

Clergy Mentoring Guidelines

1. Introduction

The diocesan clergy mentor scheme exists:

- To resource and train clergy to develop as mentors.
- To create a safe environment for mentoring to take place, based on good practice and clear policies.
- To provide a means by which clergy can develop as disciples of Jesus, ministers of the gospel and leaders of God's people.

A mentor works with a mentee to assist them in fulfilling their developmental desires in a trusting relationship built on mutual respect, clear guidelines and agreed expectations. The scheme is primarily intended for any deacons or priests who want to grow and who are committed to the path of transformation. Its effectiveness will be most evident in those who chose and desire mentoring rather than those who see it as a requirement. However, there will be occasions when a bishop will require someone to have a mentor.

2. Objectives

The Church of England's *Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing* has: *'...explicit focus on the nature of pastoral care within a Christian context, of encouragement rather than demand, and its goals of: a shift towards the preventative (better than cure); a shift towards shared responsibility (a renewed sense of partnership between individual ministers, laity, local church, the diocese and the national church); a shift towards coordinated response (from ministerial discernment through to retirement); culture change (toward greater concern on the part of the whole church); and achievability (practical, pragmatic and useful at every level).'*¹

Mentoring is not about personal counselling or spiritual direction or performance management. There can be a lot of pressure on clergy to produce church growth and measurable results. This has been known to lead to rigid adherence to particular techniques or methodologies designed to produce immediate growth or success, but which slowly depart from actual Kingdom activity. Mentoring is one aspect of clergy support, one option available to clergy looking to fulfil their vocation, grow in grace in love, and avoid burnout and disillusionment. Other options for personal development, some of which are required under Common Tenure, and which may be more appropriate at any given time, would include;

- Reflective practice groups, which facilitate learning and deeper understanding from facilitated peer conversations;
- Coaching circles, which facilitate confidential, peer-facilitated support and discussion.
- Spiritual direction, which deals with a person's relationship with God, but not necessarily with consequent implications for vocation and ministry.
- MDR (required under Common Tenure), which in addition to providing an opportunity for reflection, brings certain ministry objectives to the attention of the bishop and senior staff in a way that other options of clergy support cannot.
- Diocesan Galilee Course for ministerial renewal.
- Occupational health (required under Common Tenure)

We define mentoring as an intentional, empowering, unique, voluntary relationship of trust in which one person (the mentor) enables another person (the mentee) to maximise the grace and resources of God within their lives and develop their potential in the service of God's kingdom.

Intentional

Christian mentoring is intentional for the obvious reason that it is undertaken deliberately. Church life is full of incidental conversations, often haphazard and unintentional, that lead to the sharing of good advice and constructive ideas. Sometimes this has some of the characteristics of mentoring. It is not however what is meant by mentoring in this context which is the deliberate work of willingly engaging in the next step that leads to deep personal change or addressing the challenge of a particular issue.

¹ See Appendix 3 for the summary proposals

Empowering

“Empowering relationships take people from a place of inner weakness, where they feel powerless and overwhelmed, to a place of inner strength where they feel able to respond constructively to their situation. Inner weakness is characterised by timidity, indecisiveness, anxiety, procrastination and self-doubt. Inner strength is characterised by confidence, fortitude, patience, determination, hope and courage.” [Rick Lewis] In our context we trust that this work is done by the Holy Spirit who strengthens us with power in our inner being

Unique

There are a vast number of mentoring templates available in the HR marketplace. Evidence seems to suggest, however, that the best Christian mentoring is based upon the foundation of establishing a unique relationship between two people who are dedicated to pursuing the presence of God, centred on Jesus and enlivened by the Holy Spirit. The direction the relationship takes in our context should be found by careful listening to the inner voice of the other and the still, small voice of God.

Voluntary

Actually, choosing to begin a mentoring relationship is the first, and possibly most important, step in the process. A growing desire to flourish, to take greater responsibility, to avoid wasting time and talent are essential ingredients. This voluntary step needs to be met with respect, empathy and confidentiality in order that a safe and sacred space may be created, which the process needs, like oxygen and sunlight, if it is to thrive.

Relationship

Mentoring needs a formal structure, but it cannot take place in the context of a purely transactional contract. It may involve a formal arrangement, but it will go beyond that to become a heart-to-heart meeting of persons. It is less important that the mentor is trained in theory and technique, than that they are conscientious, non-defensive, and caring, that they engage with people, honour confidences, and let themselves actually care when the mentee is hurt, that they believe in people and really think the mentee could be better.

