

St Michael and All Angels, Beaconsfield

RECORDING PASTORAL ENCOUNTERS

There is now a legal requirement to record certain pastoral encounters. Making records is considered good practice and reassures the DCC that they know what is being done in their name and ensures that there is a record in case of a subsequent enquiry or allegation. This helps to safeguard both the visitor and the person visited.

Policy

In following the guidelines and principles set out below, the quality of pastoral care provided by and through the church is of paramount importance.

Pastoral encounters may take the form of face-to-face encounters, written or telephone communication. It is not necessary to record every such encounter. The following is a guide and some discretion will be needed in the exercise of the policy. If a safeguarding issue is raised, the matter **must be recorded**. See DCC Safeguarding Policy and guidance on recording safeguarding issues. Otherwise:

- a brief conversation at morning worship or in the high street is unlikely to need a record;
- a home or hospital visit should be recorded. Exceptions would be in situations where the visit is made to someone as a friend as distinct from a visit in the name of the church. It is for the person making the visit to decide on the nature of the visit in such cases;
- telephone calls would not normally be the subject of a record but it may be judged wise in certain situations;
- records may be kept when cards ('get well', condolence, congratulations etc.) are sent.
- e-mails vary considerably in content and discretion is needed when deciding whether to make a record: significant emails may need to be printed out and hard copies retained;
- letters are usually written to ensure that 'something is in writing' and so it is likely that a record would be appropriate.

Records may fall into four categories:

- Baptismal, wedding and funeral visits should be recorded;
- The Pastoral Group members should bring to each meeting a note of those visited in the previous month and the reason. This should include Home Communion visits. The record should include the names of individuals visited or the location of the visit to a care home, where there are multiple communicants. This will then be recorded at the meeting and a log kept locked in the Office.
- The above record may include brief notes that might previously have been considered insignificant. Visits by members of the Ministry Team and Funeral visits fall into this category.
- From time to time clergy or others in ministry are engaged in pastoral encounters which are not safeguarding issues and which are highly confidential. It is advisable to make a brief note with at least the date and the name of the person.



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