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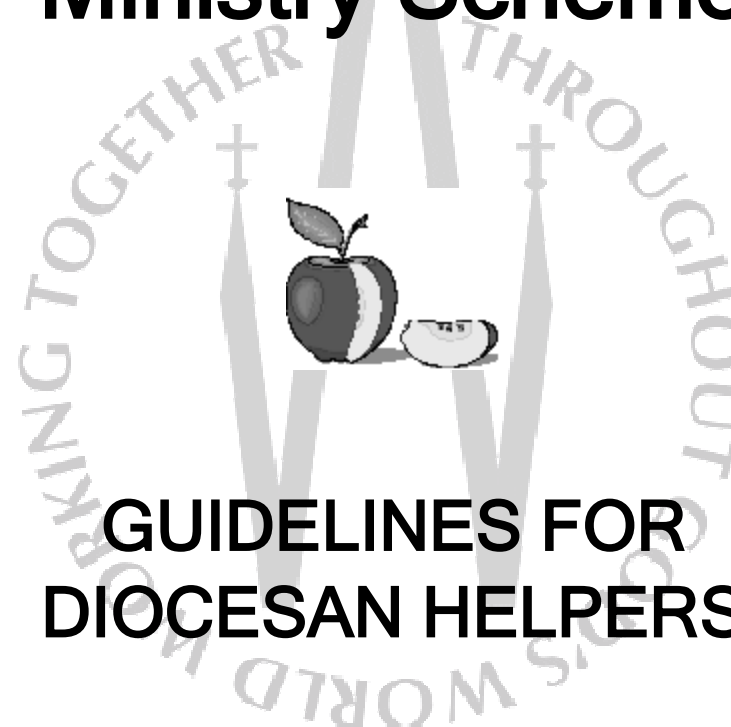
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Wakefield Ministry Scheme



GUIDELINES FOR DIOCESAN HELPERS

IL

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1. What is a Diocesan Helper?

Every parish that decides to join the Wakefield Ministry Scheme is allocated a Diocesan Helper, usually a lay person from outside the parish who will accompany the Core Group through the WMS process.

The term 'Helper' has been chosen to refer to this person in order to convey the idea that it is a friendly, informal role of coming alongside to assist the parish in its progress through the Scheme.

However, some diocesan schemes use other terms which also cast light on some of the roles which Helpers might need to adopt from time to time:

- Sometimes the Diocesan Helper may be a 'Consultant', someone who can introduce a note of objectivity and help the Core Group to stand back and monitor and evaluate what is happening in the parish and within their own group life.
- Sometimes the Helper may be a 'Mentor', someone with a degree of wisdom and experience made sensitively available to the Core Group to draw upon.
- Sometimes the Helper may be a 'Tutor', guiding the Core Group through aspects of the Parish Programme and helping them to draw out the learning from their experience of it. This may be the case especially in the early stages of the process.

8. Where can further information be found?

A wide range of leaflets is available covering all aspects of the Wakefield Ministry Scheme, including:

ILA 2 Basic Information

ILA 3 Who's Who in the Wakefield Ministry Scheme?

ILA 4 Outline of the Basic Parish Programme

ILA 5 Starting the Scheme: a step by step Guide

ILA 6 Candidates for Ordination

ILB 1 Criteria for Inclusion of Parishes in the Scheme

ILB 4 Information about Core Groups

Additionally, the annual Handbook for parishes embarking on the Scheme gives an account of the whole process stage by stage, and lists the complete catalogue of educational and training resources available. The Handbook is issued to Core Group Members, Incumbents, and Diocesan Helpers.

Material from the list of information leaflets will be made available by WMS personnel when first discussing with a person the possibility of becoming a Helper to a particular parish.

The detailed Handbook will be issued to the Helper once the parish is ready to begin the process.

Helpers who are not already WMS Staff members with their own budgets are entitled to claim mileage expenses to cover travelling to visit Core Groups and attend diocesan sessions.

the **task**, the health of the **group** and the fulfilment of the **individual**.

