional Ministerial Guidelines**

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- Christ. Compassion is essential to pastoral care. Clergy should enable other members of the worshipping community to share in this pastoral care.
- 2.2 Clergy have a particular responsibility to minister sensitively and effectively to those who are sick, dying and bereaved.
- 2.3 In their ministry, pastoral care and working relationships, clergy must endeavour to offer equal respect and opportunity to all.
- 2.4 Clergy minister through their own broken humanity, being aware of their own need to receive ministry.
- 2.5 Clergy should discern and make clear their own limitations of time, competence and skill. At times they will need to seek support, help and appropriate training.
- 2.6 The difference between pastoral care and formal counselling is always to be recognized.
- 2.7 Clergy should be aware of the help available from accredited pastoral agencies so that it can be commended where appropriate.
- 2.8 There is risk in all pastoral work. The place of the meeting, the arrangement of furniture and lighting, and the dress of the minister are important considerations in pastoral care. The appropriateness of visiting and being visited alone, especially at night, needs to be assessed with care. Clergy should recognize the importance of knowing themselves and their own emotional needs.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 Clergy 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.
- 2.11 Clergy should be aware of the potential for abusing their privileged relationships.
- 2.12 When help or advice is being sought, any note-taking should be mutually agreed and should be regarded as if it were subject to data protection legislation.

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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- 2.13 Every ordained person should have appropriate training in child protection / safeguarding. The diocesan policy for the protection of vulnerable people should be known and adhered to.
- 2.14 The dress of clergy should be suitable to their office; and, except for purposes of recreation and other justifiable reasons, should be such as to be a sign and mark of their holy calling and ministry.
- 2.15 In the conduct of worship, clergy should wear the appropriate liturgical dress. Should there be disagreement about what is appropriate dress, the matter should be referred to the Bishop for direction.
3. **“Guided by the Holy Spirit, pray constantly that your life may be a pattern of obedience and holiness and so reveal the power of the Kingdom of God. You cannot fulfil this ministry in your own strength. May the Lord who has given you the will to undertake this work, give you also the strength and power to perform it.”**
- 3.1 Pastoral care will seek to bring about Christ-like wholeness, both personal and corporate. The development of trust is of primary importance for honest relationships within ministry.
- 3.2 Clergy are often placed in a position of power over others, in pastoral relationships, with lay colleagues, and sometimes with other clergy. This power needs to be used to sustain others and harness their strengths, and not to bully, manipulate or denigrate. They should be aware of the diocesan Bullying and Harassment policy.
- 3.3 In pastoral and caring relationships the clergy should be open to God and to the needs of the other person. It is important for clergy to be sensitive to the situations in which they are placed, especially with regard to the pastoral care of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 3.4 Clergy should be aware that those for whom they care may be distressed and vulnerable. The power conferred on a minister in such situations should be acknowledged, used positively, and never abused.
- 3.5 It is always wrong to exploit or manipulate. Improper questioning or physical contact can be emotionally or sexually abusive.
- 3.6 Spiritual authority must be exercised with gentleness and sensitivity, and the minister should be aware of the possibility of spiritual abuse.
- 3.7 Pastoral care should never seek to remove the autonomy of the individual. In pastoral situations the other party should be allowed the freedom to make decisions even if clergy consider that decision to be incorrect.

**Professional Ministerial Guidelines**

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- 3.8 In leadership, teaching, preaching and presiding at worship, clergy should resist all temptation to exercise power inappropriately.
- 3.9 Clergy should thankfully acknowledge their own God-given sexuality. They should be aware of the danger of seeking sexual advantage, emotionally or physically, in the exercise of their ministry.
- 3.10 In their personal life clergy should set an example of integrity in relationships, faithfulness in marriage and responsibility in parenthood and family life
- 3.11 Clergy are called to be chaste in their sexual relationships. Promiscuity is incompatible with ordained ministry. Pornography demeans a person who is a child of God into a disposable object.
- 3.12 A person seeking pastoral guidance and counsel from the clergy has the right to expect that the cleric concerned will not pass on to a third party confidential information so obtained. Clergy are accordingly not at liberty to share confidential information with their spouses, family or friends.
- 3.13 In certain circumstances clergy may consider it necessary for the content and process of a pastoral relationship to be shared with a supervisor or supervisory group. In such cases the cleric must obtain authority from the individual to do so and ensure that the supervisor or supervisory group understands the necessity to maintain confidentiality.
- 3.14 Clergy should be aware of the circumstances in which confidential information can or should be disclosed to third parties, particularly where the safety of children is concerned. In these circumstances, clergy should refer to the guidance in the appropriate diocesan policy. Children or vulnerable adults who disclose evidence of significant harm will need to know that their concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with according to a proper process so that a proper investigation can take place and practical help obtained. In such cases the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult should be regarded as of paramount importance. Special considerations apply where information is disclosed in the context of formal confession (see paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3).
- 3.15 It is important to safeguard the right of parishioners to share personal information with one minister and not another. In a team situation, or in an area where clergy are seeking to work collaboratively, it may be advisable to create a policy to avoid the danger to ministers within a team of being manipulated and divided by the sharing of personal information with one and not another. Assistant clergy in training posts should make it clear to those to whom they are ministering that information given to them will normally be shared with their training incumbent.

