Society of the Sacred Mission
St Antony's Priory Durham

PASTORAL SUPERVISION GUIDANCE & AGREEMENT

This guidance is issued by the Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM) at St Antony's Priory, in agreement with the Diocese of Durham, to set out the purpose, scope and practical arrangements for pastoral supervision for clergy within the diocese. It is intended to provide clarity for both supervisees and pastoral supervisors about the nature of the supervisory relationship, the expectations placed on each party, and the safeguards that support good practice. The guidance also forms the basis of the supervision agreement, helping to ensure that pastoral supervision is undertaken in a spirit of trust, mutual respect, confidentiality, accountability and care.

Definition and Purpose

Pastoral supervision is defined as a structured, intentional process where a skilled supervisor meets with a supervisee to reflect on their practice, enhance their professional development, and ensure ethical standards in their work. This process is characterised by trust, respect, confidentiality, and support, allowing supervisees the freedom to discuss issues arising in their ministry. It is informed by spiritual and theological perspectives, as well as psychological insights, to address the complexities of pastoral care.

The primary purposes of pastoral supervision include:

- **Professional Development**: by helping supervisees grow in their vocational identity, role competence, and self-awareness.
- **Ethical Practice**: by ensuring that supervisees are supported to adhere to ethical standards and manage boundaries effectively.
- **Support and Reflection**: by providing a safe space for supervisees to reflect on their experiences, challenges, and the impact of their work on themselves and those they serve.

Distinction from Other Forms of Support

Pastoral supervision is distinct from spiritual accompaniment, counselling, coaching or line management. It is primarily focused on the supervisee's practice and personal development rather than problem solving or managerial oversight. This unique focus allows for deeper exploration of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of pastoral work.

When You Meet

The Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM) has no view on the frequency and duration, it is up to supervisees and pastoral supervisors to decide what is most workable.

How You Meet

While geographical and time restrictions may mean that pastoral supervision is offered remotely (e.g. via Zoom or MS Teams), it is often helpful for some sessions take place in-person where possible, especially in the initial starting up period. It is anticipated that the supervisee will attend sessions at the pastoral supervisor's normal place of work or, if convenient, at St Antony's Priory.

Confidentiality and Care

Confidentiality is the basis of a trusting and supportive pastoral supervision relationship. All interactions are considered confidential, including contacting methods such as email and telephone. Anonymity of supervisees and confidentiality of the content of supervision discussions will always be upheld by pastoral supervisors, unless there is concern of harm to self or harm to others, including abuse or neglect, which may give reason to break confidentiality and share concerns with the Diocese or signpost to appropriate services. In this circumstance, the supervisee would be kept informed of any actions.

Pastoral supervisors receive their own regular pastoral supervision, and have the opportunity to contact us for support. In all these spaces, pastoral supervisors are bound to maintain the confidentiality of a person's details and circumstances so that they are not identifiable.

Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding issues will be referred directly and in a timely manner to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, who will follow their Diocesan policy. Ideally, it will be the supervisee who takes this step, with pastoral supervisors checking back with them that this has been done and following up with appropriate support.

Data Protection

SSM and pastoral supervisors comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

SSM does not require any supervision notes either to be written or provided to them. However, if it is preferred by both supervisees and pastoral supervisors to have some notes arising from discussions, these must be kept fully secure.

We ask supervisees to complete an anonymous online feedback form at the beginning and end of the supervisory relationship. We use this information to measure and report on outcomes.

Risk Governance, Consent & Safe Practice

Anyone engaged to facilitate pastoral supervision sessions on behalf of SSM will adhere to and uphold the Diocesan polices pertaining to risk, safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, data protection and any other relevant policies and procedures.

Complaints

Any complaint received from the supervisee will in the first instance be the responsibility of the pastoral supervisor and every attempt should be made to resolve it directly with the supervisee.

If this is not successful and as the pastoral supervisor is a member of The Association for Pastoral Supervision and Education (APSE), then reference should be made to their conduct procedure: https://www.pastoralsupervision.org.uk/home/about/definition-and-ethos/code-of-conduct/

If the pastoral supervisor feels that the pastoral supervision relationship cannot be sustained, please try to work with your supervisee in the first instance to address the issues and establish a meaningful working relationship. If this proves impossible, please let SSM know.

Signatories

Supervisee (name):

Signature:

Date:

Pastoral supervisor (name):

Signature:

Date: