



Anna Chaplaincy Discernment

As you think and pray about the possibility of becoming an Anna Chaplain, it can be helpful to look in more detail at what Anna Chaplains do, and consider what skills and experience you would bring to this role.

Role Description

An Anna Chaplain is appointed by, and sent out under the authority of, their local church and so we would expect that this general role description is adapted to fit the local context.

Amendments should be agreed between the incumbent/supervisor and Anna Chaplain.

The main role of an Anna Chaplain is to:

- Offer spiritual support to older people who are living in care homes and sheltered housing complexes, their relatives and the staff who look after them.
- Promote the spiritual welfare of older people in the wider community, particularly those facing challenges living independently in their own homes.
- Promote a safe environment to work within, where all can flourish.

What might this look like in practice?

Supporting older people

- Building relationships of friendship and mutual respect with older people.
- Helping older people reflect on their spiritual journey, including the healing of memories and dealing with outstanding issues.
- Offering spiritual support so that older people may live more peacefully in their last years and prepare to face the end of their earthly lives.
- Acting as an advocate for the needs of older people in church and in the wider community.

Supporting relatives

- Helping and supporting relatives to understand better the spiritual issues that older people face in the latter stages of their lives.
- Helping and supporting relatives with the responsibilities of caring for older people in their family.

Supporting staff working with older people

- Helping staff to understand better the spiritual issues that older people face in the latter stages of their lives.
- Offering spiritual support to staff dealing with the, sometimes stressful, circumstances that they encounter when dealing with older people in their care.
- Helping staff and managers of care homes in the formulation and implementation of the values underlying the care they offer.

Supporting churches

- Helping inform and coordinate the church's work with older people.
- Helping churches identify, recognise and appreciate the value of the contribution that older people can make to church life.
- Encouraging churches to understand the particular needs of older people, including dementia, using them in the best ways and supporting the work undertaken with them.
- Encouraging and enabling younger generations to consider what constitutes 'successful ageing' and so prepare for more positive experiences in older age.

Supporting the community

- Helping volunteers understand the role of an Anna Chaplain.
- Helping volunteers to understand when and how to call upon the Anna Chaplain to support those living independently in the community.
- Developing partnerships with local voluntary groups, joint events and activities.
- Supporting or initiating groups and activities for older people, including worship groups.

Supporting all generations

- Building partnerships with local schools and groups (Guides, Scouts, choirs, etc.).
- Understanding how young and old can learn from each other and enjoy each other's company.
- Breaking down stereotypes.

It is expected that Anna Chaplains will:

- Attend regular staff meetings and collaborate fully with others within their ministry team.
- Connect with any other Anna Chaplains locally, and others further afield who are engaged in similar work with people in later life, through the national network.
- Keep up to date with research into issues relevant to the spirituality of ageing.
- Attend appropriate training courses in order to develop skills and to aid personal spiritual growth.
- Keep written records of work undertaken to evaluate effectiveness, to aid reflection and to draw on when producing written reports for churches with oversight of this work.
- Contribute to the worship of local churches.
- Complete the relevant safeguarding training and keep it up to date.

Qualities that make this possible

In your initial discernment, write down examples from your life that illustrate you have these qualities. On a later review, fill in the document with examples from your ministry as an Anna Chaplain.

Quality	Example
<p>Love for God Has a desire to make God known by word and deed and is nourished by Christ's love for the world.</p>	
<p>Ability to work in a team An Anna Chaplain will need to work within the local ministry team and be a team builder themselves.</p>	
<p>Generous empathy Someone who can listen attentively and show warmth and hospitality to those who contact them.</p>	
<p>Pastoral sensitivity This person will be alongside people in times of crisis and so they need to be warmly empathetic whilst upholding appropriate and healthy boundaries. An Anna Chaplain also needs to be sensitive to the ethos and needs of any care settings visited.</p>	
<p>A great communicator This role requires someone who is able to receive and share information.</p>	
<p>Flexible and patient with people Anna Chaplains should have a calm presence, able to tease out what is being asked for and how to respond to it. An Anna Chaplain should also be prepared to try new approaches and think of ways to present the church and Gospel better.</p>	
<p>Have knowledge of the needs of older people It will be necessary for Local Leaders to have (or can show that they can acquire) a good knowledge of the needs within their local context.</p>	
<p>Good judgment This person needs to be able to make good judgments about how to tackle problems that are presented and who to ask to help with this.</p>	