

Guide to Good Practice for Focal Ministers and Oversight Ministers



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An Introduction from the Bishops Pete and Sophie

Experience frequently reminds us that so many aspects of church life revolve around our relationships with each other. Developing good patterns for our regular interactions is essential in collaborative working relationships, such as those between Focal Ministers and Oversight Ministers. Valuing and respecting each other as colleagues in Christ's mission will be at the heart of this. Developing the attitudes and skills needed for collaboration is an ongoing process for many of us, which proves challenging as well as rewarding.

This Guide is written for both Oversight Ministers and Focal Ministers. It is intended to help you find constructive, healthy and practical ways to approach your working relationships together and to nourish them over time. We commend it to you as a resource when a new Focal Ministry Team is being established; also, as something you can keep returning to as this ministry gradually develops.



+ Pete Sheffield



+ Sophie Dancaster

“The Diocese of Sheffield is called to grow a sustainable network of Christ-like, lively and diverse Christian communities in every place which are effective in making disciples and in seeking to transform our society and God's world.”



Focal Ministers

Focal Ministers are a visible presence and agent of the gospel. They are authorised by the bishop and supported by the diocese, and rooted to provide a focus and regular presence in a particular congregation or community. They usually work as part of a team with other Focal Ministers.

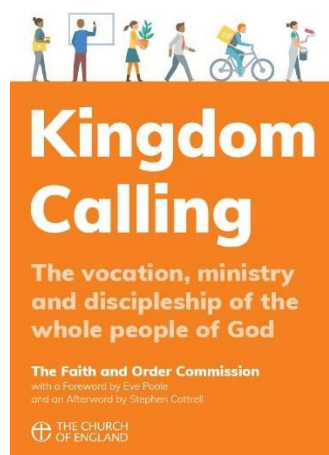
The Oversight Minister, Church Wardens, PCC, and other recognised ministers, along with the Focal Ministry Team share in the leadership of ministry and mission within a parish, as part of, and in collaboration with, the wider Mission Area.

This basic model will be true for all Focal Ministers. However, Focal Ministry itself is not one-size-fits-all. The particular shape Focal Ministry takes will vary, and Focal Ministers themselves will be different in each place; reflecting both the local context and needs, as well as the gifts, skills and callings of the Focal Ministers.

Some Focal Ministers may already hold the office of Reader, Churchwarden, or be another lay minister, others may be ordained; some may be the obvious ‘face of the community’, others may be responding to a new call to ministry. All may be nominated to the role of Focal Minister.

Where there is a team of Focal Ministers one of them will usually be designated as the Coordinating Focal Minister. This role may rotate around the group, or not, depending on circumstances. The Co-ordinating Focal Minister will usually act as the main point of contact with the Oversight Minister and be part of the Mission Area Leadership Team.

Working with an Oversight Minister in their Mission Area, the team will seek to mobilise the whole people of God for the whole mission of God; enabling all the baptised to enter into the fullness of their baptismal calling to “shine as a light for Christ in the world, to the glory of God the Father.” For a deeper look at the theology and background thinking behind this, please see the excellent report: Kingdom Calling below.



[Download here](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Kingdom%20Calling%20Web%20Version.pdf) -

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Kingdom%20Calling%20Web%20Version.pdf>

Core Role Description of a Focal Minister

As expanded upon below in the Core Qualities of Focal Ministers, a Focal Minister will be:

- A believer in God as described in the creeds and teachings of the Anglican Church
- Baptised and confirmed
- Someone who as a baptised believer and disciple receives, walks in and reflects the Light of Christ in their daily lives
- Someone who is prepared to be a lifelong learner in areas of faith and ministry
- A recognised face of the church in their congregation and/or community

The core purpose and role shared by all Focal Ministers, usually as part of a team, is:

- To work with their Oversight Minister, PCC and Church Wardens to help lead the mission, ministry and growth of their church
- To work with and be supported by others in their Mission Area and deanery
- To support the wider diocesan vision and strategy
- To be a public face of the church, recognised as people of faith and integrity
- To be a focal point of contact both for the congregation and wider community
- To share in enabling the nurture and formation of disciples, encouraging all to receive, walk in and reflect the Light of Christ in their daily lives
- To help grow and develop others in their vocation and ministry
- To take responsibility and leadership of a particular area of mission and ministry as outlined in their Ministry Agreement
- If applicable, to act as a Coordinating Focal Minister