In summary, the objectives are

- To maximise the grace of God in the life of the mentee
- To deepen someone’s understanding of their vocation in Christ
- To promote diaconal and priestly formation
- To encourage the achievement of ministry objectives
- To provide an opportunity for listening and reflecting
- To share godly, practical wisdom
- To develop potential in the service of God’s kingdom

3. Key roles and responsibilities

Oversight

The mentor scheme is part of the apostolic life of the diocese, and those who act as mentors are acting on behalf of the diocese. The scheme is co-ordinated by the CMD officer who along with all mentors is accountable to Director for Apostolic Life.

Co-ordinator

The coordinator of the scheme is responsible for:

- Coordinating the selection and training of mentors.
- Ensuring mentees are suitably equipped for their role.
- Overseeing the mentor directory.
- Supporting the mentors and ensuring appropriate supervision.
- Co-ordinating review and evaluation of each mentoring relationship.
- Ensuring adherence to the diocese’s mentoring policies.
- Managing whatever (small) budget is allocated to this task.

Mentors

The mentor will:

- Attend appropriate training before starting.
- Develop one-to-one mentoring relationships with mentees.
- Support the mentee in the development of their diaconal or priestly ministry.
- Help the mentee establish and fulfil their developmental and ministry goals.
- Refer the mentee to other sources of support when the limits of their role have been reached.
- Respect the confidentiality of the mentee, unless there are specific reasons why this cannot be done. It could be that both partners agree that the mentor can speak to someone else about an issue or problem or that some level of reporting is required by the bishop. Confidentiality can be broken without consent if a child or adult is at risk of significant harm, prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime is prejudiced or if withholding information would lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm.
- Pray for the mentee.
- Adhere to this mentor policy and procedures, always aiming for best practice.
- Review how the relationship is going on a regular basis.
- Keep simple records of each meeting containing anything that the mentee wishes to be accountable for.

The mentee will:

- Aim to grow in devotion to Christ. They will desire to be transformed into the likeness of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Be open. They will recognise that they are seeking new ideas and perspectives and listen for God's voice.
- Be determined. They will seek out areas for growth and work to push through obstacles.
- Be honest. Good mentees are not evasive or defensive, they own their own opinions and do not create false impressions.
- Think. They reflect on their lives, prepare good questions and consider what is said.
- Take action. They avoid being passive and take responsibility for their development and completion of plans.
- Take responsibility for putting into action what has been agreed with the mentor.
- Pray for the mentor.
- Respect boundaries. They are sensitive in their demands and respect the time commitment given by the mentor by honouring commitments and not contacting the mentor outside of agreed guidelines.
- Indicate the relationship on their MDR paperwork.
- Show appreciation. They acknowledge the value of the mentor.

4. Location of meetings

Normally the mentee travels to meet the mentor in their home or at a mutually agreed place nearby. Mentoring can take place in a home, a coffee shop, a church room, even on a walk. If it is held in a place where others are present, it is important that the participants cannot be overheard. A simple contract should be agreed (see appendix 5).

5. Frequency of meeting and duration of the relationship.

The meeting should be booked in advance and on a regular basis, which should be defined and agreed between mentor and mentee. A rough guideline is to meet every 4-6 weeks to begin with. The duration of the relationship can be open ended but the best mentoring relationships should be time limited. There should be a formal review after 12 months to see if it should continue and then every 6 months after that.

6. Resources

The diocese commits itself to providing resources to develop the mentors in their role through ongoing opportunities for training. There will be two supervision/support sessions each year.

7. Complaints

Last updated 22/8/23

Mentors are trained to conduct their role in accordance with this mentor policy. Whilst it is of course hoped things will run smoothly, it is important to have a clear policy if things don't go as hoped. Should there be a complaint, the diocesan complaints policy should be followed

8. Further information

If you would like to know more about the mentor scheme and any of the policies or procedures, please contact CMD Officer.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Common Worship Ordinal (excerpts)

Deacons

Deacons are called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom. They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.

Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church and in leading God's people in worship. They preach the word and bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession. They accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism. They assist in administering the sacraments; they distribute communion and minister to the sick and housebound.

Deacons are to seek nourishment from the Scriptures; they are to study them with God's people, that the whole Church may be equipped to live out the gospel in the world. They are to be faithful in prayer, expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as he reveals his kingdom among us.

