

DIOCESAN POLICY ON DELIVERANCE MINISTRY



1. **The House of Bishops' Report *A Time to Heal***, published in 2000 defined Deliverance at p.377 as 'release from evil spiritual influences which oppresses people or places or which hinders the individual's response to God's saving grace. Prayer by an individual or group of Christians for a person who, it is believed, is being troubled by evil.'

The House of Bishops' Guidelines for Good Practice in Deliverance Ministry (2012) state further that 'Jesus, in his life, suffering and death, and in his resurrection and ascension defeated evil and brought the hope of salvation to everyone. So we can be confident that when we pray the Lord's Prayer for deliverance from evil, God hears us, and that praying with people for their needs and protection is often an appropriate way of ministering to them. Some people, however, seek specific help when going through times of suffering and anxiety, or when distressed by what seems to be continuing experiences of evil within them or around them. For these people, it may be right to ask for God's saving help through the Church's deliverance ministry.'

Deliverance Ministry requires prayerful diagnosis and discernment to determine where the problem lies, coupled with recourse to pastoral and professional expertise bearing in mind that spiritual disturbance and the influence of evil cover a wide spectrum of conditions including mental illness, coercive behaviour or abuse and a range of emotional, physical and paranormal phenomena.

This policy seeks to set out the required steps and actions in cases of seriousness. It does not proscribe instances where individuals seek prayer ministry from a parish priest or prayer group. However, all who engage in pastoral prayer and ministry to anyone requiring spiritual help or counsel must exercise great care, sensitivity and discernment as all such individuals are potentially highly vulnerable.

2. Nationally, the policies and recommendations of the Church of England derive from:-
 - a. A report prepared in 1965 at the instance of the then Bishop of Exeter which examined the ministry of exorcism. The Commission which produced his report comprised of theologians and psychiatrists and was ecumenical in its membership. The report was published by SPCK in 1972 and recommended that each diocesan Bishop should appoint a suitable person to undertake this ministry in each diocese coupled with a team of advisors/ practitioners including psychologists and psychiatrists as appropriate.
 - b. The Archbishop of Canterbury, issued guideline for good practice on behalf of the House of Bishops in 1975. Those guidelines concluded that good practice would require Deliverance Ministry and in particular exorcism to be carried out in collaboration with all the resources of medicine, in the context of prayer and sacrament, with the minimum of publicity and by experienced persons authorised by the Diocesan Bishop, such persons overseeing continuing pastoral care.
 - c. The House of Bishops' Guidelines for Good Practice (2012), referred to above, reviewed the Guidelines in the light of changes in pastoral practice since the 1970s and an increased awareness of the significance of other areas including mental health and safeguarding. The 2012 Guidelines remain in full force and effect insofar as this policy is concerned.
3. This policy seeks to ensure best practice and clear accountability with an emphasis on Deliverance Ministry being conducted in a non-sensational manner, with the minimum of publicity, confidentiality and respect for

the privacy and dignity of individuals and families and also in the context of professional counselling where appropriate, prayer and absolution, anointing, the laying on of hands and Holy Communion.

4. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint an Advisor for Deliverance Ministry, currently Canon Simon Holland, who shall be authorised to conduct Deliverance Ministry in the widest sense and who shall coordinate a diocesan team of clergy who are themselves authorised specifically by the Bishop.
5. Deliverance Ministry shall be carried out only by a priest or other minister under the terms of the previous paragraph and should act in collaboration with medical professionals, in the context of prayer and sacrament and with the minimum of publicity, ensuring that there is continuing pastoral care. This ministry should never be undertaken by one person ministering alone; the authorised person should always be accompanied by another priest or a lay minister of mature pastoral experience who is similarly authorised.
6. Counselling should form an important part of the process but should only be provided by suitably accredited counsellors and therapists. Where appropriate, authorised priests or other ministers should have access to adequate professional clinical supervision.
7. There must be provision for pastoral care and counselling following any process of Deliverance Ministry. If ministry comprises a service of Holy Communion, such a service should be simple and straightforward and may include the ministry of absolution, anointing and laying on of hands. The welfare of the subject is paramount and all such ministry and any service within it, must be carried out with the utmost sensitivity. In appropriate cases, remembering that all potential subjects of deliverance ministry are vulnerable, the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor must be sought.
8. Within the constraints of the Data Protection Act, all authorised priests or other ministers must keep careful and confidential records.
9. All clergy and any lay people involved in Deliverance Ministry must receive appropriate training and supervision.
10. All persons engaged in Deliverance Ministry must be covered by adequate insurance, which insurance at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop should be provided via the policy or policies taken out by the diocesan board of finance specifically to cover those authorised under this policy.
11. A multi-disciplinary approach is to be desired and all those authorised for this ministry should seek to work closely with other clergy and with doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists as appropriate. Where a person is already receiving other professional care, it is desirable to work collaboratively in a multi-disciplinary approach, respecting professional boundaries.
12. No exercise of Deliverance Ministry shall be carried out by persons who have not been authorised by the Diocesan Bishop.

Policy Owned By:	PCC Secretary
Reviewed By:	EDF PCC
Date Last Reviewed:	12.01.26
Next Review Due:	12.01.27