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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- 3.16 Any information about a living individual, whether held on computer or in a paper based filing system, should be treated as if it were governed by the UK Data Protection Act 1998 or equivalent.
- 3.17 Those compiling records should be prepared to be accountable for their content.
- 4. “All are called to make Jesus Christ known to men and women as Saviour and Lord. Your task is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all. You are to teach the faith that comes to us from the Apostles and proclaim it afresh.”**
- 4.1 Mission is a primary calling. It belongs to the whole church and clergy have a leading share of responsibility in its promotion.
- 4.2 Clergy have the privilege of leading their congregations in proclaiming afresh the good news of Jesus Christ and promoting God’s mission, including evangelism.
- 4.3 Where it is possible, schools, along with other institutions within a parish/ chaplaincy, may provide opportunities for mission and ministry. Clergy should seek to enhance opportunities for themselves and appropriately gifted and trained laity to contribute to the worship, religious education, pastoral care and governance in schools, and to be willing to support all places of education within their jurisdictions.
- 4.4 Clergy should ensure that, where appropriate, well-led and accessible courses and discussion groups on all aspects of the Christian faith are available at regular intervals to parishioners seeking to explore, deepen or renew their faith.
- 4.5 Suitable preparation for Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage is a primary responsibility for clergy. The importance of children, young people and all who are new to the Christian faith should be a priority for the Church and for its clergy.
- 4.6 Clergy should recognize, affirm and encourage the ministry and witness of lay people in their workplaces and communities, as well as within the Church.
- 5. “You are to teach. You are to be fellow-workers with Christ in his renewing of the world. You are to explore new ventures in mission and work for peace and justice.”**
- 5.1 Continued theological learning is an essential discipline for preaching and teaching, as well as for personal growth. Clergy should be aware of the need

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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to participate in and the availability of continuing ministerial education programmes.

- 5.2 Clergy should set aside time for continuing ministerial education, including the consideration of contemporary issues and theological developments, so that their faith engages with the perceptions and concerns of this generation.
- 5.3 Keeping abreast of a variety of communicating skills is crucial to the effective and ongoing proclamation of the gospel.
- 5.4 Part of the clerical vocation in both preaching and teaching is a prayerful openness to being prophetic and challenging as well as being encouraging and illuminating.
- 5.5 Great care should be taken that illustrative material from personal experience does not involve any breach of confidentiality.
6. **“You are to preside at the Holy Eucharist and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you. Study Christ’s teaching and meditate upon it, that you may encourage his people in the way of holiness. You are to lead the people of God into holiness of life, and encourage the ministry of all God’s people.”**
- 6.1 Clergy are called to leadership within the Church and the wider community.
- 6.2 Clergy should develop this gift of leadership within their own ministry through prayer and training, being aware of their own natural leadership style.
- 6.3 Clergy should promote collaborative ministry across the whole range of church life and activity. It is important to recognize and affirm lay ministry that already exists and to encourage new ministries, both lay and ordained. Clergy should be ready to assist others in discerning and fulfilling their vocation and to acknowledge and respect the range of experience amongst the church membership.
- 6.4 Clergy should ensure that services are thoughtfully prepared, sensitive to the need and culture of the context and the traditions of the world wide Anglican Church.
- 6.5 Where appropriate, clergy should involve others in leadership of worship, providing training and preparation as necessary to support them.
- 6.6 Clergy should be aware of the needs of their congregation and take any practical steps necessary to ensure that worship is truly inclusive and that no one is excluded through disability or disadvantage..

