Spiritual Direction

Accompanying YOU on your journey with God

To find out more visit our website or email dawnharrison:Hotmail.co.uk
**The Liverpool Diocese Spirituality Group**

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**SD Prayer**

We pray, Loving God as you invite us to share in the ministry of spiritual accompaniment, we ask that you help us to have a listening ear and an open heart as we walk with others on their journey of life.  
May we be attentive to the voice of your Holy Spirit as we walk with others and grant us a discerning heart that we may know when you are prompting us, and it is not our words we speak to others.  
Thank you for the privilege of working in this ministry and guide our steps as we walk with others towards your love.  We ask this through Christ our Lord Amen.
**Foreword by Bishop Bev**

At the heart of Christian wellbeing is our care of the inner self. The sacrificial nature of our Christian vocation, whether lay or ordained, means that we find ourselves going places and doing things we might not have anticipated. And in our desire or commitment to care for the wellbeing and spiritual nourishment of others, and in the offering of the other cheek and loving those who are sometimes very difficult to love, we may find that our own spiritual wellbeing gets crowded out. In order to remain faithful, joyful and thankful disciples of Christ, we all need to find the safe space where we can talk through some of the things we are engaged in or facing - some of the things we find challenging or dispiriting and somebody we can talk through our hopes and joys. All of us need spiritual companions whatever stage of life’s journey we are at. I thank God for my companions and I am deeply grateful to the companions in this Diocese who are committed to walking the journey with you and for as long or as short a time as you require. They may not have all the answers, but they will listen deeply, they will share their empathy and they will pray for you and make themselves accessible to you. I warmly and wholeheartedly commend this ministry to you.

Bishop Beverley Warrington
The story behind the Guidelines

These guidelines are a resource issued by a working party of those involved in spiritual direction training. They are supported by the Retreat Association following their affirmation and adoption by a National Consultation for those involved in Spiritual Direction Training in February 2015 organised by the Association. They are not prescriptive and are intended to be more servant than master.

The vision behind developing these guidelines is a desire to promote greater consistency of practice across different training schemes and Christian traditions. It celebrates the strength of ecumenical goodwill and co-operation that already exists in this field.

Who these Guidelines are for:

It is suggested that the Guidelines are for use by any of the following practitioners:

- Individual spiritual directors and supervisors.
- Those involved in training spiritual directors.
- Those involved in the allocation and referral of spiritual direction.
- Those with oversight of spiritual direction training and provision.
- Those with oversight of safeguarding.

Suggested context of use:

The Guidelines may be used in the following contexts:

1. A reference point for reviewing practice for:
   
   - those who hold training – considering the course content
   - an individual spiritual director – reflecting on their daily practice
   - a supervisor – ensuring best practice in a supervisee

2. A reference point for local based training initiatives.

3. For denominations and local training schemes to enable greater consistency of practice.
The Guidelines

A. What is spiritual direction?

A Relationship

The ministry of Christian spiritual direction involves relationships between God, the person offering this ministry and the person receiving this ministry. The spiritual director can be a lay or ordained minister. In these Guidelines ‘director’ is used to describe the one offering the ministry and ‘directee’ for the person receiving. The terms ‘director’ and ‘directee’ have been used, while acknowledging that they are problematic. Other terms sometimes used are ‘accompanier’ and ‘companion’.

The role of the director is to help the directee focus on their relationship with God and so enable their personal vocation (to become the person they were created to be) to grow and be better lived out through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

The directee’s life is lived in relationship to God, creation, the world, local and faith communities. Spiritual direction seeks to enable the directee to reflect on the dynamic interaction between their experiences of prayer and life, and theology and spirituality.

The director has significant potential power and responsibility which should be exercised with great care to ensure the intention of the relationship and the autonomy of the directee are not undermined. This involves care in the use of language, in the expression of moral judgements and in the handling of decision-making and in the physical and special awareness and the avoidance of touch.

The director will be offering this ministry as part of their expression of their personal vocation and within the context of their own spiritual life in relationship to their faith community and their own director.

The Focus

The focus of the director is primarily on the inner life of the directee, and attention to this in the context of the experience of life and spiritual activities rather than as a moral guardian or confessor.

