

Church Crookham Baptist Church
Pastoral Visiting Policy

1. What is Pastoral Visiting?

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. **Acts 20:28**

Pastoral care occurs in the church in an informal and unofficial way as we seek to help practically and to encourage one another in the faith and assist with their needs.

Formal or official pastoral care is pastoral care carried out by church representatives on behalf of the church community, and this policy is intended for Pastoral Visitors and Elders appointed in this capacity. Pastoral Team members should recognise when they are acting on behalf of the Church rather than in a personal capacity.

People who are suffering illness, facing life challenges, are housebound or in hospital may be offered visits from the Pastoral Care team. Pastoral visits are made to offer friendship, help, support and maintain contact with the Church. These visits may include practical help, giving information and/or helping people to make their own decisions by listening to them articulate their concerns.

Listening well is fundamental to all good pastoral care. It is not intended that visitors should make people's decisions for them. The role of the visitor is not to offer counselling or spiritual guidance (see signpost section for help with these maters). It is, however, appropriate for Pastoral Visitors to give account for the hope within them if asked by the person whom they visit. It is also appropriate for spiritual encouragement to be given to those in the Church family.

Pastoral care can occur in any setting including the person's home, meeting in a public place, a residential care home, hospital, or at the Church.

The confidentiality of people will be respected at all times, in-line with their wishes, and never assumed.

2. The Team

The Pastoral Team will be overseen by an Elder or the Pastor. This role will be referred to as the Pastoral Team Coordinator (PTC).

The PTC is responsible for the selection, induction, support and supervision of all Pastoral Visitors. Pastoral Visitors will be selected and invited to join the Pastoral Care Team by the PTC. It may be appropriate to seek references.

The PTC themselves will also undertake visits. In this policy, under circumstances where it states that the PTC is to be informed, the PTC should inform another Elder, trustee or the Pastor to ensure accountability is maintained.

The Pastoral Team, by default, contains all Elders, the Pastor and any additional paid employees.

The team will meet regularly and liaise, formally and informally, to coordinate, training and offer each other support.

Subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, persons with a conviction or caution under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or Schedule 15 to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 or is included in a list barring them from working with vulnerable adults or children held by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS), will not be appointed to the team.

New Pastoral Visitors will:

- read this policy
- have a induction conversation with the PTC
- read the Alone Working Policy and Safeguarding Policy
- be offered any appropriate training

3. Records

We will not keep permanent records of visits to Church Members or regular attendees. However, if requested by the PTC, team members should be able to report on who they have met and when in the recent past.

The PTC will be informed of visits to people who are not church members or regular attendees. However, no permanent records will be kept.

A list of those whose are undertaking visits of behalf of CCBC will be maintained by the PTC, subject to CCBC's Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy.

All policies can be seen at www.churchcrookhambaptistchurch.org.uk/policies/.

4. Home Visits, Lone Visiting and Risk Management

When visits are made alone, there is an increased personal safety risk. At CCBC, pastoral visits tend to be to those known to the Church. However, even in these cases, risks remain and it is best practice to consider the associated risks.

All members of the Pastoral Care Team must have read the CCBC Working Alone Policy, taking due account of the advice given, and in particular must:

- not visit someone by themselves if they have any question or concern whatsoever about whether it is safe so to do
- ideally, and when practical, work in pairs
- do not visit at night
- take a switched-on mobile phone and inform another person of their visit
- never visit someone under 18 without an accompanying parent or guardian

If visiting someone who suffers with memory loss, a relative, carer or similar of the person should be informed. If that is not possible, a "calling card" should be left. This is avoid confusion of who has been in the home.

Pastoral Visitors must take care to deal cautiously with persons who could be under the influence of alcohol or drugs and persons who are suffering from mental health issues, memory loss, or are prone to aggression. They must not put their personal safety, or that of others, at risk.

If a pastoral visitor has any concern about visiting alone they should refer to the PTC and/or the wider Pastoral Team.

5. Looking After Yourself and Others

Pastoral Visitors need to be aware of the risk of becoming overloaded by pastoral demands and of neglecting their own needs and their families.

When making pastoral visits, it is good practice to suggest how long the meeting might be for and to check whether this is a convenient length of time for the other person. Failure to maintain clear time boundaries can result in both parties feeling unsafe or out of control.

Where a person's needs are recognised as being outside the Pastoral Visitor's competence or capacity, they should seek the agreement of the person to refer them to someone who can offer appropriate help.

6. Visting Someone of the Opposite Sex

The Pastoral Team will aim to have a mixture of sex on the team and we will respect the wishes of a person who requests a certain gender to visit.

If a person visits a person of the opposite sex, alone, the PTC must be informed.

7. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Confidentially and when it can be broken

Pastoral Visitors will maintain strict confidentiality, unless expressed consent has been given to share . Pastoral Visitors must not mention the person and their needs to anyone else, even within the pastoral team, without their permission. However there will be times when total confidentiality cannot be kept.

As a church we follow our Safeguarding Policy, which is available on our website and in the Church foyer.

Confidentially cannot be maintained when:

- any individual confides in you and makes reference to safeguarding issues regarding any person under 18 or a vulnerable adult;
- any individual confides in you and makes reference to violence to others, self-harm or a serious criminal activity.

In addition to offering support, the following procedures should be observed (with regard to safeguarding issues):

- advise that confidentiality cannot be kept.
- record your concerns (do not probe, just listen).
- you must contact our Designated Person for Safeguarding (Natasha Atkins). If she is not immediately available, inform the Terry Bateman (Trustee responsible for Safeguarding).
- in an emergency contact Hampshire Social Services at 0300 555 1384 or 999 if there is an immediate threat to safety.

Under 18s

The Pastoral Team will not visit or meet with those under 18 without an accompanying parent or guardian.

DBS Checks

There will not be a requirement for pastoral visitors to complete a DBS check unless they will be visiting the homes of vulnerable adults alone.

The definition of vulnerable adults is wide, however this may be regarded as anyone over the age of 18 years who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation, which may be by reason of illness, age, mental illness, disability or other types of physical or mental impairment.

Those at risk may live alone, be dependent on others (care homes etc.), elderly, or socially isolated.

8. Signposts

Spiritual

- The Elders
- There are resources on our website at https://www.churchcrookhambaptistchurch.org.uk/suggested-resources/

Health

- GPs (Find a GP **-** https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp)
- NHS 111

Mental Health and wellbeing

- Surrey and Borders NHS Crisis Mental Health Helpline - 0800 915 4644
- NHS mental health advise and tips : https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/
- Surrey and Borders NHS Services - https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health

Debt and Finances

- Christians Against Poverty - https://capuk.org/ (locations in Fleet, Farnborough & Bracknell).
- The Elders hold a discretionary fund for emergency needs.

Abuse

Various helpline for men and women can be found at:

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/

Addiction

- Drugs - https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/drug-addiction-getting-help/
- Alcohol https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support/
- Pornography – Care for the Family - https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/couples/when-porn-becomes-an-addiction/

Counselling

Connect Counselling is a counselling service based in Camberley providing general counselling for adults over 18 as well as couples and family therapy for groups of all ages. Their ethos and background as an organisation is rooted in the Christian faith.

Connect Counselling does not charge a fixed fee per session, rather they ask clients to consider making a financial contribution dependent on their means, as no client is turned away due to lack of funds.

https://connectcounselling.org.uk/ and 01276 24210.