Beyond this, the specific role of a Focal Minister will vary greatly depending on gifts, needs and contexts. Some may take a lead in Mission, others Worship, others Pastoral Work, others new areas that come out of the time of prayer and exploration. It is hoped that our Focal Ministers will be wonderfully diverse, reflecting those in the congregations and communities that they serve. One of the benefits of seeing 'someone like me' in a public role is that it encourages others to explore their own discipleship and vocation. It is our prayer that Focal Ministers and Oversight Ministers are liberated into the fullness of their life in Christ, they will liberate others into the same, encouraging them and building their confidence and skills.



Core Qualities of Focal Ministers

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Theme	Qualities	Seen in
Personal Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing and joyful relationship with God Motivated by love of God Living as a light for Christ in everyday life Confidence found in Christ 	A desire to reflect the love of God and live as a Light for Christ
Nurturing Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to all the key beliefs of the church as expressed in the scriptures and the creeds Nourished and sustained by prayer, scripture and sacrament Sharing in the fellowship of the church 	Care for spiritual life in ministry, through prayer, worship and bible study; private and corporate Habits, tools, practices and supportive relationships to draw on, to nourish and sustain personal and spiritual life

SELF-CARE

Theme	Qualities	Seen in
Healthy Self-Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal identity on Christ Shaped by spiritual disciplines e.g. prayer, self-awareness and self-acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and working with strengths, limitations and personal capacity Receiving and handling positive and negative feedback appropriately
Taking Care of Yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of personal needs Care for self Balance of work and rest Realistic understanding of the time and energy required by the role as outlined in the Ministry Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal boundaries and mechanisms to balance competing demands Looking after key personal relationships and taking time off Strategies for managing stress Exercising ministry within a balanced and healthy lifestyle

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Theme	Qualities	Seen in
Discipline	Open to being transformed by God Committed to growing in discipleship	Living as a Light for Christ in all aspects of life
Lifelong Learning	Openness and commitment to growth and development	Self-understanding as a learner Willingness to participate in regular ongoing ministerial development Identifying and accessing appropriate learning opportunities Reflective practice
Learning from and with others	Openness to learning from and with others	Appropriate engagement with others

LEADERSHIP AND FOCAL MINISTRY

Theme	Qualities	Seen in
The Focal Minister as a leader	A disciple of Jesus who lives out their baptismal calling to be a Light for Christ Models leadership on the example of Christ	Recognised by others as a disciple of Jesus, having faith and integrity Recognised as someone who is stable and trustworthy Healthy, accountable relationships, with appropriate boundaries and confidentiality Practical understanding of the use, and abuse, of power and the role of policies and procedures, especially Safeguarding Role model to those within and outside the church Of good standing in their community
Collaborative leadership	Committed to collaborative leadership	Shared leadership and effective team working Supportive of colleagues
Vision	Has a realistic and practical sense of vision for the church or congregation, which resonates with others Capacity to develop as a reflective practitioner in shaping vision and practice	Development and implementation of that vision with others Ongoing reflection on practice

NURTURING A HEALTHY CHURCH LOCALLY

Theme	Qualities	Seen in
The whole life of the Church	Desires to see the whole life of the church flourish	Ongoing reflection, encouragement and nurture of the whole life of the church Fostering healthy relationships
Enabling others to live as Lights for Christ	Desires to encourage and facilitate the gifts of others in sustaining the life and ministry of the church	Encouraging of others in their journey of faith Supporting, developing and facilitating the ministry of teams and individuals within the life of the church
Mission in the local context	Committed to God's mission as outlined in the 5 marks of mission	Enabling the church in outreach to the local context, in ways which are appropriate to the local context
Personal gifts	Aware of personal gifts and ministry, and where they are called to serve in the life of the church	Using personal gifts and ministry within a particular area of the life of the church

