



## Guidelines for the Ministry of Healing and Wholeness

Healing was central to Jesus' ministry and is part of the Church's mission to a broken world. Christ is the healer and through the Holy Spirit the Church offers this ministry in Christ's name. It is a joy and privilege for both clergy and lay people to serve their neighbour in this way. Through Christ's healing touch, grace is received and lives transformed.

Clergy and lay people who are called to offer this ministry do so after careful preparation. They follow good practice guidelines, including the deepest compassion and respect for the people they serve. Eleven points of good practice are given below. The guidelines follow those set out in "A Time to Heal", a report for the House of Bishops on the Healing Ministry. Another resource are the Notes in *Common Worship Pastoral Services*.

### Eleven points of good practice in the Ministry of Healing and Wholeness

**1. Prayer and Preparation** - At the heart of the healing ministry is prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who minister in this way should be prayerful Christians who are willing to listen and pray sensitively. They should make sure that those receiving ministry have been properly prepared for it, and know exactly what is being offered.

**2. Accountability** - Everyone involved in the healing ministry should understand clearly the lines of accountability, and accept the relevant authority within their Parish Church. They should be aware of their personal responsibility for advice given, recognising that they may well be regarded by those receiving ministry as speaking in the name of the church. The PCC may wish to consider the possibility of insurance to cover any legal liability.

**3. Training** - Individuals should receive appropriate training and be kept up to date with developments and its ecumenical expression. Healing Team leaders must make sure that members have opportunities for training and a clear understanding of good practice. Regular meetings should be held for supervision and review of the work of the ministry team. Those involved should take responsibility for their ongoing training and development.

**4. Competence and Boundaries** - People involved in this Ministry should be aware of their own limitations and need for support, and refuse duties or responsibilities which are beyond their proper competence. They should ensure that they are properly prepared and fit to be involved. The use of language, body language and touch should be appropriate, courteous and considerate to those receiving it. Ideally, people should pray in pairs with at least one member of the pair being of the same sex as the person receiving ministry. No one should ever be ministered to against their will.

**5. Anointing** - This is a formal representative act of the church (see James 5.14) and may only be administered by a priest or person authorised specifically by the Bishop. (See Note 2, page 40, paragraph 2 *Common Worship Pastoral Services*.)

**6. Safeguarding** - The Diocesan Policy should be known and strictly adhered to. Details are in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan website <http://www.cofesuffolk.org/>

**7. Personal Conduct** - The healing ministry is part of the ministry of the gospel. The personal conduct of all those involved should encourage confidence in this ministry and not undermine it. No ministry should be undertaken while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Nobody should seek any personal advantage, whether monetary, emotional, sexual or material, by virtue of a personal relationship. No personal view should be represented as the official stand or teaching of the church.

**8. Confidentiality** - Every person's privacy and dignity should be respected and protected. Any limitations to confidentiality should be explained in advance, and any disclosure should be limited to relevant information. It should be disclosed only to appropriate people, and normally with the person's consent. If any written record is kept, the person should be informed of the fact, and of their right to see the record.

**9. Counselling and Psychotherapy** - These specific treatments should only be provided by those who are accredited practitioners, who adhere to the code of ethics of their regulatory bodies and have professional Insurance Cover.

**10. Deliverance** - This is a dimension of the ministry of healing and wholeness that requires particular training and experience. It is under Episcopal oversight and should only be offered after consultation with the Diocesan Deliverance Team. The Team contact is currently Revd Canon Matthew Vernon [canon.pastor@stedscathedral.org](mailto:canon.pastor@stedscathedral.org) or 01284 748720

**11. Partnership** – Where appropriate, the healing ministry should be carried out in co-operation with chaplains and representatives of other professional and voluntary health care agencies.