The director will seek to:

- listen discerningly to what is shared
- respond in ways that are conducive to the directee’s discernment of God in their life
- offer insights and perspectives that are helpful to the directee in their communication and response to God and living this out in their life.

B. What is the difference between spiritual direction and counselling?

Like counselling, therapy and coaching, spiritual direction rests on careful listening to the ‘client’. All these helping ministries place value on the confidentiality of the relationship and may lead to increased personal wellbeing and a more fruitful and productive life. What makes spiritual direction distinctive is its focus on listening and responding to the Holy Spirit. While spiritual direction may help someone come to terms with disabling low self-esteem, or help someone make a career choice, or provide a supportive space to work through how to act within a difficult relationship, none of these fruits are its primary focus.
Underpinning a spiritual direction relationship is the understanding that both parties seek the same thing: namely to be open to the Spirit’s forming and guiding for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Spiritual Direction enables people to notice, hear and discern the movement of God within their daily experiences, helping them as they seek to draw closer to God and to respond to his work in their lives. The focus of the interaction is between the directee and God.

Counselling, Therapy and Life Coaching enable people to work on thoughts, emotions and behaviours that impact their lives and relationships, generally in a more goal-centred and problem-solving way. The focus of the interaction is between the therapist and client.

C. The nature of the relationship of the director and directee

This relationship is based upon trust and mutual respect within the awareness that both director and directee are within the gracious love of God.

Common and significant areas of exploration in the relationship will include:

personal experience and inner (emotional and spiritual) reactions to that experience

discerning reflection on that experience, seeking to enable in the directee growing discernment of the movements and leading of God’s Spirit in their life

the practice of prayer and the ongoing development of spiritual life, sources of further insights and perspectives, other ways in which their journey might be explored and supported.

Confession: the sacrament of confession specifically remains the responsibility of a priest and directees should be referred to a sacramental priest accordingly.

D. Core skills and qualities of a spiritual director

These skills and qualities are aspired to and a spiritual director would be committed to continuing development in these areas.

The core skills and qualities of a spiritual director listed below should make it clear that spiritual direction is not about being directive, but a work of great humility in the service of transparency to the Holy Spirit.

1. Prayer: The primary requirement is that the person should have an ongoing relationship with God and a commitment to deepening that relationship. It is essential that any person offering the ministry of spiritual direction should themselves meet regularly with a spiritual director.

2. Listening: A person who shows themselves able to listen on many levels and pick up deeper resonances (‘holy listening’), and is able to foster the directee’s skills of articulating their thoughts and feelings.

3. Restraint: A person who is able to hold themselves in check and hold the safe, welcoming and hospitable space in which the spiritual direction conversation can
develop. This affects listening, holding boundaries and handling the power balance in the direction conversation with integrity.

4. Clarity: A person who can enable clarity in establishing agreement with the directee on the length and frequency of sessions and the process for evaluating and terminating the relationship, e.g. contracting, negotiating to establish clarity of relationship, process and expectation.

5. Self-awareness and humility: A person who recognises their own strengths and limitations and when to refer, e.g. to a counsellor. A person who holds the awareness that God is at the centre of the conversation and that they must step back, but who is also aware of their own worth.

6. Able to say ‘No’: A person who does not need to be needed and is aware of the dangers of mutual dependency. A person who can distinguish between being a 'soul friend' and a friend; the closeness and mutuality of friendship militates against the objectivity which is necessary for the direction relationship to serve the directee's spiritual growth.

7. Learning: A person who never stops being a learner ('beginner’s mind') and is open to new perspectives. A person who is willing to participate in ongoing training.

8. Discernment: A person who enables the directee to learn the skill of discernment and exercise it themselves, primarily through modelling good discernment: a mutual process of waiting on the Holy Spirit and sharpening awareness of the moral and spiritual significance of the directee's inner processes. A person who already practises good discernment with regard to their own spiritual life.


10. Communion: A person who shows awareness that the spiritual direction relationship is in service of the wider church and wider world.

11. Difference: A person who is able to be with otherness, variety, uniqueness and difference – e.g. gender, age, race, culture, sexuality, theology – including the recognition that to get to know another involves acknowledging ignorance, and preparedness to work at understanding another's life and experience.