BEING PART OF THE DIOCESE

Theme	Qualities	Seen in
Diocesan vision and strategy	Values the vision and strategy of Sheffield Diocese	Ongoing reflection on the life of the church in relation to the diocesan vision and strategy
Roles across the Mission Area and diocese	Values the role of Focal Minister and its place in the life of the diocese Values and works with all other roles and ministries in the life of the diocese	Healthy, mutually supportive relationships within the Mission Area and diocese
Managing the Church	Committed to ministry within the structures of the diocese; following diocesan guidelines, practices and policies	Ministry within diocesan boundaries, legal and safeguarding Accessing information and support
Being Anglican	A respect for and commitment to the Church of England, its faith, breadth and diversity	A deepening understanding of Christian faith and practices within the Church of England

Oversight Ministers

The calling of the ordained is not to do all the work of ministry, but to enable and nurture the ministry and mission of the whole people of God to be Lights for Christ. In supporting and supervising Focal Ministry teams, Oversight Ministers are fulfilling that calling, as they seek to develop and release the gifts of others, lay and ordained. As stated in the ordinal, their priestly ministry is to enable all the baptised to enter into the full dignity of their baptism, 'that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God'. Through this ministry, every disciple finds their particular calling in service and witness to their local communities, as part of a network of worshipping congregations in their Mission Area. The role of an Oversight Minister is to work collaboratively with others in four interrelated ways:

1. To oversee mission and ministry in the Mission Area, managing change and providing vision, direction and leadership, with a focus on specific parishes
2. To grow a healthy church, watching over the well-being of the whole people of God and equipping them for the whole mission of God
3. To ensure mission and ministry in the Mission Area reflects the Christian faith as understood in the Church of England
4. To keep watch over the leaders in the Mission Area

There are three particular roles for the Oversight Minister in relation to Focal Ministry:

- To help Parishes to build Focal Ministry Teams

This will include discerning when a Parish is ready to begin to implement Focal Ministry and then determining how the model will be realized in this context.

- To help identify potential Focal Ministers

In consultation with others, the Oversight Minister will seek to nurture vocations to Focal Ministry, guiding and helping them through the discernment process.

- To support Focal Ministers and Focal Ministry Teams as they exercise the ministries God has called them to.

The Oversight Minister will be a first port-of-call for Focal Ministers. They will meet regularly with them for support, learning and equipping in their ministry. Working together, the Oversight Ministers, Focal Ministers and other church ministers will help discern the vision and set the direction for the mission and ministry of the church.

At the heart of their work will be growing outward-facing Christian communities, which demonstrate the love of God and His Kingdom. If a Parish does not have an Oversight Minister then the Parochial Church Council (PCC), in consultation with the Associate Archdeacon, should identify an Accompanying Minister: someone with suitable experience who can support and guide them, and any potential Focal Ministers, through the transition to the new model of ministry until an Oversight Minister is appointed.

Collaborative ministry

Collaboration is part of God's design for our flourishing in the church and in the wider world. In the Bible, we see God as creator sharing responsibility in care for that creation with humankind (Genesis 1:26). Later, God shares responsibility with particular people, such as Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4) and Moses (Exodus 3-4). In the New Testament, we find God sharing gifts and ministry with members of the church, 'so that we might grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ' (Ephesians 4:11-16). Paul describes ministry as being co-workers with God (1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1).

Clergy and laity exercising responsibility and leadership together, enables the growth and flourishing of all the people of God. Sharing ministry and leadership with others gives all involved opportunities for growth and flourishing; failure to share this with others will stifle opportunities for growth and flourishing.

Oversight Ministers seek to release, empower, support and equip Focal Ministers. It is the Focal Ministers who, with the PCC and Church Wardens, are the local leaders in ministry and mission with responsibility for their particular congregation or community.

Focal Ministers authorisation comes from Bishop Pete, and they are ultimately accountable to God. Locally, they are accountable to the Oversight Minister and PCC.

A Focal Minister may be a Church Warden, but this need not be the case. They may also be a member of the PCC.

Focal Ministers must be encouraged and enabled to shape and initiate the development of mission and ministry in their parish. It is therefore strongly suggested that Focal Ministers are represented on the PCC and invited to give a report and get feedback on a regular basis.

An Oversight Minister helps as an experienced mentor and critical friend, with the wider Mission Area perspective in mind. Our uniqueness as individuals means each supportive relationship is unique.

For example, one Focal Minister might lack confidence and experience in a particular aspect of their role, and need quite a lot of support and consultation during the early stages, to help them develop as they grow into the role. Sometimes this could involve the Oversight Minister responding to requests for advice; at other times, simply giving space to the Focal Minister to find their feet, gain confidence and grow into this unfamiliar role.

