



Southwell Cathedral

PARISH VISITING GROUP POLICY & GUIDANCE

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Approving body: Chapter

Next review in: Q4 2028

Policy owner: Designated Residentiary Canon or other member of clergy appointed to the post by the Dean

** Amended (non-substantive changes) to update policy owner and group lead July 2026*

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the Parish Visiting Group is to assist in the mission and ministry of Southwell Cathedral, demonstrating the love of God through befriending and visiting members of the worshipping community.

This document should be read in conjunction with: [Church of England Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance](#); [Church of England National Safeguarding Standards](#); the following Cathedral policies: Pastoral Care Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Procedure & Guidance, Lone Worker Policy, Health and Safety Policy; and the Role Description for the Parish Visiting Group (see Appendix).

All members of the Parish Visiting Group must be recruited in accordance with the Cathedral's Recruitment Policy and are subject to the appropriate DBS checks.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Ministerial Team and members of the Parish Visiting Group. It might also be referred to by those visited by the Parish Visiting Group.

3. Objectives

- To be alert to pastoral needs and to communicate these to the cathedral clergy and other members of the Parish Visiting Group as appropriate.
- To offer friendship and listen to the concerns of the worshipping community.
- To visit when invited and by prior arrangement, usually in pairs.
- To keep notes of times, dates, places and people visited.
- To be alert to safeguarding concerns and to report these immediately to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Team, or the police if someone is considered to be at imminent risk of harm or in an emergency.
- To recognise where more specialised care is needed and signpost to appropriate sources of help.
- To assess risks both to those visited and to visitors, and take appropriate action.
- To administer Communion to the housebound if trained and authorised to do so.

4. Membership and supervision

- The **Group Lead** is a Residentiary Canon or other member of clergy appointed to the post by the Dean.
- Membership of the Group is at the discretion of the Group Lead and subject to annual review.

- Members will attend regular meetings of the Group to receive guidance. The Group Lead will periodically review common themes and issues arising through these meetings to identify areas for improvement or development.
- Members of the Group can seek guidance from the cathedral clergy when needed.

5. Training

All members of the Parish Visiting Group must undertake Basic (C0), Foundation (C1) and Domestic Abuse Awareness safeguarding training.

6. Good practice guidance

As a member of the Parish Visiting Group, you represent the Cathedral and should treat all volunteers, staff and visitors with respect and consideration. You should expect the same treatment in return.

Planning and preparation

- You should consider the potential difficulties of home visits and discuss with relevant Group members and the Group Lead how risks to both the adult and to yourself (or other visitors) can be minimised.
- Ensure you have a fully charged mobile phone and/or that a relevant person (colleague or loved one) knows your whereabouts.
- Wherever possible, arrange visits in advance rather than 'cold calling', especially for a first visit.
- Make clear from the outset what you are offering (e.g. listening and befriending), and discuss with the person how they would like to be supported within the structure of the service.

Identification and transparency

- You must carry identification linking you to Southwell Cathedral and proactively show it to the person you are visiting. This is particularly important for elderly people living alone, who may be at risk from bogus callers. Letting them know that they have a right to see identification does them a great service.
- Consider leaving a card with your name, role and contact number so that the person or their carer can contact you if necessary.

Safeguarding

- You must report all concerns about an individual's safety or well-being – however minor – **within 24 hours** to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.
- If there is an immediate risk of harm, you must contact the police.

- You must never investigate a disclosure of abuse or possible abuse: seek clarification of details and then report the information shared.
- Follow the Cathedral's Safeguarding Procedure as set out in the Safeguarding Policy, Procedure & Guidance.

Respect for the person visited

- Respect the person's independence. Always knock before entering and consider whether initiating or receiving physical contact is appropriate.
- Do not assume that first-name terms are acceptable; ask how the person wishes to be addressed.
- Show sensitivity to the person's beliefs and faith.
- Be alert to signs of developing or inappropriate dependency, especially during times of personal crisis. If you feel that an over-dependent or inappropriate attachment might be forming, seek advice from the Group Lead and/or Cathedral Safeguarding Officer as appropriate.

