



Volunteer Guidelines

Guidance for those in positions of trust or exercising pastoral ministry with vulnerable people, children or young people. All those involved in pastoral ministry should be working within this set of guidelines. Following such guidelines should not only protect vulnerable people but also ensure that workers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct.

Your relationships

Exercising any kind of ministry involves developing an understanding of yourself and how you relate to others, how you increase the well-being of others and how you ensure your own well-being and safety. As you are in a positions of trust you will necessarily have power, therefore respecting professional boundaries is particularly important. Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts, making this guidance even more necessary.

- Exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or family relationship.
- Be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.
- If you are exercising a healing ministry you should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work.
- Recognize your limits and do not undertake any ministry that is beyond your competence or role (e.g. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators, or giving legal advice). In such instances the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise.
- Avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.
- Treat those with whom you minister or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.
- Take care when helping with physical needs, washing and toileting, always respecting the choices of the individual concerned.
- Pastoral relationships may develop into romantic attachments and such situations should be handled sensitively. You need to recognize such a development and make it clear to both

the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements should be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the person concerned.

- Do not undertake any pastoral ministry while you are under the influence of drink or non-prescribed drugs.

Your conversations with people

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters. You should be aware of your language and behaviour. For example, innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, you should be discerning about the motives and needs of the person and question their own ability to assist. You should consider in advance:

- the place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, and your dress;
- the balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby);
- the physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past;
- whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction;
- the propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone, especially in the evening;
- the personal safety and comfort of all participants;
- establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration;
- the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

Record keeping and privacy

- Consider keeping a daily record of pastoral encounters to include date, time, place, subject and actions to be taken. The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's consent unless it is a matter of child protection or might be a record of suspicion of abuse or mistreatment.
- Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
- Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 50 years).
- The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation.

Being part of a team

The standards maintained within a pastoral relationship are equally relevant in relationships with the rest of the Uplyme team. Harassment or bullying should never be condoned. You need to be aware of the possibility of stress within the ministry environment. The needs of family should be acknowledged and all who work together should acknowledge the boundaries between ministry and home, allowing sufficient time for relaxation and holidays. Everyone who works with vulnerable people should know to whom they are accountable and have a designated person with whom to discuss their work.

- You should be aware of the responsibilities, function and style of the rest of the team and encourage cooperation and consultation between team members in the tasks they do.
- Your team-mates should not be discriminated against, harassed, bullied or abused for any reason.
- Team-mates should not be penalized for following this guidance or for taking action regarding others and this guidance.
- When leaving office or relinquishing any task church workers should relinquish any pastoral relationship except with the agreement of any successor.
- You should know to whom you are accountable and be regularly mentored by them or another person who can assist. Such mentoring is especially necessary if you are undertaking a continuing individual pastoral ministry of counselling, or when your ministry takes you outside normal church work.
- You should ensure that their tasks can be carried out by another if you are ill or otherwise unable to fulfil your responsibilities.

Sexual conduct

Your sexual conduct may have an impact on your ministry within the Church. It is never appropriate for you to take advantage of your role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom you have a pastoral relationship. You should be aware of the power imbalance inherent in pastoral relationships.

- You must not sexually abuse an adult or a child.
- You must take responsibility for your words and actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (e.g. a hug may be misunderstood) or talk to them about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and

responding to non-verbal communication, refraining from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.

- You should follow the Church's discipline on sexual matters.
- You must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and should refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults.
- You should avoid situations where you feel vulnerable to temptation or where your conduct may be misinterpreted.

Your financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- You should not seek personal financial gain from your position beyond your salary or recognized allowances.
- You should not be influenced by offers of money.
- You should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it should be decided whether they could be accepted.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, e.g. the recently bereaved.

Your behaviour outside church and your ministry

In church ministry, behaviour outside work can often impinge on that ministry. You are expected to uphold Christian values throughout your lives.