Another Focal Minister may already be considerably more experienced and comfortable in ministry roles; this person will still need support from their Oversight Minister, but more in terms of encouragement to trust their own judgment, and affirmation as they make decisions and take things forward.

However, even one individual is a complex mixture. For example, a Focal Minister who has years of experience as a school teacher may have well-established competence in particular practical skills (such as relating to younger people or managing a budget). Yet the same person may have no experience or confidence in other aspects relating to their ministry (such as devising service rotas or helping organise a funeral). These differences and the feelings they produce need to be recognised and explored by the Oversight Minister and the Focal Minister in their ongoing conversations.

Equally, different Oversight Ministers will bring their unique experience and gifts to the role, and it will be a blessing if they draw upon these appropriately in ministry. They are not expected to be all-knowing and all-things-to-all-people. They will need to take responsibility for asking for support and equipping where necessary; modelling that it is wise and not weak to ask for help, and be prepared to learn from and with those with whom they minister.

Practical Matters

There are some basic practical matters it is usually helpful for Focal Ministers and Oversight Ministers to discuss right at the beginning of their collaborative working relationship.

1. Agree a pattern of regular times of prayer and Bible study together. This will help both Focal and Oversight ministers keep rooted in their faith and work together. Sessions do not always need to be led by the Oversight Minister, even though it is their responsibility to ensure it happens. In fact, sharing the facilitation of prayer and learning is actively encouraged.
2. Agree the most suitable ways to communicate with each other. Consider when you need to be in the room together and when can you use a telephone or online call. Share and negotiate preferences for email, text, phone, video call or meeting physically. Establish regular patterns of communication, which will work well for both of you. Talk about boundaries and agree when and where, outside of an emergency, each will not be available.
3. Agree a regular pattern of 1:1 meetings. (Please see next section.)
4. Try to talk openly, and preferably in advance, about areas where you know there might be disagreement.
5. Money matters! Discuss what expenses will be paid and how; and put a process in place. Make sure that everyone is clear about expectations.
6. Finally, it is very important that the Focal Minister has a Ministry Agreement with their Oversight Minister. A proforma for this can also be found at the end of this document. This is not set in stone, and as can be seen below, it is regularly revisited at times of review and renew.

Focal Ministers will usually have begun thinking about their vocations and gifts a long time ago, and this will have been listened to carefully during their Discernment Conversation. A Ministry Agreement is completed between the Focal Minister and Oversight Minister as part of Getting Ready. This gives the opportunity for the Focal Minister and Oversight Minister to agree how, where and when those vocations and gifts might be released in a way that enables the Focal Minister, their congregation and context, and fellow ministers to flourish together. It also helps put in place limits and boundaries to keep individuals and the church as a whole both safe and healthy.

Of course, each situation will be different, and subject to change the Ministry Agreement should be amended accordingly, and as new situations and opportunities arise.

Regular 1-1 Meetings

Building and maintaining relationships by investing time in good communication is a vital priority. Regular meetings provide the opportunity to check on wellbeing and exercise duty of care

As a rule of thumb, the Oversight Minister might aim to have a one-to-one (1-1) once a month with a Focal Minister from each of the parishes that the Oversight Minister is responsible for. For example, one parish may have just a single Focal Minister, in which case they will probably meet 1-1 each month. Another parish may have a team of three Focal Ministers: in this situation, as the key point of contact, a Co-ordinating Focal Minister might meet the Oversight Minister every second month and one of the other Focal Ministers meet the Oversight Minister in the intervening month. For larger teams, Focal Ministers and Oversight Ministers should decide together what is practical in terms of meeting.

In 1-1 meetings, the Focal Ministers share what has been happening in the life of their church, how they feel about it, what they sense God may be saying and doing and what they are thinking and planning for the months ahead. The Oversight Minister listens and learns, expressing support, giving encouragement and sometimes advice or targets. The Oversight Minister's task is to empower and enable the ministry of the Focal Minister(s). Both parties need to be asking questions, to help them think together more deeply and discern the leading of God's Holy Spirit.

