

Pastoral Skills Course

Suggestions and Support



**Diocese
of Salisbury**
Making
Jesus Known

Thank you for considering leading a Pastoral Skills course for potential Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs) and lay chaplains in various contexts. The success of any course is committed, flexible, imaginative teaching and we could not sustain the level of pastoral ministry in the diocese without you. These notes explain the course and offer some suggestions about the different ways in which the material could be used. From time to time we offer a Zoom session on 'How to lead a pastoral skills course' which will be advertised in the CMD brochure, or on our website, but if you cannot see one soon and would like to hear from someone about their experience of running the course, please do get in touch with the [Mission and Ministry Team](#).

Shape of the course

The course handbook has recently been updated in the light of feedback from participants and course leaders. The course consists of ten sessions, each intended to last around two hours, though in some sessions you may find you need to pick out the activities and discussions that will be of most benefit to your group rather than feel you have to cover all the material. It is designed to have space of at least two weeks between sessions in order to allow for some active learning and reflection time, but it is very much up to you how you structure the training for your group. Some courses have run on a weekly basis – others have used a combination of Saturdays and midweek sessions to be able to cover more material over a shorter timescale. In addition, there is a Taster session to enable people to reflect on whether Pastoral Skills training is right for them before beginning the course. They are encouraged to spend time when the course concludes to discern whether ministry as a Lay Pastoral Assistant or Lay Chaplain is for them at this time.

Within the course handbook you will find the following sessions:

- Session 1: **Who are we?**
- Session 2: **Who am I?**
- Session 3: **Journey of life**
- Session 4: **Healthy boundaries in pastoral care**
- Session 5: **Learning to listen**
- Session 6: **Engaging with families**
- Session 7: **Coming alongside those with illness or disabilities**
- Session 8: **Valuing later life**
- Session 9: **Our role at a time of loss**
- Session 10: **Ministry matters**

Either before starting, or during the first part of the course, participants will also need to complete three safeguarding modules online in their own time. These will complement the learning together on the course, so course leaders might like to refresh their own safeguarding training in order to be aware of material that might be referred to by course participants.

*A health warning

Be aware that some of the sessions could bring to the surface sensitive issues that the participants may need to work through with someone they trust. Please mention this at the start of the course so that participants are prepared.

Please do not feel that you have to work through everything that is in the handbook. You are encouraged to make the material your own by substituting your own exercises and examples. It will be important to offer opportunities for participants to reflect on the experience that is in the room rather than listen to a lecture, so feel free to improvise and draw on your own pastoral experience.

Preparing to lead a course – some questions to ponder

Who?

- Benefice-wide, deanery-wide or even beyond?
- Include your Rural Dean and Lay Chair in the conversation.
- Maximum number of candidates?
- Advertise or invite? (Taster session can be important as a discernment tool, but is not compulsory.)

When & Where?

- One location or mixed? Who pays cost of any hired premises/refreshments etc?
- Online or onsite?
- How long and at what frequency?
- Will you use a pre-course taster session, or start straight in on session 1?
- Establish course dates.

How?

- Who is going to lead the sessions?
- Who is going to coordinate the course (administration!)?
- Who is going to have pastoral oversight?
- AV equipment and other practical considerations (for example diverse ability access?)

Get in touch with the Mission and Ministry Team at an early stage – they may be able to help you work through some of these questions.

Lay Ministry Team

Lay Ministry Administrator: [Venetia Tucker](#)

Lay Ministry Officer: [Karen Hutchinson](#)

Step by Step Guide to running a Pastoral Skills course

Step 1	<p>Establish the course start date and structure, and the date of the pre-course taster session if you plan to use this. If possible also pencil in a date for the Commissioning service with your Area Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave at least 2 weeks' notice before the first session after informing the Mission and Ministry Team, to allow for it to be advertised. • Leave at least 6 weeks between the final session and commissioning service date to allow for discernment and any outstanding DBS check/safeguarding training.
Step 2	<p>Complete the form on the website “Notify the Diocese that you intend to run a course” You will then be sent a link for you to pass to potential participants. It is up to you how widely you decide to circulate that link, and whether you would like the course publicised on the diocesan Learning Hub so that others can join.</p>
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the course dates and any taster session either by advertising or by invitation to selected candidates, sending them the Learning Hub link to register. • Book venues for all course sessions. • Arrange to collect sufficient numbers of Pastoral Skills Handbooks from the Diocesan Office.
Step 4	<p>If you run the initial Taster Session please emphasize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incumbent's support is required before you begin the course. • Every participant must have registered through the Learning Hub before the course start date. If anyone has difficulty with this they can contact parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org
Step 5	<p>Pre-Course information is sent out four days prior to the course start date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This information is sent from the learning hub in your name as course leader. It can contain whatever information you feel it is important for people to have at that point such as directions to the venue, information about parking or refreshments. • It is important that everyone who intends to attend the course has registered with the Learning Hub by that date so that they can receive future information emailed to all course participants.
Step 6	<p>First Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of the course remind participants that they will need to complete Basic awareness (C0), Foundation (C1) and Awareness of Domestic Abuse online as soon as possible. This must take place well before commissioning. They will also need an enhanced DBS check for both vulnerable adults and children, with adult and child barring check. • Shortly after the first session, the Lay Ministry Administrator will send a welcome email to course participants, explaining the requirements for DBS checks and for candidates to undergo the required safeguarding training. Those hoping to be commissioned will need to show their incumbent a clear disclosure at the right level.

Step 7	Run the course!
Step 8	<p>Having completed the final session all participants to be commissioned will need to undertake a period of reflection with their incumbent concerning potential LPA Ministry.</p> <p>Those who feel they are ready to be commissioned as LPAs will need to work on a Role Description with their incumbent, setting out the kind of ministry they will offer, and the supervision and support they can expect.</p>
Step 9	<p>The Commissioning Service details need to be arranged directly with the relevant Area Office and confirmed to the Lay Ministry Administrator. The Commissioning will be undertaken by either the suffragan bishop or an archdeacon.</p> <p>Please confirm the names of those going forward for Commissioning.</p> <p>The incumbent is responsible for ensuring the person has been safely recruited.</p>
Step 10	<p>The participant and incumbent agree the Role Description prior to commissioning.</p> <p>Participants and incumbents complete the Declaration Form prior to commissioning.</p> <p>Course leaders are encouraged to share any feedback with the Lay Ministry Administrator for future reference and improvements.</p>

Course materials

The handbook is available online, and printed copies can be collected (by arrangement) from Emmaus House or one of the Area Offices. In addition all are welcome to download a pdf from the [diocesan website](#). However, if you are using substantial amounts of your own material, you may prefer participants not to have a handbook until you have finished the course, when they may want to return to it for reference. It is therefore up to you to decide at what stage to point the participants to the course handbook on the website, or to collect printed handbooks to give out.

The taster session is available as a separate download from the website, and you are welcome to use this or make up your own. Many course leaders and participants find the taster session helpful as part of the discernment process, but it is not compulsory. If you have run a course before you may recall there being a separate 'Concluding session'. This has now been incorporated into session 10 of the core course, with an expectation that each incumbent will then work with their participants on discerning the shape of their ministry from that point on and recommend them for commissioning if that is appropriate.