12. Openness: A person open to the surprise of God, the freedom of the Spirit, who blows wherever she wills.

Many of these skills are essential for all listeners, while some are particular to spiritual direction, specifically those skills relating to awareness of God in the conversation, 1, 5 and 8.

**E. Some key areas in formation of spiritual directors**

The following are some of the key areas of experience, knowledge and skills needed in the formation of spiritual directors:

- Attention to their own spiritual life – including regular prayer, reflection and spiritual direction.
- Is able to reflect biblically and theologically as they offer direction.
• Ability to facilitate an environment where humility, openness and embracing of process are fostered.
• Skills in listening.
• Practice – e.g. triads.
• Formation in a reflective discernment process.
• Experience of life and the spiritual dimension of life.
• Some knowledge of the spiritual traditions, theology and psychology.
• Knowledge of good practice.
• In Liverpool Diocese we run a Training Course every year.
• All new Directors are Commissioned by the Bishop and abide by the Diocesan Guidelines
• All new Directors have to attend Safeguarding training
• All Spiritual Directors are part of a supervision group who meet regularly.

**F. Good practice guidelines**

It is suggested that, in respect of good practice, spiritual directors will:

• themselves be in receipt of regular spiritual direction.
• take their ongoing training and development seriously, availing themselves of opportunities to further develop their skills and understanding.
• receive regular supervision to help them reflect on and develop their practice.
• not (ordinarily) relate to the directee in a separate context (for example as a friend, colleague, minister or supervisor). This enables the directee to be free in sharing whatever they wish and the director to respond with objectivity and balance; it also avoids any confusion of roles.
• keep matters shared between the director and directee as confidential unless a legal obligation is involved. Other disclosures may be made in certain cases of serious harm in agreement with the directee.
• have knowledge of local and national legal and ethical guidelines – for example in relation to safeguarding – and abide by them.
• reflect on ongoing practice and vocation.
• ensure there is clarity about the nature of boundaries and confidentiality in the relationship.
• at all times act in a way that respects the personal and spiritual integrity and wellbeing of the directee. Have a contingency plan in place in the event of incapacity or death.
• Work under these Guidelines and will therefore be covered by diocesan insurance

**G. Complaints Procedure**

Any complaint made about a Spiritual Director should be referred either by telephone and/or in writing to the Bishop’s Officer for Spiritual Direction (Rev Dawn Harrison 07786 365193 or email: dawnmharrison@hotmail.co.uk) Any complaint made against the Bishop’s Officer for Spiritual Direction should be referred either by telephone and/or in writing to the Bishop of Warrington (tel: 0151 426 1897 email: bishopofwarrington@liverpool.anglican.org).

Any safeguarding or ‘at risk’ issue, the matter should be immediately referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (Catriona Richardson 0151 705 2153 or catrina.richardson@liverpool.anglican.org). Depending on the urgency and if the DSA is unavailable the issue should be reported directly to the police.
H. What support will be given by the Diocese to those offering this ministry?

The Diocese views the ministry of spiritual direction as valid and necessary, and is committed to the ongoing training courses and support of all who offer the ministry of spiritual direction.

The ministry is overseen by the Spirituality Network Group under the authority of the Bishop and will ensure:

- That the list holder will accept without question if a director says they can see no more people at that time.

- That the two Network days will continue each year.

- That any suggestions for training needs will be listened to, and taken to the Spirituality Group Meeting.

- That, when possible, other training sessions will be offered, which may incorporate any suggestions put forward, and be for a wider diocesan audience.

- That the list holder will be made known. This means that contact details will be listed in the Diocesan Directory, in the Lifelong Learning department, and on the Diocesan website.

- That in an emergency one to one supervision is available.

- That the Diocesan list of spiritual directors is updated on a regular basis, and review how this list is managed.

- That the ‘Guidelines’ are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, making amendments when necessary.
Supervision

Supervision is described as:

‘the processing of the inner experiences of spiritual directors that are evoked during direction sessions in order to help them grow in awareness of their reactions and responses, to allow them to respond in a God-centred and interiorly free manner, and to maintain a contemplative focus.’