Here are some ideas which can help make these meetings purposeful and constructive:

- Praying together - for the particular parish as well as the wider Mission Area and each other.
- What is going well? Find stories to share which bring encouragement.
- Review how things are going in the church, particularly in terms of their own role and agreed objectives.
- What are the Focal Minister's felt needs for growth and learning? Does the Oversight Minister also want to add suggestions about this?

- Identifying learning: a Focal Minister might share something that struck them recently in the *Building Foundations* or *Keeping Growing* course
- Reflective practice: the Focal Minister might bring a concern or experience of ministry to the meeting, which you then talk through. As you do so, weave in the regular habit of theological reflection: constructive conversation between our experience and our understanding of God and God's world.
- Self-care and spiritual life: how are they getting on in these areas? What are their concerns and hopes?

These meetings can be approached in a range of ways. It will be good to revisit the Focal Ministry Tree regularly. This can help focus attention on the different aspects of Focal Ministry. Which ones feel strongest at present and should be celebrated? Which aspects are simply going okay? Which ones feel weaker and need more attention?

Having identified the latter, you can start planning how to address them, perhaps leading to a further conversation with a Focal Minister's Learning Mentor.

An alternative and equally useful approach can be to revisit the Focal Minister's Ministry Agreement from time to time. This can help give a focus to your conversation within an overview of what the role was intended to be. Doing this may be another way of highlighting what is strong and flourishing, what is okay and what is not really happening or not going so well, with some further attention then needed for the latter.

Time Log

Keeping a Time Log can be a useful discipline, particularly for new Focal Ministers. Noticing in this way how much time is being given to the Focal Ministry role – and also what those hours are actually being spent on – can be revealing, and sometimes surprising. This may bring to light imbalances in use of time, enabling you to talk about priorities and how to prevent what seems 'urgent' pushing aside what feels less immediately pressing, but is actually more important. Oversight Ministers can also gain from trying this exercise themselves in regards to how they spend their own time in ministry.

Reflection on Practice

Another helpful approach is to reflect on a particular ministry experience. A Focal Minister might bring to one of the regular meetings a story from their recent experience: something that happened which they found exciting or puzzling or difficult. Unhurried time may then be given to reflecting on why it prompted those feelings, how it was handled at the time, what the outcome was, what they sensed God might be saying through it and whether any similar experience might be handled differently in future. In doing this, Focal and Oversight Ministers together can do some useful problem-solving while also learning to be theologically reflective in their ministries.

Review and Renew

When people are rooted in God, exercising their gifts and following their calling, it is expected that they will grow, change and hopefully flourish. This is why the diocese is committed to enabling Focal Ministers to keep learning and developing in their roles. There is a dedicated programme for Focal Ministers of review, support and opportunities for learning based on 'Just in Time, Just Enough and Just for You' principles. Please see the Guide to Life Long Learning for more details.

Ongoing discernment of the vocations of individuals and the team as a whole is actively encouraged, and opportunities should be given to try out new ideas and roles. This will be explored routinely at the Annual Review meetings. However, please do not hesitate to ask for additional support from the Director of Focal Ministry for help between reviews. We are dedicated to your vocation.

The purpose of all review and renew events is to ensure the well-being of individuals and team, also to check that the ministry of all those involved is healthy, Christ-centred in being and doing, and flourishing together. Although each Focal Minister and context is different, it is important to keep checking this on a regular basis using a common framework for review. A Focal Ministry Review Form can be found at the end of this document. It is also available in Word on the web page It is expected that three sorts of reviews will take place: 1) after an initial probationary period of six months, 2) at the end of the first year and thereafter annually, and, 3) at the end of three years prior to re-authorisation. Those involved in the review may vary according to context, and may include the Oversight Minister, and the Focal Ministry Team.

As with all of the review processes built into Focal Ministry the time for reflection should be rooted in careful and prayerful discernment. Where has God been evident? What might God be saying into the situation? Where might God be calling? Where, perhaps, has God been absent or ignored?

As preparation for, and during, this Review, the Focal Minister and Oversight Minister might find it helpful to refer back to the Ministry Agreement. The Oversight Minister usually prepares a final version once the review has taken place and, when agreed, it is signed off by both parties. On completion, signed copies should be retained by both the Focal Minister and the Oversight Minister, and revisited at the first annual review. A copy should also be sent to the Focal Ministry Team at focalministry@sheffield.anglican.org

These may be some helpful questions to think about before and during these review processes:

- What has been going well?
- What has been learned about Focal Ministry and the way it works in our parish?
- Have any new opportunities and / or problems emerged?
- Are there things that we now realise we should not be doing, or do differently?
- Do we need to make any changes to the Ministry Agreement?
- Do either of us have any significant issues and concerns about this ministry?

