



Pastoral Care Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Policy Statement.....	4
3. Care for One Another at UCF	5
4. Small Groups	5
4.1 Commitment to House Groups	5
4.2 Role of House Groups.....	5
5. Confidentiality.....	6
5.1 Confidentiality Statement.....	6
5.2 Breach of Confidentiality	6
5.3 Disclosure requiring additional professional support.....	6
5.4 Disclosure of abuse and further action.....	6
6. Consent.....	6
6.1 Issues of Mental Capacity and Consent in adults.....	6
6.2 Children and young people.....	6
6.3 Assumed consent.....	7
7. Safe Practice.....	7
7.1 Duty of Care	7
7.2 Prayer Ministry	7
7.3 Lifts.....	7
7.4 Visiting friends at home	8
8. Code of Conduct.....	8
8.1 Abuse of Trust.....	8
8.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks.....	8
8.3 Boundaries to Practise.....	8
9. Actions and Considerations.....	9
9.1 Ethical considerations.....	9
9.2 Equal Opportunities	9
9.3 Misconduct, mistreatment and abuse.....	9
9.4 Incident and Accident Reporting	9
10. UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group.....	10
10.1 Function of the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group	10
10.2 Persons invited to join the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group will have.....	10
10.3 Responsibilities of the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group	10
11. Prayer Ministry Team.....	10
11.1 Persons invited to join the Prayer Ministry Team will have.....	10
11.2 Responsibilities of the Prayer Ministry Team.....	10

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

12. Pastoral Care Management.....	11
12.1 Pastoral List	11
12.2 RAG Rating.....	11
12.3 Pastoral Oversight	11
13. Pastoral Care Team.....	12
13.1 Criteria for joining the Pastoral Care Team	12
13.2 Referral to the Pastoral Care Team.....	12
13.3 Responsibilities of the Pastoral Care Team.....	12
13.4 Home Visits	13
13.5 Handling Personal Finance.....	13
13.6 Record Keeping.....	13
13.7 Training and Support for those Providing Pastoral Care.....	13
14. Pastoral Deacon(s).....	14
15. The Ministry Team.....	14

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: **1159971**

1. Introduction

New Testament believers were encouraged to share in each others' burdens (Galatians 6:2), intercede for one another (Romans 8:26) and to demonstrate care in actions, not just words (1 John 3:18). At United Church Ferndown (UCF) we have adopted a 'whole church' approach to pastoral care.

One of the best ways to provide pastoral care is to encourage believers to join house groups within their church (The Purpose Driven Life, Warren: 2002). At UCF initial pastoral support will be accessed through small groups (see section 4). Where support is needed that is beyond the scope of the house group a referral can be made to one of the Ministers or Pastoral Deacons who will discreetly involve others if necessary.

Drawing on our/individuals' gifts, our aim is to enable and support each other in the challenges we face. At UCF our second principle is that **We Love All People (James 2:8)**. We seek to be a church that loves people, motivated by the experience of God's love in our lives. This is shown through our acts and deeds to others within the church family and those on the fringes of the church. We offer hospitality with open arms, ears and hearts! Therefore, in our relationships we respect one another.

This Policy covers the following:

- Pastoral care in small groups
- Prayer Line and Prayer Ministry
- Pastoral Care Team
- Role of the Ministers and Pastoral Deacons

Pastoral support will be offered within these contexts and guided by this policy. It is not intended to be an exhaustive document but to guide best practice.

2. Policy Statement

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown is committed in all areas of its work to providing a safe, welcoming environment, where all people are treated with dignity and respect. This document is relevant to all aspects of pastoral care at UCF.

