

journeying with

Running a *Journeying With* scheme in
partnership with Torch Trust

HANDBOOK FOR CHURCHES



‘Pastoral ministry with a mission’

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1. Introduction

This is a guide for churches running a *Journeying With* befriending scheme in partnership with Torch Trust. It outlines the responsibilities of the church and also of Torch Trust.

This guide does not cover the process of preparing for and establishing a *Journeying With* scheme - for this information please see the guide 'Coordinating a *Journeying With* scheme' which is available from Torch Trust.

In some areas a *Journeying With* scheme will be run by one individual church, with volunteer befrienders coming from the congregation of that church. In other areas a scheme may be run as a joint venture between several churches. Both models can work well and this guide should help with the practicalities of either situation.

Torch Trust will work closely with you and support you in this important work. Please keep in touch and if you have any questions which are not covered in this guide, just get in touch with your Torch Trust representative who will be pleased to help.

Pastoral Care with a Mission

Individual *Journeying With* schemes may develop in different ways, but the aim will always be the same - this is pastoral care with a mission, the expression of our Christian faith through coming alongside individuals as they struggle with sight loss.

Journeying With is open to clients of all faiths or none, but it is not to be seen as an opportunity to impose our faith on anyone. We do what we do as an expression of the love of Christ. We may offer prayer and we will always respond to clients' questions about our faith, about church, about Jesus and about what we are doing.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."[1 Peter 3:15-16]

2. The basis of Journeying With

Confidently Christian

Journeying With is a distinctively Christian response to the needs of those losing their sight. The basis of *Journeying With* is:

- Volunteers are Christians from local churches
- Local churches are taking the lead
- Prayer is foundational for the whole scheme
- Clients will be informed that this is a Christian befriending service
- Volunteers are ready to pray with and respond to clients' questions of faith
- Everything is done in the service of Jesus our Lord

Through *Journeying With*, Torch Trust is mobilising and equipping local churches and volunteers to respond to the needs of those losing their sight. Torch will resource and support the church and the volunteers to befriend those on the sight loss journey and to journey with them.

The scene

Sight loss is the disability which is feared the most. It is often difficult for churches and individuals to know how to respond. The problem is a growing one as numbers of people experiencing sight loss continue to increase:

- In the UK almost 1 in 30 people live with debilitating and un-correctable sight loss
- The number is expected to **double** over the next 30 years
- Around 1 in 4 of us will experience what it is to lose our sight
- Each day about 100 people in the UK are told they are losing their sight. Often this will take place in busy eye clinics where the opportunity for emotional support is almost non-existent.

Individuals with sight loss are much more likely than others to experience loss of self-confidence, depression, isolation and feeling worthless. The church is in a unique position to reach out to these people, and Torch Trust with over 50 years of experience of working with people with sight loss is in a unique position to equip churches to be able to respond to this need.

3. The benefits of *Journeying With*

Journeying With offers pastoral care for the whole person, providing practical, emotional *and* spiritual support. It is a free service, open to clients over the age of 18 diagnosed with long term sight loss.

Trained Christian volunteers offer a listening ear, companionship and information, to help people come to terms with the changes that sight loss can bring. Support is offered on a weekly basis for approximately six months. This gift of time can be invaluable at a time of crisis, and gives opportunity to discuss deeper feelings and faith.

A *Journeying With* scheme needs the endorsement of the local church leadership for the overall responsibility and oversight. However, the planning and running of the scheme can be delegated to a volunteer coordinator appointed from within the volunteer team.

Torch works alongside the local team to develop the scheme by providing training, assisting in networking with sight loss charities and professionals, and providing a comprehensive guide to setting up and coordinating a *Journeying With* scheme.