Possible outcomes are:

- Everything is developing well; the Focal Minister continues in their role.
- Some exciting new gifts or opportunities have been identified and equipping is needed.
- Some small changes are needed to existing practice.
- Significant issues are identified and a conversation is needed between the Warden of Focal Ministry, the Focal Minister and the Oversight Minister to discern an appropriate way forward.
- Of course, the Focal Minister could decide that Focal Ministry is not for them at the current time and withdraw from the role. However, it is hoped not, and part of the outcome of each review which involves continuing in role is an agreement about how the Focal Minister will move ahead in developing their gifts and ministry.
- The Focal Minister and the reviewer may also agree some objectives for the coming period. These clarify areas which will be priorities for the Focal Minister and for their role in the mission of their church in the coming months. In addition, a Learning Plan will be agreed. This will summarize learning priorities for the Focal Minister as they grow in their understanding, skills and spiritual life during the next year. For more details please see the FM Guide to Lifelong Learning

Approaching a Review

Review meetings can be a cause of anxiety for the Focal Minister and / or the Oversight Minister. Memories of 'assessment' in previous study or working situations may arise, particularly if those were stressful or unhelpful experiences. The Focal Minister might feel pressure to justify what they have been doing, perhaps even to exaggerate its 'success'. The Oversight Minister may feel pressure to affirm and recommend continuation of the Focal Minister's role – or else to do the opposite. They may be conscious of the significant experience and skills the Focal Minister has in certain areas, perhaps even in supervision! So, the question 'How are you feeling about this?' is an important one to ask yourself and also to discuss with each other as the review date comes around. Honesty is a vital part of the process.

Review meetings can also be valued as a moment of opportunity. They provide a space and structure for reflection, which otherwise may get neglected in the busyness of life. Reviews give both parties an opportunity to air concerns in order to adjust the Focal Minister's role if need be, so that it becomes more realistic, more constructive and better suited to the needs of the situation. Making changes to the agreed Ministry Agreement can be part of this process, giving clarity and confidence to both parties.

The Review also gives each party the opportunity to say that the time has now come for the Focal Minister to step away from this role, for whatever reason, without a sense of blame or recrimination. Having that option as a genuine possibility is important for the well-being of the individuals and the relevant churches. Alternatively, the outcome of the Review may be an agreement about how the Focal Minister will move ahead in developing their gifts and ministry. If this is the case, the Focal Minister and the reviewers will agree areas which will be priorities for the Focal Minister, and a Learning Plan to support this and help the Focal Minister as they grow in their understanding, skills and spiritual life during the next year.

If the Focal Minister has other roles which are also subject to review, then please use common sense about how to avoid duplication of time and effort by combining reviews and reporting back.

It might also be a time to reflect on how the congregation is growing and flourishing, and whether those people the Focal Minister has been developing might be ready to explore becoming Focal Ministers themselves. Each review must also check that Safeguarding training and DBS clearance is up to date.

Safeguarding Matters

Focal ministers are in positions of leadership and therefore need to undertake safeguarding training at levels Basic, Foundation and Leadership, plus the Safer Recruitment training. They may wish to consider also attending the Domestic Abuse training, if this is an area relevant to their situation. Details of these regular courses are publicized on a regular email; to sign up for this contact: training.safeguarding@sheffield.anglican.org

Training at Basic and Foundations levels takes place online. This must be completed before a Focal Minister is authorized. Safeguarding Leadership training involves two group sessions with a trainer, either online or in a physical (onsite) gathering. Ideally, this should also be completed before authorisation, although completion soon after authorisation may be permitted. Understanding safeguarding issues is essential and the training can be stimulating and enjoyable. Some people may find the online aspect a challenge and will be helped in navigating this.

If a potential Safeguarding issue arises, the first point of contact is always the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Each Focal Minister needs to know who this person is and how to contact them. If the parish has another Focal Minister or Focal Ministry Team in place, they should promptly be informed about the issue by the Parish Safeguarding Officer, who should also inform the Oversight Minister. The Oversight Minister should then initiate whatever conversations and action they deem appropriate, following the normal diocesan safeguarding guidelines and procedures.

