

A4 EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT AND SENIOR STAFF

“A bishop is called to lead in serving and caring for the people of God and to work with them in the oversight of the Church. As a chief pastor he shares with his fellow bishops a special responsibility to maintain and further the unity of the Church, to uphold its discipline, and to guard its faith. He is to promote its mission throughout the world.”
(Ordination of a bishop: ASB 1980)

Episcopal oversight is a ministry which the diocesan bishop shares with others who have a role in exercising leadership and pastoral care within the diocese, though it is exercised in different ways by different people.

The diocesan bishop shares his distinctive episcopal functions of ordination and confirmation with the Bishop of Dunwich and a number of retired bishops within the diocese. He shares his spiritual leadership and pastoral care with the Bishop’s Staff and clergy. He shares his responsibility for policy making and planning with the Bishop’s Council and a number of individuals, both ordained and lay, who hold particular positions (eg. Chairman of the DBF) within the diocesan structure. The process is helped by individual members of the Bishop’s Staff having particular areas of responsibility, as follows:

The Diocesan Bishop carries overall responsibility within the diocese which he exercises through the following:

- Bishop’s Staff
- Bishop’s Council
- Diocesan Synod
- Rural deans and lay chairs meetings
- Link person for the hospital and prison chaplains
- Convenor of the Child Protection Panel

The Bishop of Dunwich carries the ministry portfolio which he exercises as follows:

- Sponsoring Bishop for Ordination selection and training
- Link person for the ministry officers covering ordinands, continuing ministerial training, adult education, youth & children’s work and the Diocesan Ministry Course
- Convenor of those involved in the Ministry of Healing
- Chair of the archdeaconry pastoral committees

The Dean of St Edmundsbury carries responsibility for the life of the Cathedral as the ‘seat of the bishop and a centre of worship and mission’. In that capacity he serves ex-officio on the Diocesan Synod and the Bishop’s Council. He is also:

- Chair of the Board of Studies of the Diocesan Ministry Course

The archdeacons carry responsibility through the various roles. They exercise pastoral care of the clergy, are involved in making appointments of clergy to parishes and are closely involved in the faculty jurisdiction system.

Each archdeacon is a member of the;

- Diocesan Board of Finance (each archdeacon is also a director)
- Diocesan Advisory Committee
- Bishop's Council
- Diocesan Pastoral Committee
- Glebe and Investment Committee
- Parsonages Committee

In addition archdeacons may chair Diocesan Committees.

The Diocesan Secretary carries responsibility as:

- Secretary of Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Council
- Secretary to the Diocesan Board of Finance

Pastoral Oversight

Pastoral care of the clergy and their families is exercised on a day-to-day basis by all members of the Bishop's Staff together with rural deans and others. Arrangements for pastoral support and counselling are set out in section F9.

Episcopal Reviews

Oversight is also exercised jointly by the Bishop's Staff through episcopal reviews with all clergy on a two year cycle. The purpose of the review is to reflect on past, present and future in such a way as to build on strengths and identify those things which need to be addressed. (See section F6)

Provincial Episcopal Visitor

Following on from the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 arrangements have been made to provide extended episcopal ministry and pastoral care where this is requested by parishes and agreed by the diocesan bishop. The guidelines relating to the working of the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 appear in section B10.

Episcopal Leadership in the Community and Wider Society

This is an important element in the mission of the Church within the world. The bishops are closely involved in the Church's response to regional development and government and the role which can be played in relation to statutory and voluntary bodies in community development, planning and policy making.