6. What about the relationship with the incumbent?

The incumbent's own direct involvement with the Core Group and the WMS process in the church will vary, typically according to whether it is a single church situation with a full-time resident incumbent, or a small daughter church or parish within a team or multi-parish benefice, where the incumbent is mainly occupied elsewhere.

The Helper and the incumbent will have complementary roles **in relation to the Core Group only**. They will form together the internal and external aspects of the general 'mentoring', oversight and guidance of the Core in its progress through the Scheme. It is not expected of the Helper's role that they will get involved in the wider life of the parish, or work **individually** alongside the incumbent.

7. What happens after the three year programme?

At the end of the Basic Parish Programme the church should be operating on a shared ministry basis as a matter of habit as well as conviction, and so the Core Group (by whatever name) will continue to function. Occasionally a parish and Helper may wish by mutual agreement to continue their existing relationship. However, in most cases the Helper's involvement will end after the three years and at this point the parish will be put in touch with an Area Representative who may perform this ongoing role towards several WMS parishes within a deanery or area of the diocese.

2. So what qualities and skills do Helpers need?

Helpers do not necessarily require technical qualifications as consultants, counsellors or teachers but should have some of the aptitudes associated with these roles.

- They should be good listeners
- They will not project their own agenda on to the parish or the Core Group
- They will have some analytical ability, to be able to help the group 'see the wood for the trees'.
- They will have some understanding of group processes
- They need to be tactful and sensitive
- They need to have imagination, to be able when appropriate to help the parish create new ideas and initiatives.

3. Why does a parish need a Diocesan Helper?

- a. For the benefit of the Core Group -
 - to introduce an outside perspective
 - to clarify processes and ideas
 - to tease out learnings
 - to help identify training needs
- b. For the benefit of WMS as a whole -
 - to liaise between the parish and WMS staff
 - to help 'moderate' the Scheme by enabling a comparison of experience of different parishes.

4. How much time commitment is required?

To some extent as the Scheme progresses in the parish Helpers will find their own 'level', but as a general guide the following will help:

During the early stages of a parish's involvement - typically the first six months or so - the Core Group will need to meet with the Helper several times to ensure that everything is in place to have the process running smoothly in the parish, including the formation of the Core as an effective working group. For this period, Helpers should expect to give at least one evening a month to the parish. Some may choose to do more if time permits, for example by getting involved in the study units as well as Core meetings.

Beyond this early stage, Core Groups should settle into a pattern of meeting periodically for progress reviews, forward planning and consideration of emerging training needs. This will probably entail the Helper's attendance at a couple of meetings per term, i.e. every six to eight weeks. However, again, some Helpers may opt to be more closely involved.

It is also beneficial if Helpers can attend the Diocesan sessions with their Core Group, though it is recognised that not all Helpers will be able to manage all of these.

5. What do Helpers need to be aware of ?

The WMS Staff try to match suitable Helpers to appropriate parishes and will usually brief potential Helpers on an individual basis, about the suggested parish, the Scheme as a whole and the Helper's role, before a decision is made to

proceed and a Helper is introduced to a parish.

Important things Helpers need to know about the parish include:

- churchmanship and style of ministry in operation
- any significant history e.g. changes of incumbent, closure of buildings, amalgamation of parishes etc.
- How ministry in the parish is organised and what the Core Group's role is likely to be: for example
 - a 'Local Ministry Team', effectively comprising the people who **do** the ministry alongside the incumbent
 - a 'Ministry Co-Ordinating Group', essentially there to focus and unite a pattern of shared ministry around common vision and aims
 - a 'Think Tank' or Parish Education Group, put in place to foster ideas and encourage new thinking and exploration among the congregation.

Important issues Helpers need to be alert to may include some or all of the following:

- Working with **volunteers** who are giving freely of their time and must not be taken for granted or become over-committed
- 'Team Spirit' and relationships within the Group
- Spirituality- remembering this whole process is not just about getting things done and becoming extremely busy
- The interlocking needs around the accomplishment of