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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- 6.7 Clergy should do their best to ensure that the worship for which they are responsible is contextually aware and appropriate.
- 6.8 Clergy should encourage good ecumenical relationships.
- 6.9 Clergy should have good and courteous relationships with members of other faith communities.
- 6.10 A new minister should not undermine a former ministry by critical assessment, but should focus with respect on the positive work of a predecessor.
- 6.11 Upon resignation or retirement, clergy should immediately lay down their leadership and sever all professional relationships with those formerly under their pastoral care. Any exception to this guideline should be formally negotiated with the bishop.
- 6.12 Having resigned or retired, clergy should only minister in a former church, if invited by the clergy with pastoral oversight, or with their permission.
- 7. “You are to call people to repentance and in Christ’s name to absolve those who are penitent.”**
- 7.1 The ministry of reconciliation, as an extension of Jesus’ own ministry, lies at the heart of the vocation to priesthood. It is to be exercised gently, patiently and undergirded by mutual trust.
- 7.2 Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4, there should be no disclosure of what is revealed when a person confesses to God in the presence of a priest –‘the seal of the confessional’. This principle holds even after the death of the penitent.
- The priest may not refer to what has been learnt in confession, even to the penitent, unless explicitly permitted by the penitent. Some appropriate action of contrition and reparation may be required before absolution is given. A priest may withhold absolution. Guidance is available from the bishop
- 7.3 Where abuse of children or vulnerable adults is admitted in the context of confession, the priest should urge the person to report his or her behaviour to the police or social services, and should also make this a condition of absolution, or withhold absolution until this evidence of repentance has been demonstrated.
- 7.4 If a penitent’s behaviour gravely threatens his or her own well-being or that of others, particularly children or vulnerable adults, the priest should insist upon action on the penitent’s part. It should be noted that at law there is no

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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absolute duty of confidentiality. A Court or the police may require disclosure. In exceptional circumstances there may also be an over-riding duty to break confidence, especially where the safety of children, or of vulnerable adults, is involved, or, more rarely, where the well-being of the person who is sharing confidence is at risk. Should a priest believe that there is a possibility that such information will be disclosed, it should be made clear to the penitent in advance, that disclosure may be necessary.

**8. “Pray constantly that your life may be a pattern of obedience and holiness. Will you accept the discipline of the Church and give due respect to those set in authority over you?”**

- 8.1 Clergy swear an oath of canonical obedience to the bishop.
- 8.2 Clergy should participate fully in the life and work of the diocese giving support and respect to those given the responsibility of leadership and oversight.
- 8.3 Clergy should respect such regulations as are put in place by the diocese.
- 8.4 Clergy should acknowledge and respect the areas of ministry of other clergy.
- 8.5 The authority of churchwardens and lay people elected or appointed to office in the local church is to be respected and affirmed.

**9. “Will you be a diligent minister of the Word of God? Will you devote yourself to prayer and study? Will you continue to equip yourself for ministry in the Church?”**

- 9.1 In exercising their ministry, clergy respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ. The development of their discipleship is in the discipline of prayer, worship, Bible study and the discernment of the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Clergy should make sure that time and resources are available for their own personal and spiritual life and take responsibility for their own ongoing training and development.
- 9.2 Spiritual discernment can be facilitated by sharing the journey of faith with another person. A minister should normally have someone outside the work situation to whom to turn for help.
- 9.3 Clergy should participate fully in continuing ministerial education and in any diocesan system of ministerial review, knowing that accountability involves regular review personally and with others.
- 9.4 It may be appropriate for clergy to meet regularly with a work consultant to review their ongoing ministry.

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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- 9.5 Time given to family life, friendship, recreation, renewal and personal health should be included in any review. This reflection will be the more useful if conducted both as a part of formal review and also in discussion with a spiritual director and/or work consultant.
- 10. “Will you, with your family, order your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ? Will you lead by encouragement and example?”**
- 10.1 Clergy are called to a high moral standard of behaviour.
- 10.2 Clergy who are married should remember that this is also a vocation. Marriage should not be considered as of secondary importance to their vocation to ministry. Similarly, those who are not married, including those with a vocation to celibacy, should take the necessary steps to nurture their lives, their friendships and their family relationships. Clergy who are married to clergy need to take special care to address any potential difficulties which might arise.
- 10.3 Good administration enables good pastoral care. Dealing with correspondence and enquiries with efficiency and courtesy is essential. Administration must be carried out in accordance with Church and civil law, and, best practice is to be aspired to.
- 10.4 The keeping of parochial registers and records to a high standard is required as well as being part of pastoral care.
- 10.5 Clergy need to ensure that all their financial activities, whether personal or corporate, meet the highest ethical standards. There must be strict boundaries between church finance and personal moneys in order to avoid the possibility of suspicion or impropriety.
- 10.6 Clergy should never seek any personal advantage or gain by virtue of their clerical position.
- 10.7 Clergy should be extremely careful about accepting personal gifts from those in their spiritual care. Clergy must not encourage people to give, lend or bequeath money or gifts which will directly or indirectly benefit them or their family. Should clergy receive substantial gifts or legacies, equivalent to over €500 in value, or the promise of legacies from those in their spiritual care, they should inform the Bishop. A register of such gifts, including those made to the bishop may be kept.
- 10.8 Clergy should not undertake any professional duties when medically advised against it, nor if under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 10.9 Clergy must be aware that their personal conduct reflects not only on their ministry but also on the reputation and integrity of the Church and

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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particularly the Anglican Church in the places where we serve, and must avoid:

- Use of illegal non-prescription drugs
- Alcohol abuse or drunkenness
- Use of language that is blasphemous, malicious or likely to offend
- Violent or indecent behaviour

Where alcohol or drug abuse is suspected clergy must participate willingly in rehabilitation. Where there is failure to participate or where abuse continues following rehabilitation clergy will be considered as being in breach of the ministerial guidelines.