- It is the responsibility of every adult to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of, or the neglect of, any church attendee and to report any actual or suspected abuse that comes to light. Procedures set out in United Church Ferndown's 'Safeguarding Policy' must be followed.
- Each staff member or volunteer will be informed of and given access to copies of the current safeguarding policies and this Pastoral Care Policy with agreed procedures/guidance and will be expected to observe them.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

- United Church Ferndown is committed to supporting, resourcing and training the Pastoral Care Team.
- The names of the Minister(s) and the Pastoral Deacon(s) will be clearly displayed within the church building along with out of hours contact numbers where appropriate.
- The Minister(s) and Pastoral Deacon(s) will be responsible for the implementation of the 'Pastoral Care Policy' and will make themselves available to provide advice, guidance and support to members of the Pastoral Care Team.
- Everyone at UCF will have access to this Pastoral Care Policy on request. The Leadership Team is committed to an annual review of this policy.

3. Care for One Another at UCF

Every Christian has a responsibility to care for others (John 13: 34). That care often happens in natural and unplanned ways, although sometimes that is not possible or practical so additional support may be needed (See section 13 - Pastoral Care Team).

At United Church Ferndown (UCF) we recognise that life has both challenges and joys. We can journey together in those highs and those lows. As a church we want to foster a sense of belonging whether meeting all together or in house groups. Our care for one another includes praying, listening, encouraging, comforting, sharing and learning together. To make this work well we do this through our Pastoral List with our systems of RAG rating and light shepherding (See section 12).

A group of approved volunteers offer prayer support after the Sunday morning service (see section 11). A prayer WhatsApp group for urgent prayer is also available (see section 10).

It is hoped that:

- everyone at UCF will both give and receive the love Jesus showed and taught, (John 11:5, John 13:34 & Romans 5:8).
- our care at UCF will provide both support and encourage spiritual growth.
- everyone will feel responsible for/take ownership of/actively engage with/be a part of this.

4. House Groups

4.1 Commitment to House Groups

As noted in the introduction one of the best ways to provide pastoral care is to encourage believers to join house groups within the church. At UCF we are committed to that idea. We also recognise that these groups can and should have different formats and settings.

4.2 Role of House Groups

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

Pastoral support will be offered by every house group at UCF where friendships and care already exist. It is hoped that everyone in the group will be involved in this.

Within each house group, one person will oversee pastoral care. They will ensure group members who have not attended recently are followed up and pastoral issues including those beyond the scope of the house group are communicated to the one of Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s).

5. Confidentiality

5.1 Confidentiality Statement

Information of a personal nature that is shared within the context of pastoral care will be treated confidentially and with respect. If details are to be revealed, the permission of the person sharing that information should be sought.

Where there is a serious risk of harm or where abuse is suspected, either to the person concerned or to others, then confidentiality will be waived in the interests of those at risk. In such cases confidentiality should not be promised; see section 5.4.

Those providing pastoral care at UCF should not feel they do so alone. Concerns should be discussed with the Minister(s) or the Pastoral Deacon(s). This will normally be without divulging any personal information unless the person involved is informed, but occasionally this may be felt necessary. However, good practice is to tell the person why someone else is becoming involved.

5.2 Breach of Confidentiality

Whatever the information may be, a person's decision to share it may be at great cost to themselves or others and should not be treated lightly. It is a serious issue when confidentiality is broken. If this occurs, the Minister(s) and Church Secretary should be discreetly informed and further action taken if necessary.

5.3 Disclosure requiring additional professional support

In some circumstances specialist and/or professional help is needed and referrals to get that extra help may be necessary. Relevant information for a referral should only be shared with the consent of the person requiring the additional support. It is expected that where further action is being considered the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s) is involved.

5.4 Disclosure of abuse and further action

Where abuse or serious harm is suspected or disclosed UCF's Safeguarding policy **must** be followed.

6. Consent

6.1 Issues of Mental Capacity and Consent in adults

Please refer to the UCF Safeguarding Policy or speak with the Safeguarding Advocates and/or the minister(s).

6.2 Children and young people

Parental consent should always be obtained before offering pastoral care to children and young people under the age of 18. Refer to the UCF Safeguarding Policy, the Safeguarding Advocate or their deputy.