Very occasionally, one of these individuals (Focal Minister, Oversight Minister or Parish Safeguarding Officer) may feel uneasy about discussing a concern with the others, due to a possible conflict of interests. In this situation, they should phone the Diocesan Safeguarding

Advisor directly for a confidential conversation. More information about diocesan policies and good practice can be found here - <https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/safeguarding>

Disagreeing Well

Disagreement is normal and to be expected. So, we need to be unsurprised when it happens; we also need to find good ways to handle it. Here are a few practical suggestions about how you might go about that in relationships between an individual Focal Minister and their Oversight Minister, or in the latter's relationship with a Focal Ministry Team.

Remember that each of you will have ideas about the mission and ministry of the church. Each of you has perspective and wisdom to share. One good way to voice an idea is in the form of an unthreatening, open question: 'What do you think about...?' This opens up a possibility which you can both explore, without you directly arguing for it. Another is to be a provocateur, articulating an opposite idea to what another person has proposed – a different way of looking at the situation.

Learn the value of 'both...and...', rather than the frustration of 'either...or...'. In discussions, try saying 'Yes, and...' (affirming and building on what has just been said) rather than 'Yes, but...' (disagreeing with what has just been said).

Avoid being defensive, competitive or adversarial. If you can take the risk of admitting that your knowledge is limited and that you sometimes make mistakes, that might help your fellow minister to do the same. And a little humour, at the right moment, can help ease tension and gain a hearing for the view you are airing - although humour needs to be handled carefully in these situations, as it can backfire!

Assume the best of the other person, particularly their motives and intentions, even when you disagree. Remember that, like you, they want the church to thrive; they just have a different idea about how best to enable that to happen.

Accept that we learn through experience; both good and bad!

Keep reminding yourself that, as Christians, we find our true identity and worth not in our church roles but in our relationship with God. Keeping that focus on God in a prayerful way helps us sustain and develop our sense of security, while also restoring our sense of perspective.

Handling a Major Disagreement

If resolving difficulties in the relationship is proving a particular challenge, your Director of Focal Ministry is an important resource: please talk to them. They are available to talk to Focal Ministers and Oversight Ministers alike. The Associate Archdeacon Transition Enabler for your area is another important resource person to whom you can turn. Consulting in confidence in this way can help reduce any sense of isolation and help discover possible ways forward for you to explore.

Appendices

Focal Ministry: Ministry Agreement
Review form for Focal Ministers

Focal Ministry Agreement

On completion, signed copies should be retained by both the Focal Minister and the Oversight Minister. This Ministry Agreement should be reviewed, and revised if necessary, at the Focal Minister's Annual Review.

A copy of the most recent Ministry Agreement should be sent to the Focal Ministry Team at focalministry@sheffield.anglican.org

Name of Focal Minister	
Name of Oversight Minister	
Parish	
Date of Authorisation	

Area of Ministry (roles and locations)	
Time offered	
Anticipated pattern of supervision and support meetings	
Membership of committees	

What legitimate expenses might be claimed and how should a claim be submitted?	
Any other comments	

Signed (Focal Minister)		Date	
Signed (Oversight Minister)		Date	

Focal Ministry: Review Form

Name of Focal Minister			
Name of Oversight Minister			
Parish			
Mission Area			
Date of Authorisation			
Date of Review			
Type of Review (please circle)	Probationary	Annual	Three Yearly

What has gone well?	What might need some prayerful reconsideration?
Items from Ministry Agreement	
Working relationships	

What has gone well?	What might need some prayerful reconsideration?
Core qualities of a Focal Minister	
Learning and Equipping	
Any further comments	

Is your DBS up to date?	Yes / No
Is your safeguarding training up to date? If no, what needs renewing? <i>(this needs renewing every three years)</i>	Yes / No
Note of any changes to Ministry Agreement	

Actions following review	
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How confident do you feel about your ministry? (please circle your answer)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not confident					Very confident	
Comments on reason for the number you have chosen:							
How well equipped do you feel to carry out your ministry? (please circle your answer)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not resourced					Very well resourced	
Comments on reason for the number you have chosen:							

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