

## **PASTORAL CARE ETHICS AND FRAMEWORK FOR GOOD PRACTICE**

*(For the sake of brevity the word 'client' is used to indicate the person being cared for)*

### **1 Ethical Basis For Pastoral Care**

- 1.1 Care must be taken not to exploit clients; because of the vulnerable nature of clients special care is required and the client should be kept fully informed and given the opportunity at every stage for discussion.
- 1.2 The integrity and confidentiality of the client must be maintained.
- 1.3 The safety of the client must be safeguarded and all reasonable steps taken to seek appropriate medical or legal assistance.
- 1.4 All Christian pastoral care members should be integrated in the body of the local church community and receive appropriate consultative support for their work.

### **2 Framework for Good Practice (Pastoral Care Member/Client Relationship)**

- 2.1 Pastoral care members should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client suffers neither physical nor psychological harm during caring encounters.
- 2.2 Pastoral care members are responsible for working in ways which promote the client's control over his/her own life and respect the client's ability to make decisions and change in the light of his/her own beliefs and values.
- 2.3 Pastoral care members do not normally act on behalf of their clients. If they do, it will be only at the express request of the client.
- 2.4 Pastoral care members must not exploit their clients financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way.
- 2.5 Pastoral care members have a responsibility to establish with clients what other therapeutic or helping relationships are current. Pastoral care members should gain the client's permission before conferring with other professional workers.
- 2.6 Exceptional circumstances may arise which give the pastoral care member good grounds for believing that the client will cause serious physical harm to others or to him/herself. In such circumstances the client's consent to break confidentiality should be sought whenever possible unless there are also good grounds for believing the client is no longer able to take responsibility for his/her own action. Whenever possible, the decision to break the confidentiality should be made only after consultation with the person overseeing the caring.
- 2.7 Pastoral care members need to be particularly aware that the client's right to confidentiality must not be waived in the context of prayer.
- 2.8 Pastoral care members should monitor actively the limitations of their own competence and involvement and work within their own known limits.

- 2.9 Pastoral care members should not work when their functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness, disability, alcohol, drugs or for any other reason.
- 2.10 It is an indication of the competence of the pastoral care member when they recognise their inability to help particular persons and make appropriate referrals.
- 2.11 Pastoral care members have a responsibility to themselves and their clients to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and ability to help clients by seeking help and advice from the person who provides their pastoral care cover.
- 2.12 Pastoral care members should have received adequate basic training before commencing work and be willing to maintain ongoing training.
- 2.13 Pastoral care members should take all reasonable steps to ensure their own physical safety.
- 2.14 Pastoral care members should not conduct themselves in their caring activities in ways which undermine public confidence either in their role as a pastoral care member, or in the work of other pastoral care members.
- 2.15 If a pastoral care member suspects misconduct by another pastoral care member which cannot be resolved or remedied after discussion with the person concerned, they should implement the Complaints Procedure, doing so without breaches of confidentiality other than what is necessary for investigating the complaint.

### **Complaints Procedure**

- 2.16 The only complaints that can be dealt with by the ACC are those concerning failure to comply with the "Pastoral Care Ethics and Framework for Good Practice".
- 2.17 All complaints should be taken up with the ACC pastoral care member in the first instance, both verbally and in writing.
- 2.18 If there is no satisfactory conclusion, then the complaint should be taken up in writing with the Chair of the Association.