Priests

Priests are called to be servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent. With their Bishop and fellow ministers, they are to proclaim the word of the Lord and to watch for the signs of God's new creation. They are to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for his family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Formed by the word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.

With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love. They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith. They are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God. They are to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They are to bless the people in God's name. They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death. Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, 2015 (excerpt)

The primary aims of these Guidelines are:

- to encourage the clergy – deacons, priests and bishops – to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct throughout a lifetime of ministry;
- to identify certain basic minimum standards of behaviour;
- to seek to ensure the welfare and the protection of individuals and groups with whom the clergy work, and of the clergy and their families;
- to provide safe and effective boundaries for clerical ministry;
- to encourage personal and corporate ministerial development.

Last updated 22/8/23

...

Well-being

13 You cannot bear the weight of this calling in your own strength, but only by the grace and power of God. Pray therefore that your heart may daily be enlarged, and your understanding of the Scriptures enlightened. Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

13.1 The clergy minister by grace through their own broken humanity, being aware of their own need to receive ministry.

13.2 In exercising their ministry, the 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. The 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.

13.3 Spiritual discernment can be facilitated by sharing the journey of faith with another person. A minister should have someone outside the work situation to whom to turn for help.

13.4 Ministers holding office under common tenure have a legal obligation to cooperate in arrangements made by the diocesan bishop for ministerial development review, and to participate in appropriate continuing ministerial education. Ministers who are not subject to common tenure should also, as a matter of good practice, ensure that arrangements are in place for their ministry to be reviewed on a regular basis and for their ongoing ministerial education.

13.5 Both formal ministerial development review and discussion with a spiritual director or companion should offer the opportunity for the clergy to reflect on whether they are giving sufficient time and attention to family life, friendship, recreation and renewal and to consider any health issues.

Care for the Carers

14 Brothers and sisters, you have heard how great is the charge that these ordinands are ready to undertake ... Will you continually pray for them? Will you uphold and encourage them in their ministry?

14.1 "Care for the carers" is fundamental. The clergy need to be supported and the laity have a particular and significant role in the pastoral care of the clergy.

The clergy and those who support them should be aware of the Ministry Division publication Dignity at Work (2008) and its recommendations concerning bullying, harassment, and accusation at work.

14.2 The bishop takes responsibility for the welfare of the clergy when receiving the oath of canonical obedience. This responsibility is shared with suffragan and area bishops, archdeacons, and rural and area deans.

14.3 Care of the clergy is a responsibility shared between the PCC and Diocesan Authorities.

Many of these responsibilities are spelled out in the Statement of Particulars under Common Tenure and in Diocesan Regulations. The PCC is responsible for the provision of adequate administrative assistance, reimbursement in full of ministerial expenses (see The Parochial Expenses of the Clergy, Ministry Division, 2017) and for ensuring a safe environment in the church and its surroundings in which to work. Where the PCC is the relevant housing provider, it has responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of the clergy housing. The responsibilities of Bishop and Diocese are as set out in the Statement of Particulars and Diocesan Clergy Manual, and in the Green Guide published by the Church Commissioners. The Statement of Particulars includes provision for holidays... upkeep of the parsonage house, and entitlement to release for extra-parochial ministry.

14.4 As part of good stewardship, those who occupy either a parsonage house or housing provided by the Diocese or PCC must take proper care of the property and should be aware of the requirement to allow access for both inspections and works to take place.

14.5 Power is exercised and experienced in many ways, and the clergy should beware of the potential of using their position to bully others. Equally those who have the responsibility of caring for the clergy should be aware that bullying can be exercised both by church authorities and by parishioners.

14.6 The clergy should be encouraged to develop opportunities for mutual support and pastoral care within chapters, cell groups, or other peer groupings. All the 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.

14.7 In ministries where the clergy have both a sector and a parochial responsibility, there should be a clear understanding between diocese, parish and the minister concerned about where the boundaries lie.

14.8 Support and advice on the practical, psychological and emotional issues involved should be readily available to clergy approaching retirement and to their families.

14.9 The bishop and those exercising pastoral care of the clergy should both by word and example actively encourage the clergy to adopt a healthy lifestyle which should include adequate time for leisure, through taking days off and their full holidays, 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 needs to be a priority.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/guidelines-professional-conduct-clergy/guidelines-professional-conduct>

Appendix 3: *Clergy Wellbeing Covenant*

Specific Recommendations

27. The Working Group has wanted to avoid, as much as possible, being too prescriptive about what should or should not be done in any specific place by any particular person. However, there are a few issues that bear on the entire practice of ministry and our shared commitment to care and wellbeing of the clergy, which we wish to highlight to the wider church.

