

Bath & Wells Spiritual Direction

Summary of key points - good practice guidelines October 2020

The Diocese affirms and supports the ministry of Spiritual Direction which is both a privilege and a responsibility; accompanying the seeker who yearns to align their life in relation to God and God's world through their relationships with family, friends, the local community and the community of faith. The director holds significant potential power that should always be exercised with sensitive care in the service of the directee. To this end the Diocese has prepared guidelines for the aid of Bath & Wells Registered Spiritual Directors (who include ecumenical partners accredited by the Diocese), a summary of the key points of which are set out below:

A **Bath and Wells Registered Spiritual Director** is required to:

- Be a person of absolute integrity and have a personal faith and an ongoing relationship with God, and a commitment to deepening that relationship by maintaining an appropriate spiritual life (personal prayer, worship, retreats);
- Have had their call to this ministry affirmed, and be able to evidence this.
- Receive regular spiritual direction (not less than four times a year);
- Have undergone training in the skills of spiritual direction supported by proof of training and references from course tutors, and, in the case of a non-diocesan course, a copy of the syllabus;
- Receive regular supervision (so as to enable reflection, development and accountability in their practice) either by a trained supervisor or through a peer group;
- Engage in ongoing formation and development by attending courses or day events, as well as regular spiritual reading;
- Maintain a DBS certificate approved by the Diocesan Safeguarding team, and ensure that they have up to date Safeguarding training and evidence this if required, and maintain Professional Indemnity insurance if not covered through the Diocese;
- Subject to statutory provisions requiring disclosure, maintain clear terms of confidentiality and privacy of the directee, keeping confidential all matters relating to the directee;
- Conduct spiritual direction in appropriate settings;
- Maintain clear professional, physical and psychological boundaries;
- Not usually relate to the directee in a separate context (for example as a friend, colleague or supervisor or as parishioner/ priest);

- Act in a way that respects the integrity (including sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, or gender) and wellbeing of the directee, acting solely in the interests of the directee;
- Encourage directees to seek further support where necessary – such as counselling, medical attention;
- Have knowledge of, and abide by, legal and ethical guidelines – acting in a way that complies with Diocesan Safeguarding procedures;
- Comply, where appropriate, with Data Protection regulations (for example, any personal data held about a Directee will be kept in safe and secure place, available for inspection and destroyed at the end of the relationship).

Whilst the Diocese works to ensure good formation, support, standards, suitability and proper compliance with diocesan Safeguarding and Safer Recruiting procedures for our listed Spiritual Directors, the Diocese cannot be held responsible for the individual behaviour of directors.

The Diocese operates a resolution procedure in the event of an issue arising from this process. This is summarised below.

Resolving issues arising from Spiritual Direction

As human beings we are all different: sometimes that leads to creative engagement and at other times can lead to difficult relationships. We very much hope that any difficulties that arise within a spiritual direction relationship can be satisfactorily resolved between the Director and Directee. Guidance on Resolving Issues is intended to help navigate these issues so that all can thrive.

A Director is supported by supervision, which offers wisdom into situations that arise. Where the relationship is not working, a referral to a new Spiritual Director can be made. Where there is an issue of particular concern, the Advisor for Spiritual Direction (email: SpiritualDirection@bathwells.anglican.org) can be contacted. If a safeguarding issue arises, the Safeguarding Team www.bathandwells.org.uk/safeguarding need to be contacted.

The full process for Resolving Issues is Appendix 6 of the Bath and Wells Spiritual Direction Guidelines available on the diocesan website www.bathandwells.org.uk/spiritual-direction

The full Guidelines for Spiritual Directors are available from: www.bathandwells.org.uk/spiritual-direction