



The Church of England around Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country

Diocese of Lichfield

Safeguarding and Deliverance Policy

Guidance for safe practice within the Diocese of Lichfield

Version 1.1 – 21/11/2018

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1. Updated guidelines for good practice in the Deliverance Ministry Lichfield Diocese 2018.

The [House of Bishops Deliverance Ministry Guidelines](#) were originally set out by the house of Bishops in 1975, and updated in 2012. These are the official guidelines for the Church of England. These guidelines for Lichfield diocese are based on the above, and take into account the developments in safeguarding and GDPR.

It is traditional for Christians to pray for deliverance from evil; the petition in the Lord's Prayer is an obvious and foundational example of this. Praying with people for their needs and protection is often an appropriate pastoral way of ministering to them. There are however, some situations where a person is distressed and or claims to be afflicted by an evil power or spirit. Particular caution needs to be exercised, especially when ministering to someone who is in a distressed state⁽¹⁾.

In this sensitive area of ministry confusion can arise over language. Exorcism is defined here as the power of God removing an evil presence that has taken control of a person, during a ritual carried out by an authorised person. This type of ministry is extremely rare and must only be carried out on the direct authorisation of the Diocesan Bishop for each occurrence.

Deliverance, on the other hand, is defined here as God taking away evil in a place or person as a response to normal prayer. This ministry is part of the ongoing pastoral work of the church..

As with all pastoral ministry, and especially when it concerns areas of such sensitivity, accountability is key, and the following guidelines are set out to ensure this. Accountability is about safety and good practice for those persons or places receiving the ministry, and for those giving the ministry.

As this ministry is important to the mission of the church it deserves the highest standards of practice. Consequently these guidelines apply to every person involved in this area of church life.

As with other areas of pastoral ministry there always arise issues about the use of power, and the possibility of spiritual abuse. Within the Church of England we have lines of responsibility and accountability that exist from parish to Bishop. Every clergyperson is responsible for the ministry that takes place in their parish. As such it is the responsibility of the clergyperson to ensure that these guidelines are agreed to and implemented by all concerned. It is strongly suggested that every person involved in this ministry, reads and signs a statement that they agree to the guidelines as set out below.

2. Prayer (and sacrament)

Deliverance ministry should be carried out in the context of prayer (and sacrament).⁽²⁾

3. Safety and safeguarding

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the safety of anyone receiving deliverance ministry. Clergy and persons exercising the ministry must have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults⁽³⁾ and the Diocese of Lichfield Safeguarding Policy⁽¹⁵⁾. People have a right to know what is being provided and how they will be ministered to⁽⁴⁾. All involved in this ministry must have a current DBS and have completed the C0 and C1 safeguarding courses. Clergy and licensed lay workers must have completed C3 or C4.

4. Authorisation and diocesan regulation

All deliverance ministry, as all pastoral ministry, occurs under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. This means that all clergy have a delegated responsibility and authorisation. To assist clergy in this ministry there is a dedicated team of advisors that can help clergy deal with the situations that they may face. Clergy have a duty to seek out this expertise as relevant (this is essential practice for the purposes of safeguarding and legal liability). Diocesan policies and guidance should be followed in all cases.

5. Exorcism

Exorcism is defined as the power of God to rid an evil presence that has taken control of a person during a ritual carried out by an authorised person. Where such possession is suspected, then no ministry must take place without the specific permission of the Bishop of Lichfield. Only authorised advisors will carry out exorcisms.

6. The work of Advisors

The deliverance advisors are to:

- Advise in general terms, particularly around discernment of where deliverance is required, and how it might be prayed for.
- In the very rare cases where it may be necessary, to carry out exorcisms on the direct authority of the Bishop of Lichfield

7. Training and supervision

Advisors who are authorised by the bishop to help with deliverance ministry should have received appropriate training in this ministry⁽⁵⁾ and keep that training up to date. Deliverance ministry advisors and parish clergy involved must ensure that everyone involved in this ministry adheres to these guidelines and is aware of the limits of their authority. For advisors supervision is carried out by the area coordinators on an annual basis, or as required.

8. Competence and boundaries

Persons involved in Deliverance Ministry should be aware of their personal limitations and ensure that they are properly prepared and fit to be involved. All reasonable steps should be taken by those involved to ensure a working knowledge of any relevant law and policy that impacts upon this ministry. This includes but is not limited to data protection, informed consent and safeguarding. If fitness is doubtful or compromised or there is any conflict of interest, they should withdraw from ministering immediately. Professional boundaries with health care professionals, chaplaincies and other agencies should also be observed⁽⁶⁾.

All difficult cases, or cases involving individuals, need to be discussed with diocesan advisors. In the cases of suspected occultic involvement, an immediate referral to a deliverance advisor should be made (prior to any ministry taking place).

9. Personal conduct

The personal conduct of everyone involved should encourage confidence in this ministry and not undermine it. Language, body language and touch used by those ministering should be appropriate, considerate and courteous towards those receiving it. No-one should be ministered to against their will⁽⁷⁾. Caution must be observed over the use of touch, as informed consent is essential. (This includes the laying on of hands). Any abuse of power must be challenged. Complaints will be taken seriously and referred to the appropriate senior person for action.

10. Confidentiality, record keeping and public statements

Deliverance Ministry should be undertaken with the minimum of publicity⁽⁸⁾. People's privacy and dignity must always be respected and protected. Careful, factual, and agreed confidential records should be kept by those carrying out the deliverance ministry within the constraints of GDPR and with due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding⁽⁹⁾. Record keeping helps to protect those who minister as well as those to whom they minister. Confidential information obtained during the deliverance ministry should not be disclosed to a third party without the consent of the person providing it or under lawful authority⁽¹⁰⁾. Please see the attached reporting form, to be kept by the parish clergy.

11. Counselling and psychotherapy

These specific treatments, as distinct from pastoral care and listening, should only be provided by accredited counsellors and therapists who adhere to the codes of ethics and practice of their regulatory organizations and who have professional insurance cover⁽¹¹⁾.

12. Continuing pastoral care

Deliverance ministry should be followed up with continuing pastoral care, normally involving the minister⁽¹²⁾. Diocesan advisers for deliverance ministry should be available to advise and when necessary, to work with clergy, chaplains and Safeguarding Advisers in providing appropriate pastoral care⁽¹³⁾.

13. Collaboration with the resources of healthcare

A multi-disciplinary approach is essential⁽¹⁴⁾. Those authorised for the deliverance ministry should have access to consult and work with other clergy and with doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists. This ministry should be carried out in co-operation with the resources of healthcare, whilst recognizing that healthcare professionals and related agencies may be bound by other codes of conduct.

References:

1. Time to heal, 298
2. Guideline 2 of the 1975 DM guidelines
3. Section 5 Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016
4. Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy para 5.3
5. HofBs' guidelines for the HM
6. Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy para 14.2
7. As for HM in the HofBs' guidelines for the HM
8. Guideline 3 of the 1975 DM guidelines
9. ATTH,181
10. Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy para12.5
11. HofBs' Guidelines for the HM
12. Guideline 5 of the 1975 DM guidelines
13. Addn text to strengthen cooperation between DM groups/advisers and clergy/chaplains
14. ATTH,181
15. Diocese Safeguarding Policy. Lichfield Diocese Board of Finance.

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