

# **A Guide to the Exeter Diocese Pastoral and Counselling Service**

The Pastoral Care and Counselling Service exists to provide help in times of emotional or psychological difficulty, for the clergy, spouses and their children and for lay people who are on the payroll of the diocese, and immediate family. The service also provides help to licensed readers and staff on the payroll of the Diocese or their partners and children and volunteers (with formal working agreements). Access to the service is through the Advisor in Pastoral Care and Counselling, Julia Barrett.

## **What kind of difficulty?**

Everyday life creates stresses and strains-personally, at home and at work. Normally we cope with these as part of life. There are however times when particular problems seem overwhelming, or we feel in need of help to cope with levels of stress, underlying feelings or experiences, or occasional difficulties which are affecting our health or our ability to do our job or fulfil our vocation. Counselling, with a professional and experienced practitioner, offers a safe and confidential environment in which to explore, understand and resolve problems and difficulties which threaten to overwhelm.

Some aspects of a minister's pastoral responsibility are in themselves stressful - for example, a particularly distressing funeral or pastoral contact. In such cases it is often helpful to meet with someone who can help in reflecting on responses and reactions after the event. This is a service which the Service is also able to offer.

Sometimes, too, when ministers are dealing pastorally with people who seem to be emotionally disturbed or unusually difficult it may be hard to work out how to respond or what to do. Here too the Advisor may be able to offer suggestions which could perhaps involve a referral to a GP, a specialist advisor or counsellor, or voluntary agency. Whilst the Advisor is not in a position to be able to take on work with parishioners, she is more than happy to support and advise ministers in how best to care and support them pastorally.

## **What happens when someone uses the Pastoral Care and Counselling Service?**

After the initial contact an arrangement will be made for the person concerned to meet the Advisor in order to discuss their situation and agree on an appropriate way forward. This may lead to further appointments or a referral to another qualified professional for the appropriate kind of counselling.

Initially, counselling is offered for six or twelve sessions at weekly intervals. Occasionally, with more complex problems, longer-term help may be required. There is a commitment to providing the kind of help that is appropriate to each user of the Service.

Sometimes, however, what people will need is simply information or knowledge of where to get some kind of practical help. This will usually be dealt with through a one-off meeting or telephone call. At other times what is needed is a sympathetic ear to help in the process of talking through some concern or anxiety which may take place over one or two sessions. At other times it may be more appropriate to refer to a Spiritual Director, Pastoral Supervisor or a Reflective Practice Group.

### **Confidentiality**

The service is very confidential. Information as to who uses the service and what help they receive is not available to the Bishop or his staff, unless this is requested by a user of the service, who gives written consent to this taking place. Occasionally a Bishop or Archdeacon may refer someone to the Service for help, but even then, although they may know about the person using the service, there will not be any feedback to them about the individual nature or content of any help given.

The only exceptions to confidentiality are in cases where there is a clear risk of serious harm to the person concerned or to others, if safeguarding issues are raised or if required by Law. E.g. if a serious crime is, or is about to be committed. In all cases, the Advisor, as far as possible, works with and supports the person concerned to make the required disclosure. This is in accordance with the UKCP (United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapists) and BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) Code of Practice and Ethics.

Service records are strictly confidential and are not noted on any official or diocesan file. To protect individuals from identification, client records are coded and only the Advisor knows to whom they apply. All users of the service are given written data protection and record keeping information and a consent form to sign.

Information about individual service users is not available to anyone exercising a management role within the Church. However, the Advisor provides anonymous statistical feedback in the form of an Annual Report, in order to help the Bishops Staff to identify and alleviate institutional causes of stress.

## **Cost**

Although Counselling is generally expensive, there is usually no charge for the use of the Service although in some circumstances a personal contribution may be discussed.

## **Complaints**

The service Complaints Policy is available on request from the Adviser or the Service Administrator [chris.blade@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:chris.blade@exeter.anglican.org)

## **Who is the Advisor?**

The Advisor in Pastoral Care and Co-Ordinator of Counselling is Julia Barrett.

Julia is an experienced counsellor and is accredited by the UKCP (United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapists). She is Chair of APC (Association of Anglican Pastoral Care and Counselling) and accredited member of APSE (Association of Pastoral Supervisors and Educators)

She has also been licensed as a Reader since 2001.

## **How do I make initial contact?**

Contact with the Service is made through Julia Barrett

TEL.NO 01884 820493 (confidential line)

EMAIL [julia.barrett@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:julia.barrett@exeter.anglican.org)

## **Some reasons for using the Pastoral Care and Counselling Service**

1. When a high level of stress is being experienced.
2. Your sleep patterns are disturbed.
3. You are regularly waking up in the morning feeling tired and demotivated.
4. Most days you feel anxious and/or guilty
5. You feel lonely and/or isolated
6. Your family and home time, days off and holiday time, are regularly interrupted by work; or you start your days off feeling exhausted.
7. You are experiencing stress or conflict in your marriage/family relationships.
8. You constantly feel that you are a failure in your work and/or personal relationships
9. You no longer feel enthusiasm for your personal interests/hobbies and have lost or losing contact with your friends
10. Conflict or anxiety about conflict is seriously affecting your ministry and/or personal life; or you feel harassed or bullied and are frightened and/or ashamed to talk about it.
11. You are struggling with feelings of loss and grief in relation to the loss of a loved one and/or a time of change and transition
12. You are struggling with painful memories of past events that are affecting you / your ability to work or function properly
13. You are self-harming and/or struggling with harmful behaviour patterns
14. You are struggling with issues related to sexuality and/or sexual orientation
15. You are struggling with serious financial problems and/or worry about about money most days
16. You are struggling with thoughts about ending your life