28. Pastoral Supervision & Reflective Practice. Among many issues considered by the Working Group, none has attracted greater support and enthusiasm than the need for all clergy to engage in some form of pastoral supervision. As Bishop David Walker has commented, “Those who are called to the most regular and intense pastoral work will almost certainly benefit from having supervision in the form common in the counselling world.”² While the Working Group recognises that opportunities for exploring ministerial practice in an informal way arise in well-organised Chapters and cell group meetings, best practice indicates that a structured process with a frequency and regularity, where clergy take time out to reflect upon their experiences and pay attention to their feelings, is required to enable them to remain congruent in their ministry. Here we are speaking of the discipline of some form of pastoral supervision undertaken individually or in groups, or access to coaching, work consultancy or formal mentoring. This reflection cannot only be done in isolation; nor can it be done effectively on an occasional, informal, basis; we all need others to help us develop our self-awareness, insight and skills in pastoral relationships.

29. *We therefore would like to propose to the Church of England that we take the first steps towards establishing a culture where some form of pastoral supervision is the norm across the board, and not the exception.* We recognise that this will take expertise and funding, but we believe its time has come, as we face increasingly demanding pastoral needs that are especially complex in a world where inadequate social care, poor provision of mental health services and social and emotional deprivation are constantly encountered by clergy during the course of their ministry. Clergy are in the front line of the church’s response to such realities; the provision of pastoral supervision, will be a tangible sign of the church’s commitment to responding to these needs. The Working Group have been reluctant to make definitive statements of what the Church of England most needs in terms of the care and wellbeing of the clergy, but if we were to make just one, it would be the vital need for provision for pastoral supervision.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/supporting-clergy-health-and-wellbeing/covenant>

Appendix 4: Rick Lewis, *Mentoring Matters* (excerpt)

Rick Lewis’s book, *Mentoring Matters*, describes the perfect storm of Christian ministry as occurring when the systematic hazards of ministry meet the vulnerabilities in the leader’s personality. This is further affected by the systems and culture existing in many church institutions and Christian denominations that

² David Walker, *Clergy in a Complex Age: Responses to the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*, SPCK 2016

are rarely free of hazardous conditions. Vulnerabilities in the leader's personality refers to those parts of the psyche that are still in the process of being brought into conformity with the image of Christ: old wounds, dark secrets, immaturity, inner addictions and foolish ways that reduce a leader's capacity.

He goes on to describe five hazardous conditions.

Demanding

This seems obvious. Christian ministry is expected to be demanding. People are messy. A problem arises when the demands of the institution, often influenced by secular models, seeks measurable results alone and leads the minister to pursue quantity over quality. Christian leaders sign up to serve Christ but are soon confronted with people who have a consumer mentality which demands that they are served and whose expectations are often at variance with those of the leader. These expectations sometimes fall on the leader's family too.

Disempowering

All Christian ministry is lived out in circumstances where resources are insufficient, where organisational structures in church life frequently lack clarity and have messy boundaries, where there is diminishing respect for Christian leadership, where there is a high proportion of volunteers, and where there is ambiguity about what is meant by the concept of servant leadership. "When I'm doing what they want they affirm me, when I don't, they quickly remind me I'm a servant." This contributes to disempowerment.

Dangerous

The stakes are high. Priestly ministry deals with peoples' messy lives often at moments of maximum vulnerability. Ministry often encourages messianic complexes and creates unhealthy systems of dependence. Every conflict in a Christian organisation seems to take on larger proportions because of particular doctrinal investments or articles of faith. It would appear easier for churches to give vulnerable leaders opportunities for indiscretion.

Isolating

Leaders in general and clergy in particular are regarded as a breed apart. Priests are rarely allowed out of role. Long-term friendships can be hard to sustain. Patterns of work make social life difficult. Many relationships for church leaders are simply with other church leaders.

Unforgiving

Churches can be among the most ungracious and unforgiving organisations you can meet. Christian leaders who make mistakes are often subject to the most severe levels of public censure and the most unforgiving public response. Emphasis is often on punishment rather than restoration. It has been said that the church is the only army that shoots its own wounded.

