



SUPPORT IN YOUR MINISTRY

**A confidential service for clergy, readers, accredited
ministers, churchwardens and their partners**

FOREWORD BY THE BISHOP OF ST ALBANS

I am pleased to have this opportunity to commend to you the *Support In Your Ministry* Scheme. As ministers of the Gospel, we are called to be ambassadors for Christ, but we are not called to do so alone. It is right that we both support others and, just as importantly, seek and receive support in our own ministry.

This is about far more than simply improving our performance or efficiency. In a secure and confidential setting, SIM provides the opportunity to take stock, to share both the joys and trials of ministry and, under God, to seek guidance on the journey that is our calling.

SIM is offered freely and unconditionally. It is staffed by dedicated volunteers, both ordained and lay. It is an encouragement to know that the Scheme is also embraced by our neighbours and friends from the Liberal and Reform Jewish Community, who both make use of the Scheme and also supply Assistants for it. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to those who administer and oversee SIM.

If you have already made use of SIM, I encourage you to continue and to share widely the message of its availability and value. If you have not availed yourself of it, then please think and pray carefully about doing so.

It is my prayer that God will continue to use SIM as a vehicle for His glory, and that in the quiet confidentiality of its meetings, new opportunities and potential will be revealed and faithfully returned to the work of mission and ministry in our parishes, schools and chaplaincies.

+ Alan St Albans

INTRODUCTION

SIM is unique to our Diocese and has been running for over 25 years. It was set up to provide one-to-one confidential support to those in ministry.

Experience has shown that the Scheme is valued both when a person is confident and secure in their ministry as well as during those periods when they are feeling under pressure and isolated. Support is given by Assistants, who are trained and selected for their listening and encouraging skills, and who represent a wide experience of life. This is a gift to you – a completely confidential space away from your place of work; a time set aside for you to explore issues relating to your ministry with someone unconnected with your work.

Don't miss this opportunity! **Read on ...**

“HOW ARE THINGS?” ...

... you may be asked, and you may well reply, “*Everything's fine*”. What else can you say?

A more considered answer to the question needs time, space, and often the help of a discerning, neutral person. To this end, the gift of SIM is an opportunity for you as a User of the Scheme to reflect on your ministry with an Assistant in complete confidence.

“An invaluable resource offering a safe space in which to explore and appraise effectively the strengths and weaknesses of ministry and so move towards a resolution of any issue – besides what is going well!” (Team Vicar)

WHAT IS SIM?

Everyone involved in ministry needs support. Much pastoral care of ministers takes place where they exercise their ministries, and this is important. There is also a need for the kind of support which aims to nurture ministers in their vocation, helping and challenging them to use their strengths more creatively and looking at areas where they could be more effective.

SIM is voluntary and absolutely confidential. There is no charge to Users of the Scheme. It is sponsored by the Diocese and warmly supported by the Bishop and his senior staff. They may use SIM themselves, but the confidential nature of the Scheme means that this only becomes known if a User wishes to speak about it. This is true for all who use SIM.

SIM can help Users to be affirmed in their work, to choose priorities, and to achieve a balance between time for ministry, for family and friends and for themselves. It can give an opportunity to discuss the pains and pleasures of ministry in complete confidence. It is complementary to other schemes (eg spiritual direction, counselling, MMDR) that may be available.

The Management Group, appointed by the Council for Discipleship and Ministry, administer and oversee SIM. The Scheme Co-ordinator and her deputy work as part of the Management Group, but only they know who uses the Scheme.

"Since joining The Scheme I have found my regular meetings with my Assistant most helpful. They give me an opportunity to look at my work from a different and realistic perspective, and to monitor the progress of my own aspirations. I have also found a space for myself and am beginning to think more positively about how I manage my many ongoing commitments."
(Reader)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Assistants meet with each of their Users several times a year, at a frequency decided by the User. The agenda for each meeting is set by the User. The Assistant may suggest and challenge, but the User always decides. The intended outcome is a more effective ministry for the User. In practice, Users often stay with the Assistant for several years, but they may request a change at any time.