Communication

- Use language appropriate to the needs of the person, with awareness of any special difficulties such as hearing impairment, speech issues or learning disabilities.
- Where communication is impaired, ask whether they are comfortable involving a family member or friend of their choice.
- When seeking their views or supporting decision making, offer clear, unbiased choices and allow time for them to consider and express a decision.

Capacity and decision making

- Remember that a person may lack capacity in one area of life while having full capacity in others; ensure participation and inclusion wherever possible.
- Adults with capacity retain the right to make decisions that others consider unwise.

Financial matters

- Exercise extreme caution in all matters related to finance, ensuring honesty, integrity and transparency.
- Do not engage in any activity involving personal financial gain.
- Do not canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, such as the recently bereaved.
- You are under no obligation to make purchases or withdraw cash for people. In emergencies where essential supplies are needed and no family member or carer can assist, obtain receipts, return receipts and any change to the person, make a careful written note, report it to the Group Lead and, if possible, photograph the receipt.
- Do not accept gifts other than small unsolicited tokens, and declare any accepted gift to the Group Lead.

- If someone wishes to donate to the Cathedral, ensure the donation is placed in a marked envelope and obtain a receipt from the Finance Office.

Safety and boundaries

- Follow safe and healthy working practices as outlined in the Cathedral's Health and Safety Policy.
- If you feel unsafe or have concerns about your security, leave the situation at the earliest opportunity.
- If a relationship becomes challenging or you feel unable to manage a developing situation, step back and seek advice from the Group Lead.

Privacy

- You must share personal details only with those within the Cathedral who need to know, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Record keeping

- Keep relevant records for each contact, including date and time, persons present, venue, and nature of contact.
- Record additional detail if you observe signs of heightened vulnerability.
- Report all safeguarding concerns **within 24 hours** to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.

Confidentiality

- Never promise total confidentiality to a vulnerable adult. Make it clear that information may be shared with appropriate people if there is a risk of significant harm.

Appendix: Parish Visiting Group Volunteer Role Description

Supervision: A nominated Residentiary Canon or other member of clergy appointed by the Dean as Group Lead.

Additional support: Dean, Residentiary Canons, Priest Vicars, Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, licensed lay ministers.

Time commitment: As required to provide appropriate support and care to the individual(s) to whom the volunteer is assigned.

Purpose of the role: The Parish Visiting Group assists in the mission and ministry of Southwell Cathedral by demonstrating the love of God through befriending and visiting members of the worshipping community.

Volunteer profile

- Friendly, caring and readily approachable.
- Able to use appropriate listening skills, show empathy and recognise need in others.
- Able to work discreetly and respect personal boundaries.
- Able to work collaboratively within the Group and accept training and guidance.

Duties

- Be alert to pastoral needs and communicate these to the cathedral clergy and Parish Visiting Group.
- Offer friendship and a listening ear to members of the worshipping community.
- Visit individuals when invited and by prior arrangement, usually in pairs.
- Keep notes of times, dates, places and people visited.
- Remain alert to safeguarding concerns and report these immediately to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Team, or the police if someone is considered to be at imminent risk of harm or in an emergency.
- Recognise when specialised care is needed and signpost individuals to appropriate sources of help.
- Assess risks both to those visited and to visitors, and take appropriate action.
- Administer Communion to the housebound if trained and authorised.

Expectations

- An understanding of, and empathy with, the life and operations of a working cathedral.
- Attendance at services and a presence in the community served.
- Alertness to those who may be absent and in need of support.
- Act as effective representatives of the Cathedral and treat all with respect and consideration.
- Work collaboratively with other members of the Parish Visiting Group.
- Familiarity with the policies set out in the Parish Visiting Group Policy & Guidance.

Safeguarding responsibilities

- Report safeguarding concerns to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Team, however minor.
- All members of the Parish Visiting Group must undertake Basic (C0), Foundation (C1) and Domestic Abuse Awareness safeguarding training.