Systematic hazard	Leader's Vulnerability	Likely outcome
Demanding	Performance driven Compulsive Fails to manage time Lack of self-care Takes family for granted	Burnout
Disempowering	Insecurity Compensating Addictive behaviours Passive aggressive	Depression
Dangerous	Lack of self awareness Crosses boundaries Lust, greed, combative, defensive Co-dependence	Termination
Isolating	Individualism Unaccountable Lonely Inadequate	Disconnection

	Paranoia	
Unforgiving	Hides character Weakness Shallowness Hypocrisy Narcissism Tells lies	Moral failure

Rick Lewis suggests how mentoring can assist Christian leaders when faced with these hazards. He calls them capacities that can help ministers refocus on God’s agenda, create a demilitarised zone of safety and confidentiality, and provide a place for healthy accountability;

Personal and spiritual preparation and bring to bear

There seems to have been a trend for people emerging into church leadership who are high on qualifications and low on formation. There may have been a naïve assumption that highly qualified people have the spiritual and emotional intelligence to sustain a lifetime of ministry. Mentoring can assist leaders by enabling them to keep their heads in the midst of difficulties and bring to bear the spiritual resources necessary for a robust spiritual life, a renewed sense of identity and vocation, and a strong character.

Relational Connectedness

Christian leaders are desperately in need of relational connectedness at a time when they are expected to deliver the services for which they are paid in an increasingly depersonalised transaction. Sometimes isolation is the result of poor choices or laziness, but many more probably fail to connect with others out of insecurity. Mentors can help reorientate life around improved relationships.

Non-Competitive partnerships

Often, when attempting to overcome isolation, ministers are exposed to competitive conversations with other church leaders that are not conducive to honest disclosure. By being on the side of the mentee, the mentoring relationship can model collaboration and work with the express intention of encouraging the heart. The mentor can be a person who is a partner in mission and who has no interest in playing competitive games.

Empowering structures

Christian leaders need to find a place to fit into structures beyond themselves that provide them with personal and spiritual support and accountability. However, leaders who look to their parent organisations to provide personal and spiritual accountability, may experience the structures of their organisation or denomination as bureaucratic and disempowering. In broad terms, according to the extent to which an organisation exercises power, they compromise their capacity to impart power. Further, those assigned by the structures to provide support and accountability may be perceived to have a conflict of interest between what is best for the leader and what is best for the organisation.

Life transformation

Christian leaders need opportunities to thoroughly process the information and training they receive about ministry and mission and leadership. CMD, seminars, conferences etc all provide very good training and other inputs but there is a risk of this material failing to lead to transformation and deep change if there is not something in parallel to the training that enables this material to become integrated into the life of the leader and their particular context and circumstances. Mentoring is ideally placed to facilitate this vital reflection to make sure that clergy are not just informed or conformed but transformed.

APPENDIX 5

Mentoring Agreement

MentorMentee.....Date.....

Establishing this agreement is a dynamic process in which Mentor and Mentee explore what is required in this specific mentoring relationship. This will include:

Logistics and Scheduling

- How long for?
- When?
- Where?

Boundaries

What is appropriate in the relationship and what is not?
What do you need from the coach in order to support and challenge you in your ministry role?
What are the mentee’s responsibilities in the mentoring relationship?

Confidentiality

All our conversations and discussion will remain confidential unless we both partners agree that the mentor can speak to someone else about an issue or problem or that the bishop has required a level of reporting. Confidentiality can be broken without consent if a child or adult is at risk of significant harm, prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime is prejudiced or if withholding information would lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm.

Openness

If your mentor ever says or does anything that you don’t feel comfortable with or if you have a concern with the way you are working, please let them know immediately. To enable effective work together you’ll need to be honest with your mentor and they will need to be honest with you. Mentor and mentee need permission to say this is not working. There may be a need to refer on with agreement.

Nature of relationship

Mentoring is not to be construed as psychological counselling or any type of therapy. A mentor is there:

- To maximise the grace of God in the life of the mentee
- To deepen someone’s understanding of their vocation in Christ
- To promote diaconal and priestly formation
- To encourage the achievement of ministry objectives
- To provide an opportunity for listening and reflecting
- To share godly, practical wisdom
- To develop potential in the service of God’s kingdom

You enter mentoring with the understanding that results are not guaranteed and that you are mainly responsible for creating your own results by engaging with the process.

Sessions

Timing:

Are you happy to be contacted by:

phone.....email.....text.....

Signed

Mentor..... Mentee.....

Date.....