10.10 Clergy are expected to take care of their own health, well-being and safety. All should guard themselves and their family against becoming victims of stress. It is important to differentiate between pressure in ministry, which can have positive results and stress which can have a detrimental effect on health and well being. Clergy should pay due regard to personal safety and unnecessary risks should be avoided.

**11. “The Church is the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Will you endeavour to promote unity, peace and love among those you serve?”**

11.1 The reputation of the Church in the community depends to a great extent on the example of its clergy, who should recognize their role as public representatives of the Church. Their lives should enhance and embody the communication of the Gospel.

11.2 Whilst clergy are advised to value their personal and family space nevertheless they must be aware that people they serve or those for whom they have pastoral care are entitled to a reasonable level of availability and accessibility. Public notice should be given of clergy availability for non-urgent enquiries. Clergy are however expected to deal with emergencies as they arise. In all circumstances a prompt and gracious response to all requests for help demonstrates care. Telephone numbers and, where appropriate, email addresses should be easily accessible.

11.3 Clergy have a particular role and calling as agents of healing and reconciliation for those in their care.

11.4 The call of the clergy to be servants to the community should include their prophetic ministry to those in spiritual and moral danger.

## Professional Ministerial Guidelines

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- 12. “Do you trust that, by God’s grace, they are worthy to be ordained? Will you support them in their ministry?”**
- 12.1 ‘Care for carers’ is fundamental. Clergy need to be supported and the laity have a particular and significant role in the pastoral care of clergy.
- 12.2 Officers of the parish / chaplaincy, especially the churchwardens, with the advice of Diocesan officials, should play their part, in ensuring that their clergy have:
- a safe environment in which to live and work;
  - sufficient time off for rest, recreation and proper holidays; (Flexibility in provision and timing of services may be necessary for this to be possible.)
  - an annual opportunity to make a retreat;
  - appropriate administrative assistance;
  - full reimbursement of ministerial expenses;
  - appropriate release for extra-parochial duties;
  - encouragement for ministry to the wider constituency and not just to the congregation.
- 12.3 The bishop takes responsibility for the welfare of the clergy when he makes a Declaration of Canonical Obedience. He shares this responsibility with senior colleagues
- 12.4 Clergy should be encouraged to develop opportunities for mutual support and pastoral care within cell groups or other peer-groupings. All clergy should also be encouraged to have a spiritual director, soul friend or confessor to support their spiritual life and help to develop their growth in self-understanding. If required, help should be given in finding such a person.
- 12.5 The Spirituality Development Team is working to make resources available, and to publicise them.
- 12.6 Confidentiality should be assured at every level. The boundaries between different persons involved in such care should therefore be recognized by all in the diocesan structures, not least where issues of financial assistance are involved. Advisers in pastoral care need to be especially careful to maintain these boundaries when making referrals or making reports to their diocesan colleagues.
- 12.7 The bishop, or his trained representatives, should undertake a regular review of each minister’s work which should be clearly linked to the

**Professional Ministerial Guidelines**

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development of the individual's ministry, within the context of the needs of the Church.

- 12.8 Where some form of work consultancy for clergy is available, it should be offered by trained personnel whose work is monitored and reviewed by the bishop.
- 12.9 Clergy who are licensed under seal but not receiving a stipend should have a working agreement clearly setting out agreed boundaries of time and responsibility.
- 12.10 The diocese has a duty to provide continuing ministerial education throughout a person's ministry. This should include adequate and suitable training in financial, administrative and managerial matters.
- 12.11 In dual ministries, where clergy have both a 'sector' and a parochial / chaplaincy responsibility, there should be a clear written understanding between diocese, and minister about where the boundaries lie.
- 12.12 Support and advice on the practical, psychological and emotional issues involved should be readily available to clergy approaching retirement and to their families.
- 12.13 The bishop and those exercising pastoral care of the clergy should both by word and example actively encourage the clergy to adopt a healthy life-style. This should include adequate time for leisure and recreation, through taking days off and their full holiday entitlement, developing interests outside their main area of ministry, and maintaining a commitment to the care and development of themselves and their personal relationships. Helping the clergy understand and overcome unrealistic expectations within themselves, and by the outside world, needs to be a priority.