

PRESS RELEASE

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Anna Chaplaincy responds to Archbishops' Commission report: 'Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England'

Today sees the launch of an important and far-reaching report from the Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care. The report, 'Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England', sets out three actions to realise a new vision for care and support: rethinking attitudes to care and support; rebalancing roles and responsibilities; and redesigning the social care system.

Members of the Anna Chaplaincy team and network were consulted in the course of the Commission's research and the ministry is mentioned in the summary report as a recent innovation in the field. As part of the process, Bishop James Newcome (cochair of the commission) visited the Anna Chaplaincy work in Kendal, as an example of the way faith communities are providing care and support within their local communities. One of the commissioners, Professor John Swinton, has been instrumental in the creation of the Spiritual Care Series course (see below) endorsed by Anna Chaplaincy and distributed in the UK by BRF.

A complete redesign

Anna Chaplaincy pioneer, Debbie Thrower, welcomes the report and its bold vision:

'Anna Chaplaincy welcomes the fresh thinking on this vitally important issue. The first step towards improvement is always acknowledging what is wrong. The admission that the current system of social care is "broken" echoes what's been said by successive governments for three decades. I hope very much that those with power to change the way social care operates will rise to the challenge of the complete "redesign" of the system outlined in this report. Much careful thought has gone into exploring those Christian principles underpinning the vision for a far more humane system. We can't afford not to make social care more efficient from top to bottom because every citizen in time stands to benefit and each one of us will be impoverished if, yet again, the opportunity for far-reaching reform slips by.'

Anna Chaplaincy – a vital role

The archbishops' report highlights the need for social, emotional and spiritual care in order for older people to flourish, and this is what Anna Chaplaincy for Older People is there to provide. Founded in 2010, and part of BRF since 2014, Anna Chaplaincy is named after the widow, Anna, who appears with Simeon in Luke's gospel. Anna Chaplains are there for people of strong, little or no faith at all. The ministry is ecumenical and community-based.

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BRF's vision is to enable people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible and to see more people equipped to exercise their gifts in leadership and ministry. BRF ministries include Anna Chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy Church and Parenting for Faith. Find out more at brf.org.uk.

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The vision is to see an Anna Chaplain in every small- to medium-sized community in the UK, and for the pastoral needs of older people to be given much greater recognition nationally and locally, just as the Archbishops' Commission calls for. The network of Anna Chaplains is growing rapidly across the UK. Anna Chaplaincy is increasingly recognised as modelling compassionate, person-centred spiritual care for older people as well as offering excellent training for aspiring Anna Chaplains, churches and communities.

At a time when more and more older people feel that they are beyond the interest and concern of their wider community and even, sometimes, their church, Anna Chaplaincy seeks to accompany older people at this age and stage of their lives. Spiritual support provided in a gentle and loving way brings comfort and succour. It enables older people to live with greater meaning and purpose.

The work of Anna Chaplaincy is intended to complement existing pastoral care offered by churches.

The Spiritual Care Series

BRF offers a ground-breaking, tried-and-tested course, the Spiritual Care Series, designed to give churches and carers the confidence, understanding and skills to provide the holistic care highlighted as essential in the archbishops' report.

Developed in Australia, the Spiritual Care Series is now also well established in Canada. The course is fully endorsed by Debbie Thrower, Anna Chaplaincy pioneer, and her team. One of the archbishops' commissioners and leading practitioner in the field of spiritual care for older people in the UK, Professor John Swinton of the University of Aberdeen, has been involved in its development and spoke at its UK launch last September. For more information click [here](#). To watch the launch event click [here](#).

Session outline and facilitation

The eight sessions cover:

1. Understanding the ageing process
2. Spirituality in ageing
3. Good communication
4. The power of storytelling
5. Dementia
6. A new home and a new way of life
7. Grief, loss, death and dying
8. Roles, boundaries and self-care

To find out more go to the [Anna Chaplaincy website](#).

To interview Debbie Thrower and members of the Anna Chaplaincy team contact eley.mcainch@brf.org.uk.



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