



Southwell Cathedral

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

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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

A healthy Christian community is one in which people know that they are cared for, visitors are welcome, and all – young and old alike – are valued and feel safe. The care that is offered, both at times of crisis and in everyday life, is an active proclamation of God's love in Christ for all the world.

Pastoral care at a cathedral brings particular challenges because of its complex web of relationships. At Southwell Cathedral there are several worshipping communities, together with volunteers, employees, pilgrims and visitors. The Minster also serves the entire Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham, making our community diverse and geographically widespread. We aim to provide care both on and offsite, as part of Jesus' command to *"love your neighbour as yourself"*.

Good administration and effective communication are necessary elements of pastoral provision. Senior leaders have a particular responsibility to ensure the pastoral care of the worshipping community and to protect the vulnerable.

Pastoral care is for all who are part of the Cathedral community: occasional attendees as well as long-standing members; those unable to attend services as well as those who attend regularly; the healthy as well as those who are sick.

We seek to demonstrate pastoral concern and compassion through our worship, liturgy and prayers, reflecting the day-to-day concerns and joys of our community and our world.

This policy aims to secure an inclusive and accountable approach, grounded in spiritual wisdom, safeguarding principles, integrity and supervision.

We remain conscious of the power dynamics involved in pastoral care, noting the position of trust held and the power exercised.

We seek to challenge:

- Prejudice and barriers relating to gender, age, family models, sexual orientation, race, culture, membership status, disability or ability.
- The misuse of power within the Church.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the cathedral community, including clergy, employees, volunteers and congregation, contractors, and all visitors.

3. Key principles

- Pastoral ministry is integral to the life of the Cathedral and all its members.
- Safeguarding is at the heart of pastoral ministry.
- Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.

- Pastoral ministry should be proactive, not merely reactive.
- Formal pastoral care is well organised and resourced.
- Clergy, licensed lay ministers, employees and volunteers involved in pastoral care must meet Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Training requirements.
- Informal pastoral care between members of the Cathedral community is valued and encouraged.

4. What is pastoral care?

Pastoral care may involve:

- Sustaining people through prolonged difficulty or immediate need.
- Enabling healing and wholeness.
- Supporting reconciliation with God, self, and others.
- Offering guidance about further resources.
- Helping people gain new perspectives.

A great deal of pastoral care within the Cathedral community happens **informally** – spontaneously and through everyday encounters between congregation members. This is an expression of Christian concern for one another.

Formal pastoral care, overseen by the designated Residentiary Canon (or other member of clergy appointed by the Dean, hereinafter ‘Pastoral Lead’), is planned and organised. It may be undertaken by clergy, licensed lay ministers or members of the Parish Visiting Group, and may include:

- Home visits.
- Hospital visiting.
- Home communions.
- Responses to pastoral crises.
- Keeping in touch with people in residential care.
- Supporting those recently bereaved.

5. Pastoral structures

Clergy roles

- **Clergy in Residence:** Each day a member of the cathedral clergy (usually the Dean or a Residentiary Canon) is listed as Clergy in Residence. They are available to respond to pastoral situations encountered by vergers, volunteers and employees.
- **Canon Precentor:** Oversees pastoral care within the worship setting, including Minster Kids junior worship and chorister care (alongside the Chorister Supervisor).
- **Pastoral Lead:** Responsible for pastoral care across the wider Cathedral community and

oversees the Parish Visiting Group. All pastoral encounters requiring follow-up should be shared with the Pastoral Lead (see Section 6).

Duty chaplains

Most days between Easter and October, duty chaplains are available to chat or pray with visitors and worshippers.

Friends in Faith

Friends in Faith meets monthly to celebrate the gifts of adults with learning disabilities, autism and additional needs, together with (and accompanied by) their families, friends and carers. The group affirms that all are equally precious to God.

Home communion

Holy Communion can be taken to the housebound, where resources and time allow.

Hospital visiting

Members of the Cathedral community wishing to organise a hospital visit should contact the hospital chaplain first; they will liaise with the Cathedral where needed.

Parish Visiting Group

The Parish Visiting Group, overseen by the Pastoral Lead, undertakes pastoral care in the wider Cathedral community, often through home visits and visiting residential care settings. The remit and role of the Group are set out in the Parish Visiting Group Policy & Guidance.

5. Referrals and emergencies

Safeguarding concerns

Any safeguarding concern arising in a pastoral encounter must be recorded and reported to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer in line with the Safeguarding Guide for Staff and Volunteers.

The Guide also lists national and local support services. Additional resources are available in the yellow Safeguarding Folders at the Cathedral Information Desk, Vergers' Vestry, Minster Centre Office and Song School.

Non-safeguarding emergencies

- For urgent non-safeguarding issues on Cathedral grounds, the first point of contact is the **Verger on Duty**, who will take appropriate action. All vergers are trained first aiders.
- The **Clergy in Residence** is the emergency clergy contact; their details are displayed in the South Porch.
- Both the Verger on Duty and the Clergy in Residence must ensure that actions taken during an emergency are properly logged.

6. Sharing pastoral information

Good administration supports effective pastoral care.

- Records of pastoral visits must be accurate (see Parish Visiting Group Policy & Guidance).
- Personal information will only be shared with those who need to know (usually the Pastoral Lead, the Parish Visiting Group where appropriate, or, if the information relates to safeguarding, the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer), in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. Members of the ministry team are kept informed as appropriate.
- All pastoral encounters requiring recording or follow-up must be sent to the Pastoral Lead and/or a Residentiary Canon so that pastoral care is coordinated and effective.

Guidelines for sharing pastoral information:

- Ideally provide an update within 24 hours of the encounter.
- Give enough detail to be meaningful and helpful.
- Consider whether the person would be comfortable reading what is being shared about them.

7. Training

We provide relevant training for those involved in pastoral care. This includes safeguarding, principles of confidentiality, listening skills and good practice.

Clergy, licensed lay ministers, employees and volunteers are expected to complete training appropriate to their role.