



Dementia Support Roles – Becoming an Anna Chaplain or an Anna Friend

The Diocese of Rochester has two new self-supporting roles of Anna Chaplain and Anna Friend, with a special focus on the needs of those with dementia and their families. Anna Chaplaincy is an ecumenical, community-based approach to chaplaincy which has been pioneered by The Gift of Years at The Bible Reading Fellowship.

Anna Chaplaincy hubs across Rochester Diocese allow Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends to work together, complementing one another's skills and supporting each other.

Becoming an Anna Chaplain in Rochester Diocese

Anna Chaplains represent their local church in offering person-centred ministry for older people of strong, little or no faith - those living in their own homes and also older people in care homes and sheltered housing, as well as friends, family members and care staff. An Anna Chaplain advocates for older people with dementia. Their work complements, rather than replicating, ministry already being done by churches.

Roles which can be part of being of Anna Chaplain in Rochester Diocese

- One to one pastoral and spiritual support for people with dementia and those caring for them, through listening, sharing, and prayer ministry
- Designing and leading worship services that are inclusive of people with dementia
- Being involved in end-of-life and funeral ministry and bereavement care
- Raising awareness of the needs of people living with dementia and their families and advocating on their behalf in the local church and wider community
- Building bridges and working collaboratively with local care homes and support agencies to ensure spiritual needs are met in dementia
- Continually developing skill and knowledge in ageing, dementia and caring, and sharing this with local churches to increase understanding
- Theological reflection on the experience of dementia
- A leadership role within a deanery or cluster of churches
- Developing and supervising volunteers, especially Anna Friends (see below)

Desirable background and characteristics of Anna Chaplains:

- ✓ A heart for people affected by dementia
- ✓ Compassion for those struggling in their dementia or caring roles, alongside a positive, hopeful attitude which values the contribution they continue to make
- ✓ Being a good listener

- ✓ Skill in leading, energising and inspiring others
- ✓ Willingness to work ecumenically and collaboratively with others from different Christian traditions
- ✓ Experience of working in ordained or lay ministry, or a willingness to undertake training provided by the Diocese
- ✓ A willingness to learn from and alongside people affected by dementia and support them in having a voice in church and community
- ✓ A sense of accountability to the local church and willingness to work collaboratively and be guided by the Christian community and line manager
- ✓ A willingness to reflect theologically on the experience of dementia

Time commitment

Anna Chaplaincy will vary from parish to parish, depending on the needs of the local population living with dementia. The role will take up at least one day a week. If you are unable to commit to this level of involvement, we suggest becoming an Anna Friend.

Becoming an Anna Friend in Rochester Diocese

An Anna Friend is a self-supporting role similar to Anna Chaplain but with fewer responsibilities and a smaller time commitment. This is an exciting new role that is being introduced in Rochester Diocese. The development of the role is being watched with interest in other parts of the country where Anna Chaplaincy is being established.

Roles which can be part of being an Anna Friend in Rochester Diocese

- Offering one to one friendship and spiritual support to people with dementia
- Offering friendship and practical support to carers of people with dementia
- A willingness to pray with people with dementia and their carers
- Supporting local activities (e.g. a dementia café or inclusive worship)
- Visiting a local care home to befriend residents, relatives and staff and enable regular prayer and worship
- Working within a pastoral team within the local church community, representing people with dementia and cares, helping others understand their needs
- Supporting people with dementia and their families at the end of life
- Supporting family members after the person with dementia has died

Desirable background and characteristics of Anna Friends:

- ✓ A heart for people affected by dementia
- ✓ Compassion for those struggling in their dementia or caring roles, alongside a positive, hopeful attitude which values the contribution they continue to make
- ✓ Being a good listener
- ✓ Willingness to work ecumenically and collaboratively with others from a range of different Christian traditions
- ✓ Experience of working in a pastoral team within a parish, or a willingness to undertake training provided by the Diocese

- ✓ A willingness to learn from and alongside people affected by dementia and support them in having a voice in church and community
- ✓ A sense of accountability to the local church and willingness to work collaboratively within the ministry team.

Time commitment

Anna Friends would typically spend several hours a week in their role. It is a lighter commitment more easily combined with additional roles at work, church and in family life. It might include visiting two or three people regularly, supporting monthly worship services in a care home, or helping at a dementia café.

Support for Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends in Rochester Diocese

1. **Support** - Working alongside people with dementia and their families is rewarding but can also be emotionally demanding. Anna Chaplaincy hubs provide a context for mutual support and learning. The project officer, Julia Burton-Jones, also offers support.
2. **Supervision** - Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends are usually supported and supervised by leaders of the local church. Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends are integrated within the local parish to enable mutual support and effective communication.
3. **Expenses** - Anna Chaplaincy in Rochester Diocese is a self-supporting role but expenses are met through parish, deanery or diocesan funds.
4. **Training** - The Diocese provides regular training, including a module on Anna Chaplaincy within the Foundation in Christian Ministry course.
5. **Networking** - Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends are part of the wider network of The Gift of Years and can attend national events to share their experiences.

Next Steps?

If you are prayerfully considering a role within Anna Chaplaincy, please first speak with your vicar about pastoral roles and needs of older people in the parish and how you might be involved in the church's response.

Contact the diocesan project officer for Anna Chaplaincy, Julia Burton-Jones, to discover more about the Anna Chaplaincy in the Diocese. She is based in Rochester:

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