6.3 Assumed Consent

It can be assumed that someone agrees to pastoral care unless they state otherwise. If a person giving support is unable to continue or the person receiving support no longer wants it, that support will cease. When invited, pastoral care can resume with either the original giver or someone else.

7. Safe Practice

7.1 Duty of Care

It is important that we realise that Pastoral Work is a serious and important ministry. When undertaken we enter into a 'duty of care'. Duty of Care is 'a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others' (Oxford Dictionary). This means that if someone causes loss or injury whilst carrying out this role or by neglect of this role, they (and possibly UCF) could be held liable for negligence under civil law.

For best practice please refer to the UCF Safeguarding Policy.

7.2 Prayer Ministry

Believers are encouraged to pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6: 18). Prayer support is fundamental to pastoral care and should always be offered but never imposed. A team of approved volunteers offers prayer support after the Sunday morning service. Urgent and confidential prayer requests can be made anytime to the Deacon responsible for Prayer, the Pastoral Deacon(s), the minister(s) or via the UCF Prayer WhatsApp group (see section 10).

In addition to the rest of this policy the following should be observed:

- Prayer should show great sensitivity and respect.
- When we pray, we are asking God to be at work by His Holy Spirit.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

- At times touch can communicate care more deeply than words. However, any physical contact e.g. holding a hand, should only be with the permission of the person being prayed for. Touch should not be inappropriate and/or intrusive.
- Be mindful of where you are praying and who might be listening.
- If praying with someone alone, do so in a place where you can be seen by others. Praying alone with someone of the opposite sex is discouraged.
- Prayer contact between an adult and a young person could easily be misunderstood. For best practice refer to the 'Child Protection Procedures'. The Ministers will be responsible for providing prayer training for the Prayer Ministry Team and others on request from the Prayer Deacon.

7.3 Lifts

Informal lifts arranged between friends at UCF are preferred. However, if lifts to church need to be formally arranged, this will be coordinated by the Pastoral Deacon(s). Provided the person is self-caring, a rota of volunteers from UCF could be set up. If the person requires assistance to safely get in and out of a car, an alternative will be sought (e.g. Taxi service or Ring and Ride scheme). This will be paid for by the person requiring the additional help.

Anyone giving lifts on behalf of UCF should check with their insurer that they are covered for providing voluntary lifts. Only agreed volunteers with DBS checks should provide lifts, if it is officially on behalf of UCF, to places where people receive health or social care.

7.4 Visiting friends at home

Home visits can happen both informally, amongst friends and house groups, and formally by the Pastoral Care Team (see section 13).

For informal visits, in addition to the rest of this policy, keep the following advice in mind:

- Only visit people you are comfortable visiting. If in doubt, contact a Minister or Pastoral Deacon so a formal visit can be made.
- Be aware of sexual attraction. Don't visit alone someone who will make this difficult for you or them.
- Carry a mobile phone so that you can make a call quickly and easily if the situation requires it.
- Do not visit children or young people.

8. Code of Conduct

8.1 Abuse of Trust

Abuse of Trust is when someone uses their position of authority or trust to the detriment of someone they are caring for. In addition, the one cared for may be reluctant to make a complaint or take action out of a sense of loyalty or fear. It is important that all those working pastorally are aware of their boundaries and responsibilities (see section 8.3)

When working with Adults at Risk or Children and Young People please follow the guidelines set out in the UCF Safeguarding Policy.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF

www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: **1159971**

8.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

People who support children on behalf of UCF will have a DBS check. When appropriate those supporting adults at risk will also have a check. Any existing or subsequent convictions of those workers offering support must be disclosed to the Leadership Team. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a person from all pastoral care work. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

8.3 Boundaries to Practise

Those seeking and receiving pastoral care at UCF can know what to expect in terms of good conduct by referring to this policy.