As mentioned in the Introduction, supervision is a resource made available to all spiritual directors in the diocese and it is a condition of remaining on the diocesan list that spiritual directors participate in it. Those listed as offering supervision have received training in this particular area, and will themselves receive supervision as a group.

Supervision is to help the director in the ministry being offered. The details of conversations with the directee are not revealed, but only what is relevant to that which is going on within the director themselves during their sessions; thereby keeping the conversation and identity of the directee in confidence.

Supervision will be offered in small groups, and all spiritual directors will be contacted to invite them to a group which will meet four times a year. If anyone would like individual supervision, or it is necessary between group meetings, then this can be arranged.

Agreement

As a part of the good practice guidelines, all those beginning a new spiritual direction relationship, will be asked to sign a simple agreement between themselves and their director which explains what the expectations are within the relationship. Both the director and directee will sign the agreement and each will have a copy. This will be destroyed at the end of the relationship. The agreement can be found at the end of this booklet.

Network Days

For all those on the Diocesan List of Spiritual Directors, there will be no charge for attendance on the Network Days. They will become a part of the ongoing training and support being offered to all Spiritual Directors. There is the expectation of participation in these days. We have a wide and varied programme that will be both of interest and relevant to the ministry being offered and will take place at least twice a year.

Conclusion

Spiritual direction is a vital element within the overall life and ministry of the Diocese and of the Church. It is important that this ministry is made more widely accessible and known to all.

1 Page 13, Looking into the Well: Supervision of Spiritual Directors, Maureen Conroy RSM [1995] Loyola University Press
Liverpool Diocese  Spiritual Direction Agreement

Start Date: ........................................................................................................

Review Date: ....................................................................................................

Agreement between:  Director: ..................................................

..........................................

Directee: .............................................

Our Relationship
You are meeting with me, as your spiritual director, because you want to explore the spiritual life of prayer and the call of God in your life. Spiritual direction offers the space to reflect and consider how God is a part of the whole of your life, and so respond by a deepening of your relationship with God.

I do not offer any solutions or answers but will listen and enable the way of discernment through the conversation that takes place. I may suggest ways of praying, or a book to read for example, but it is your decision and choice to accept this or not.

You agree to prepare by giving time for reflection prior to our meeting.

Confidentiality
All our conversations are held in confidence. However, I reserve the right to reveal the contents of our conversation should a situation of harm or potential harm be revealed or when required to do so by an order of the court.

For my benefit and yours, I will receive supervision, which means I still keep in confidence our conversation and your identity and reveal only what is relevant in my process.

Meeting Together
We will agree together the frequency our meetings, and that each meeting will last for no more than an hour, and we both commit to begin and end on time.

If you cannot come to an arranged meeting you agree to let me know as soon as you can, preferably the day before at the latest. I agree to do the same. If there is a need to meet before an arranged time, please contact me and I will do my best to see you.

Signed:

Director: ..................................................

Directee: .............................................

Supporting the ministry of spiritual direction
Although there are costs involved in the provision of Spiritual Direction, books, travel, retreats and quiet days for example, the Diocese of Liverpool does not make a charge on those receiving this important ministry. However, donations towards these costs are gratefully received. Our budget is held by the LDBF and any gifts given from individuals and parishes are effectively ring fenced and can be rolled over year on year. Donations for the purpose of providing Spiritual Direction should be made to the LDBF. Please note that such donations can be given under Gift Aid, when being given by individuals rather
than parishes, which adds an extra 25% to the money received by the Spiritual Directors fund.
Spiritual Direction is given free of charge. If someone wants to give a donation towards the development of spiritual direction the suggested amount would be £25 to £50.

**Personal gifts to Spiritual Directors**
Spiritual Directors, lay and ordained, who are *not in receipt of a diocesan stipend*, are permitted to receive personal gifts of gratitude from individuals for whom they have provided the ministry of spiritual direction. If such a gift is greater than £20 in value, then it must be declared to the LDBF Finance Team. It is important to understand that any such gifts are gifts of gratitude. If the gift is seen to be in recompense for the ministry provided it should also be noted that the gift would then be considered as income by HMRC and thus the appropriate income tax and national insurance payments would also need to be made.