Assistants are supported in a number of ways, including meeting every six months with a trained Supervisor. This ensures that the quality and integrity of the Scheme is maintained. Any reference by an Assistant in these meetings to issues raised by a User is always carefully anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

“I drive nearly twenty miles to see my Assistant who is a wise lay person. She enables me to look at situations from a different perspective which can prove enlightening and empowering. The journey too is a benefit, giving me time to focus and reflect. It becomes in itself a part of the process.” (Vicar)

HOW DO I JOIN SIM?

Anyone in ministry, including clergy, readers, accredited minsters, churchwardens, and their partners can join SIM by contacting the Scheme Co-ordinator (contact details on back page). She will ask you what you are seeking in an Assistant and will then put you in touch with an appropriate person. They include women and men, lay and ordained, from a range of backgrounds – business, education, counselling, etc – and with a

range of experience, skills and churchmanship. SIM also has a small number of Jewish Assistants.

You arrange the first meeting with the Assistant. You will decide where and how often to meet (normally at the Assistant's home every 2-3 months). If either you or the Assistant feel that you cannot work well together or need a change, you simply contact the Scheme Co-ordinator and ask for a different Assistant.

If anyone involved with the Scheme ever feels that they have an unresolved grievance, there is a specific procedure for this to be raised and dealt with through the Management Group.

"I received consistent care and concern over a number of years – it was so helpful to be able to receive when normally giving out in relationships. I gained much insight into who I was and why I was reacting to ministry situations in certain ways. It is lovely to be able to be completely honest in a safe environment away from the parish with someone who was for that set time entirely committed to my well being."

(SS Curate)

As a spouse user of SIM, I find it very indulgent to have someone I go to who is FOR me. I can talk very openly and be heard and understood in very special ways. I come away from my meetings a happier and a better person for having taken the time to talk about where I am at and how far I have come.

(Partner)

USERS' COMMENTS

Users find that SIM supports, affirms and develops their ministries. Below are some further comments from Users on the benefits of the Scheme.

I am blessed with some generally supportive people around me but benefit from the private discussion with someone independent where anything is up for questioning by either person. (Reader)

It has been the best thing I have signed up to for some time and has been extremely helpful to me for putting lots of things in perspective. (Reader)

It really is an excellent scheme and a great resource. At a time when so much is linked to MMDR and results etc. it is, in my humble opinion, great to have such a scheme that is confidential and independent. (Member of the clergy)

Thank you for this service it has been a grace gift for me. (Curate)

It has been most beneficial having someone to talk to, reflect with who gives wise feedback, especially someone who has no contact whatsoever with your Parish. The assurance of confidentiality gives freedom to really pour out your heart and mind. (Vicar)

Knowing I have a safe place to express any issues relating to my ministry is invaluable. (Reader)

I find it immensely helpful to have a good listener outside my setting, who can also ask some probing, sometimes challenging questions, as well as affirming me in my ministry. (Incumbent)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

"The SIM (Support In Your Ministry) Scheme operates under the auspices of the Board For Mission and Ministry. The Scheme aims to support and encourage ministers, readers, churchwardens and others in ministry, and their partners, in their vocation, helping and challenging them to use their strengths creatively and enabling them to recognise their full potential. The User and the Assistant meet in complete confidence to give the User the opportunity to review any or all aspects of their ministry. The Management Group runs the Scheme but only the Scheme Co-ordinator knows the names of the Users."



CONTACT DETAILS:-

SCHEME CO-ORDINATOR:

Judy Salisbury
14 Charmouth Road
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 4SW

Tel: 07889 912269
Email: judithsalisbury58@icloud.com

CHAIRMAN, SIM MANAGEMENT GROUP:

Chris Swain
35 Cunningham Avenue
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 1JJ

Tel: 01727 835760
Email: swaincw@gmail.com

Web: www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/support-in-your-ministry/