In addition to the rest of this policy, and in particular

5. Confidentiality,
6. Consent
7. Safe Practice

...the following should be noted:

- Pastoral care (see section 1) is not counselling.
- Everyone should be aware of their limits and seek further help from the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s) if necessary.
- Nobody should handle personal finances for someone on UCF's behalf, except with the direct permission of the Leadership Team (see section 13.5)
- An awareness of over-dependency in pastoral relationships is important. This dependency can apply both ways. In the event of dependence forming, a referral should be made the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s) and support continue to be offered via others on the Pastoral Care Team.

9. Actions and Considerations

9.1 Ethical considerations

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of those receiving pastoral care. People will be treated with dignity and respect, demonstrated in actions, attitude, and language used. Privacy and decisions, including for concerns not to be pursued, should be respected whenever possible. However, in some circumstances, wishes may be overridden in favour of safety

considerations. For further advice, speak to the Minister(s) or the Pastoral Deacon(s).

9.2 Equal Opportunities

UCF is committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to serving and respecting people on a fair and equitable basis.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

9.3 Misconduct, mistreatment, and abuse

United Church Ferndown will not tolerate, or knowingly subject any person to any abusive or inappropriate behaviour. In cases of abuse or serious harm speak immediately to the safeguarding Advocate or their deputy.

The conduct of United Church Ferndown's members is regulated by the constitution of United Church Ferndown. Complaints will be taken seriously and reported to the Church Secretary. If necessary, other agencies (e.g. Police or Social Services) will be informed. If you have any concerns you can contact any of the Ministers, Pastoral Deacons or advocates as above.

9.4 Incident and Accident Reporting

Significant incidents or injuries should be dealt with immediately, e.g. calling for an ambulance or the police, etc, and recorded as soon as possible on an Incident Report form and handed to the Deacon responsible.

10. UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group

10.1 Function of the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group

The prayer WhatsApp Group is a group of people from UCF who have promised to be intercessors for the world, our nation, the life of UCF and the needs of individuals linked to our church and our community.

In all cases requests must only be passed on with the agreement of the person to be prayed for. The prayer request is operated on a strictly confidential basis with as little detail as necessary being given.

No further enquiries are made to remove any pressure or embarrassment of further discussion. However, feedback is welcomed where appropriate.

10.2 Persons invited to join the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group will have

- A desire to pray for God's people.
- Time available to receive and share messages and to pray for the needs.
- A willingness to access support for themselves should they be troubled by praying for difficult issues.

10.3 Responsibilities of the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

- Ensure permission to share with the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group.
- Pray for the needs that are shared.
- Maintain confidentiality within UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group unless it puts others at risk (see section 5).

11. Prayer Ministry Team

11.1 Persons invited to join the Prayer Ministry Team will have...

- A willingness to pray with people.
- An ability to keep confidentiality.
- Read and agreed to work within this policy and in particular section 7.2.
- Time available at end of the morning service.

11.2 Responsibilities of the Prayer Ministry Team

- Be available to listen, care and offer prayer for people who request it.
- Refer to the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s) people who need more support than prayer at the end of the service.
- Arrange swaps with someone else on the rota if unavailable.
- Join others praying before the morning service at 10:00am
- Go immediately to the quiet room and remain there for at least 15 minutes even if it appears no one is coming to pray after the service.
- Maintain confidentiality unless it puts others at risk (see section 5).
- Access training when available.

12. Pastoral Care Management

12.1 Pastoral List

We have a Pastoral List which is a list of all those adults who we feel we have a Duty of Care to. Those who we have a duty of care to include, but are not limited to members of UCF, immediate family of members (unless they have expressed that they have no interest in such care), regular (at least one a month) attenders of any of our Sunday Services and members of our House Groups. This is our Pastoral List.

12.2 RAG Rating

We will employ a RAG system to all adults who we feel we have a duty of care to A RAG rating system is another name for a traffic light system – **Red**, **Amber** & **Green**.

