

ST BRANDON'S, BRANCEPETH**SAFEGUARDING ISSUES IN HOME VISITING:
GUIDELINES**

Pastoral visiting on behalf of the church is an outworking of our Lord's commandment to love one another. It is specifically mentioned in Matthew – the parable of the sheep and the goats: 'when I was sick or in prison you visited me'.

Informal friendly and neighbourly visiting and care goes on all the time in our parish. Within the church the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all is important. Inevitably, this sometimes means being alongside people who may be vulnerable or needy. At St Brandon's we want to ensure that such relationships are appropriate and safe at all times. Therefore, when people are visiting 'on behalf of' the church, they are expected to comply with St Brandon's safeguarding and good practice guidelines.

People involved in pastoral care on behalf of the church will:

- abide by the ACC (Association of Christians in Counselling) Guidelines for Good Practice in Pastoral Care (www.pastoralcareuk.org);
- have up to date DBS clearance;
- have completed appropriate safeguarding training; and
- expect to reflect with others on pastoral care issues which may arise for the church and for themselves.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy includes the following practical guidance for pastoral care / visits:

Pastoral care often involves one to one meetings either in a home context or on church premises. 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. The following simple tips may help everyone to feel safe:

- Carry identification and be prepared to identify yourself.
- Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards. Always be aware of your exits and if possible try to sit in a place where there is no one between you and the exit.
- At a home visit, make sure the door is shut behind you and if you can, make sure you are familiar with the door lock. In church premises, make sure that at least one exit can be easily opened (e.g. a Yale lock, a push bar etc.).

- Set some boundaries at the outset, in particular how long you expect the meeting to take.
- Trust your intuition. If you feel uneasy, act straight away and find a way of ending the meeting, or leaving.
- Make sure someone knows where you are and what time you expect to be back; if you have any reason to be concerned, make specific arrangements to check in with someone; consider making arrangements for someone to contact you after a fixed period of time.
- Ensure your mobile phone is charged and accessible; park your car in a lit area and make sure you know where you have left it.
- If there are animals present and you are not comfortable, then ask the occupants to remove or secure them.
- Keep a simple record of visits, including anything that causes concern. Concerns should be shared appropriately with a supervisor, parish clergy and/or the safeguarding officer. If there is any safeguarding concern the set procedures must be followed. See the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy 2023-4.