



Faith in
our Future

Diocese of Monmouth
Esgobaeth Mynwy

Caring for those who are caring

A Well-Being Guide

Updated October 2024

...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

A cheerful heart is a good medicine,
but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

Anxiety weighs down the human heart,
but a good word cheers it up.

Proverbs 12:25



Introduction

We all work in various ways, and there is no prescribed way that suits everyone. Self-care, however, should be a consideration for all. We are often careful about looking after ourselves physically, but we also need to look after ourselves spiritually and mentally. If we are engaged in any form of ministry in the church, lay or ordained, we will be caring for people, and we can't do that properly if we are not caring for ourselves. There is a risk however, that inspired by our passion for God and our ministry, we will feel we always need to do more!

Many of us are aware of how we behave under pressure and what works best for us when there is a lot to do, but it is important that we look out for each other as well! We can't do everything by ourselves, and this guide highlights the importance of creating a culture of teamwork which fosters support and encouragement.



Looking after our lay people

Lots of people do extraordinary amounts of work in our churches, and we rely on them. Saying 'thank you' is obviously essential, but we could do more! The commitment people are willing to offer is amazing, but it also opens up the possibility of expecting too much, and the willing volunteer trying to do too much. As part of showing how much we value lay people, we need to care for them too.



As clergy and as a Ministry Area Council there is a responsibility to ensure:

- They know the responsibility isn't theirs alone. Too many people (and we are grateful for them) feel they have to do things, or they won't get done. This may even be true at times, but the responsibility isn't theirs to do things that take up more time than they have, or which cause too much stress.
- Time is spent on finding, encouraging and developing others who can share the ministry.
- Regular open and honest conversations take place to establish how much time and commitment volunteers are contributing and whether they are coping. If not, what extra support would be helpful, and can it be provided?
- Wherever possible that there is an assistant or deputy to help.
- That there is a sense of working in a team.
- Expectations of them are reasonable and sensibly managed.
- That they know there is always someone to talk to!



Looking after our clergy

Some clergy are notoriously bad at caring for themselves and still believe they can care properly for others. It won't happen effectively!

As ministry area wardens and a Ministry Area Council there is a responsibility to ensure:

- At least a day off a week is taken. Ideally this should begin the evening before.
- Clergy should not feel guilty about taking time off, but this is a common problem! Sometimes people joke, but sometimes people are more serious, when they say things like, 'you're taking more time off...?' Clergy have a holiday entitlement each year and it is important that they take it if they are going to minister effectively (please see p5 for details).
- That a culture is created whereby calls outside 'normal' working hours only happen if they're urgent. This is complicated as volunteers are often only available at those times – a sensible balance can be reached though.
- Clergy should try to only work two sessions out of three (morning, afternoon, evening).
- That their spiritual welfare is being considered – there needs to be time for prayer, study, retreat. Designating a day each month for this is useful and should not be seen as a luxury.
- When social events are held where the clergy are present, these are often 'working occasions' for them, however enjoyable they may be.
- That expenses are not seen as something of a luxury which they shouldn't take. These are part of their terms and conditions of service.
- The privacy of the family of clergy is respected. They are not the people who are ordained and must be allowed to decide how much or how little time they give to the life of the church.





Some unhealthy practices for all

- Working or volunteering when unwell.
- Using annual leave to catch up on work.
- Working or volunteering long hours and without breaks.
- Believing things will fall apart without us.

Some essentials for all

- Make sure there is a culture of gratitude and complements. People, lay or ordained, need to know they are valued. Say 'thank you' a lot!
- Communicate well!
- Be realistic about expectations of yourself and other people.
- Treat people with kindness and respect – our behaviour is a model for that of other people.

Thank
you!



Holiday entitlement for stipendiary clergy

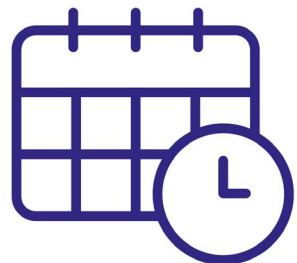
(taken from the Church in Wales Clergy Terms of Service):

A Cleric should ensure a healthy work/life balance and that the normal working week includes one stated regular free day of twenty-four hours. Once per month, an additional rest day should be taken so that there is a continuous free period of forty-eight hours. A Cleric should organise his or her working day to ensure that there is a reasonable period of time for rest and recreation.

The annual holiday entitlement is six weeks to include six Sundays per annum plus those Bank Holidays which do not fall on Christmas Day and Good Friday. One of these weeks must be taken within a six-week period after Christmas Day and one of these weeks must be taken within a six-week period after Easter Day. Annual holidays may not be taken during over the main festivals of Christmas Day, Good Friday or Easter Day. In exceptional circumstances, any plans should be discussed and agreed with the bishop. All holidays should be notified to the Area Dean or equivalent. The annual holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December. In addition, a cleric is encouraged to participate in an annual retreat of no more than five days (Monday to Friday). Periods of absence of more than 5 days require the prior agreement of the Diocesan Bishop. Cover for such absences must be arranged by the cleric.

The annual holiday entitlement of a Cleric not in receipt of a stipend is not less than six Sundays per annum plus Bank Holidays as above and such other periods agreed in the individual case having regard to the obligations of any paid employment or appointment in which the Cleric is engaged and the needs of the clerical office held.

The full clergy terms of service can be found at:
www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/clergy-handbook/terms-service/





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