Each individual that is on our Pastoral List is RAG rated. The Minister(s) and the Pastoral Deacons RAG rate with help from the Pastoral Care Team.

Green These are those from the Pastoral List who are attending well, are being cared for in the informal life of UCF and are in no obvious need of any other Pastoral Care. These people are also cared for by the Shepherding Scheme (see 12.3)

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

Amber These are people from the Pastoral List who are in need of pastoral Care but only for a limited period. Pastoral visits and other support will be organised whilst they remain amber rated. Examples might include a grieving family or someone recovering after being in hospital.

Red These are the people on the Pastoral Care List who are housebound or who can attend UCF very infrequently due to circumstances beyond their control. UCF's Pastoral Care Team commits to visiting those who are Red rated at least once a month. Once a term (3 times a year) a minister will visit with the Pastoral Visitor to offer Communion. It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Care Team member to organise this with the individual and a minister.

12.3 Pastoral Oversight

Jesus teaches us that when you're looking after 100 sheep it is easy for 1 to go missing! The Pastoral Oversight Scheme is a light touch ministry where the deacons, the House Group Leaders, and others as requested by the Leadership Team oversee all those who are Green Rated (See 12.2) at UCF. Each person is allocated people from the green section of the Pastoral List. The House Group Leaders get those who attend their House Group members.

The role of those with a list includes...

- Informal checking in regularly with everyone on their list.
- Encouraging those on their list.
- Informing the Minister(s) and the Pastoral Deacon(s) of any concerns.
- Informing immediately the Minister(s) and the Pastoral Deacon(s) of any reason why a RAG rating should be changed.
- Noticing who has not attended anything for 3 weeks and reporting this to the minister(s).

13. Pastoral Care Team

13.1 Criteria for joining the Pastoral Care Team

- Have pastoral skills and talents that have been affirmed by the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s).
- Are available to offer confidential prayer and/or practical support to those in need.
- Be able to commit a minimum of 8 hours a month in the role.
- Prayerful.
- Have read and agreed to work within this Pastoral Care Policy.
- Be a naturally caring and sensitive listener.
- Recognise closure when their care/support is no longer needed.
- Seek help when they themselves need it.

13.2 Referral to the Pastoral Care Team

Referrals to the Pastoral Care Team will come from the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s). If the concern is of a sensitive or complex nature or requires any planning i.e. a rota, then one of the Pastoral Deacon(s) or Minister(s) will deal with the issue directly.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

13.3 Responsibilities of the Pastoral Care Team

'Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep' (Romans 12:15)

The Pastoral Care Team will...

- Have attended pastoral training when available.
- Offer confidential prayer and/or practical support to those referred to the team by the Minister(s) or Pastoral Deacon(s).
- Attend quarterly team meetings for support, encouragement, training, and updates.
- Follow this policy and the safeguarding policies and others as they become available (e.g. GDPR).
- Seek pastoral advice when necessary.
- Commit to praying for those they're supporting, and for themselves as they deliver pastoral care.
- Not take on more than they can, recognising their limitations.
- Be accountable to one another.
- Communicate with the Pastoral Care Team via WhatsApp just before visiting someone and afterwards to give a brief update.
- Log visits and calls.
- Inform the NewsSheet Editor of any agreed prayer requests and put the request on the UCF Prayer WhatsApp Group.

13.4 Home Visits

In addition to the rest of this policy...

