**Introduction**

The Diocese of Lichfield takes seriously clergy wellbeing. To that end we are committed to supporting curates as fully as possible in the early stages of ordained ministry, seeking to be attentive to the unique opportunities and challenges of inhabiting the ordained life.

For those curates joining us in 2021, space is provided in ‘Rooting and Grounding groups,’ where participants are invited to reflect on their experience of ministry:

* rejoicing with each other in their shared calling.
* developing in awareness of themselves and one another, inhabiting a culture where success is celebrated, and risk and failure are welcomed and acceptable.
* paying attention to ways in which pastoral care is modelled and developing skills in self-supervision.
* becoming increasingly attentive to the needs of those they are called to serve.

Rooting and Grounding groups have emerged from considering the strengths and weakness of diocesan curate ‘cell groups’ which operated in the past, alongside what we have learned in recent months about the effectiveness of on-line reflective practice groups in providing boundaried space.

**What are R&G Groups ?**

R&G groups are facilitated groups provided by the diocese. All curates are expected to participate as part of their ongoing training and formation.

* Groups are made up of a maximum of four curates and a facilitator. Each R&G group will consist of curates from the same curate cohort and may include both incumbent and assistant ministry curates.
* Participants are assigned to R&G groups by the Diocesan Ministry Enabler.
* Groups operate as professional workspaces in which clergy colleagues can share experiences and develop skills in ongoing reflective practice and where participants hold themselves accountable to others.
* Groups are expected to meet for **a minimum of eight times** a year.
* In order to maintain boundaries in which to work effectively, groups will meet on-line using Zoom or other digital platform and each session is expected to be a maximum of 90 minutes.

**Shape of meetings**

Meetings are expected to last for a maximum of 90 minutes. Each group may determine the outline of a session and its timing. The intention is that within the allocated time each participant can speak and be listened to and time is given for constructive reflection and feedback. The following suggested structure and timings may be useful but need not be used.

* Begin session with prayer
* Each participant is invited to share an experience/issue without interruption (10 mins)
* Other members are invited to reflect back what they think they have heard (5 mins)
* The initial speaker may offer insights gained (2 mins)
* Space for transition to next speaker is provided
* End session with prayer

**The role of the facilitator**

The facilitator will take the lead in ensuring that groups meet on a regular basis and hold the space in which reflection can take place. Conversations within R&G groups are confidential unless the facilitator believes there to be a Safeguarding concern. In such a case the facilitator will report their concern to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Facilitators will attend regular supervision sessions facilitated by a supervisor appointed by the Diocesan Ministry Enabler.

A facilitator who is concerned about the wellbeing of a curate will address any concerns confidentially with the curate and come to an agreement about what appropriate action/support might be required.If the facilitator subsequently feels that intervention is required, they will inform the curate of their intended course of action.

**Holding the space**

It can be easy, amid a packed diary, for events such as reflective practice groups to be considered less of a priority in terms of time and commitment. Curates are expected to extend courtesy to their fellow group members both in attendance and attentiveness at R&G Group meetings. Here are some useful things to consider:

* Meeting on-line rather than on-site means that you are present in a familiar setting amidst the busyness and business of the working day. Please be attentive to who may be inadvertently accompanying you (from your household or wherever you might choose to enter the digital platform). How will you ensure that the conversation remains confidential to the intended participants?
* What might you need to put in place to be wholly present and actively engaged in participation?
* What boundaries do you want to set for yourself and as a group to enable you to work most effectively together?
* Socialising with colleagues can be an important and enjoyable part of curacy. However, R&G groups are workspaces and not intended to be social get-togethers. A group may choose to meet socially (or not) but such gatherings are in addition to the requirement to meet eight times during a year.

**Curacy Portfolio**

Curates are expected to include a reflection on their participation (not the content of discussions) within the R&G groups as part of their year-end portfolio.

**Reviewing the process**

This is a new venture and we are constantly learning. We will be inviting R&G group participants and facilitators to review the process (not the content) as part of a commitment to develop our curacy training provision.