- Make it known that you are visiting on behalf of UCF and are accountable to the Pastoral Deacon(s) and Minister(s).
- Be clear that you are offering pastoral support, not professional help or counselling.
- If you are unsure about your safety or the safety of the person you are visiting, do not visit alone but choose an appropriate person to accompany you e.g. a Pastoral Deacon and/or a different location where you can be seen by others e.g. a local café or park etc.
- For your safety home visits should be pre-arranged and communicated via the Pastoral Care WhatsApp group.
- Do not plan home visits late at night.
- Unless it is an emergency, we do not visit, phone or message before 9am or after 9pm.
- If the person you are visiting is not at home, leave a visiting card to let them know that you called to see them.
- Be aware of sexual attraction. Don't visit alone someone who will make this difficult for you or them.
- If it is necessary and you are visiting a child or young person strictly follow the UCF Safeguarding Policy. You must never find yourself alone with someone under 18, someone who is still in statutory full-time education, or is under 25 with a significant disability. Ensure the parent/carer remains visible. If this is not guaranteed, you must be accompanied by the Child Advocate, a Pastoral Deacon or a member of the Ministry Team. This will prevent any misconstrued events.
- Carry a mobile phone so that you can make a call quickly and easily if the situation requires it.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

13.5 Handling Personal Finance

Pastoral Care Team workers may be involved in aspects of personal finance. For example, they may be asked to do shopping or help with an online purchase. This can only be done by Pastoral Team members who have an in-date DBS check and who have attended safeguarding training in the last three years.

To protect everyone from accusations of financial mismanagement or dishonesty...

- Ensure that receipts are always given for purchases.
- Don't move any money which may be left around (e.g. when cleaning).
- Ideally have two people involved when handling money. Gifts, including monetary gifts, should be declined if possible. Any gifts that cannot be declined should be reported to one of the Minister(s) or a Pastoral Deacon to protect from accusations.

13.6 Record Keeping

- Please follow the church's GDPR Policy.
- Only the Pastoral Care Team WhatsApp group should be used for recording and sharing information. Phones and computers accessing the group should be suitably password protected.
- The Pastoral Team and the Ministry Team will be the only members of this group.

13.7 Training and Support for those Providing Pastoral Care

The Minister(s) will be responsible for providing pastoral-related training for the Pastoral Care Team and others on request from the Pastoral Deacon(s).

14. Pastoral Deacon(s)

In addition to the role as described for the Pastoral Care Team, the Pastoral Deacon(s), together with the support of the Ministers, will also...

- Pray for and coordinate the work of the Pastoral Care Team.
- Be the link between the Pastoral Care Team and the Leadership Team.
- Ensure the Pastoral Care Policy is implemented and reviewed.
- Be clear about the roles, skills and availability of the Pastoral Care Team.
- Provide confidential supervision, advice and guidance to those providing pastoral care.
- Take on pastoral referrals that may be complex, sensitive or require planning.
- Contact specialist/professional agencies, make referrals and follow up as necessary.
- Pass on referrals to the Pastoral Care Team where appropriate and follow up.
- Arrange additional training to meet needs identified by the Pastoral Care Team

15. The Ministry Team

The Minister(s) made a commitment at their induction to prayer for the church and to Pastoral care for those in UCF. We have already established that healthy Pastoral care is done by the whole fellowship however this policy sets out our best effort at trying to make sure that Ministers, Deacons, House Group Leaders, and the Pastoral Care Team offers Pastoral Care that increases at time of need.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF
www.ferndown.church Registered Charity: 1159971

The Minister(s) will offer...

- Oversight of all Pastoral Care at UCF.
- Support to all those engaged in Pastoral Care roles.
- Regular Informal Pastoral Care of those with whom they come into contact.
- Emergency Pastoral Care.
- To visit those who are in hospital for a significant stay.
- To take on the Care of individuals who have needs that require more knowledge and training that others offering Pastoral Care are unable to offer.
- Communion at individual's homes at least three times a year, to members no longer able to attend church and by arrangement with their Pastoral Visitor.

The Children's, Youth and Families' Pastor is not part of these schemes as they have a responsibility to offer and coordinate Pastoral care for all of our Children and Young People. They also have shared responsibility with the Minister(s) to offer Pastoral Care to Families.

United Church Ferndown Pastoral Care Policy

United Church Ferndown, 505 Wimborne Road east, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 9NF

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