Benefits for clients

- Confidential emotional support
- Christian companionship on the sight-loss journey
- Information and support to help make decisions
- Help to rebuild confidence, feel more connected and support longer-term independence
- Links to local services, and the resources and services available from Torch
- A listening ear and a fresh Christian perspective

Benefits for churches

- Equips churches to demonstrate the love of Christ in a practical way, responding to unaddressed local need.
- Provides new opportunities for Christians to be trained in pastoral work, with an emphasis on people who experience visual impairment

- Demonstrates to the local community that the church cares about 'real' needs
- Connects local churches with people and families who may never have been in contact with church before
- A tried and tested scheme with the backing and support of a national Christian charity: Torch Trust

Benefits for volunteers

- Volunteers have the opportunity to put 'faith into action' and develop their pastoral giftings and skills
- Opportunities to be trained in pastoral work, and for ongoing peer support, training and skill development
- The scheme is designed to ensure safety and confidence
- An opportunity to get to know new people
- Knowing that what you are doing makes a real difference

Benefits for professionals

- A free, trusted service to which professionals are able to refer clients
- Volunteers are able to give extra 'listening time' to clients which busy professionals are unable to give
- Clients receive information and links to other local services and about ongoing support and services available from Torch
- The scheme is well-respected. All volunteers are trained, criminal record checked and given ongoing support and supervision.

4. What Torch Trust provides

Support and expertise

Torch Trust provides the necessary support and expertise to enable your church to successfully embark on a *Journeying With* scheme.

The greatest level of involvement and contact between Torch and the church will obviously be in the development, training and early stages of a scheme. However, Torch works in partnership with the church and will continue to provide advice and support on an ongoing basis as required.

A regional representative

Each scheme will be allocated a regional representative from Torch Trust who will be your main contact, and the main person to support the people who are involved in running your *Journeying With* scheme.

This regional representative will be the main link to advise about setting up a scheme, to organise the training of the volunteers, and to liaise with local sight loss professionals and groups.

If you have any questions, or would like someone to come to speak to your church, please get in touch with your regional representative.

Training

Torch will provide the initial training for the volunteer befrienders. The content of this will be:

- Sight loss awareness
- The impact of loss
- Christian response
- Listening skills
- Good practice for befriending
- Case studies

If there are local contacts or organisations who would like to take part in delivering some of this training, then Torch would encourage this and work alongside others. It is also recommended that if at all possible, volunteers visit a local resource centre displaying equipment for people with sight loss.

Handbooks

- Training handbook - As part of the volunteer training, a full handbook will be provided for each volunteer covering the content of the training.
- ‘Coordinating a *Journeying With* scheme’ handbook - this is a practical guide available from Torch for the person/people who will be responsible for setting up and coordinating the scheme on behalf of your church.

Liaison with local health and welfare services

Your Torch Trust regional representative will assist in developing relationships with the local professionals and charities involved in working with people with sight loss in your local area. These links will provide the future referrals to your scheme so they are an important element for the success of your *Journeying With* scheme.

Referrals to the scheme often come from:

- Eye clinics in local hospitals
- Eye clinic Liaison Officer (if there is one)
- Staff within sensory impairment teams of health and social service departments
- Local sight loss charities
- Other more local contacts such as opticians, GP surgeries, local Chaplains and Parish Nurses (if applicable)

Ongoing support and review

Once a *Journeying With* scheme is up and running, your regional Torch representative will arrange at regular intervals to be in touch with your team, to monitor how the scheme is doing, and to provide ongoing support as needed.

Even when a scheme is well established, it is useful to review how things are working - ensuring that the scheme is running as it should be and looking at any possible developments for the future.

5. The role of the church

‘Ownership’ of the scheme

A *Journeying With* scheme should be seen as an integral part of the ministry of the local church. As such, it is vital that the church leadership is aware of the development of the scheme, and of the responsibility of the church for the scheme as it grows.

It is also essential that the whole congregation is aware of this ministry and that the church as a whole will be upholding the scheme and the volunteer team in prayer.

Appointing and supporting a ‘Volunteer Coordinator’

A *Journeying With* scheme is usually led by one person on behalf of the church. The appointment of this ‘Volunteer Coordinator’ is a joint appointment between the church and Torch Trust. This is an important role requiring maturity, the ability to form trusting relationships and good organisational skills.

In a larger church, or if a scheme has more than 6 volunteers, there may be more than one Volunteer Coordinator, or even a leadership team for the scheme. Your Torch Trust representative will discuss with you the best way of organising the leadership of your scheme based on your own local situation.

The role of the Volunteer Coordinator or leadership team is to:

- Facilitate the recruitment of volunteers
- Liaise with Torch to organise the training of the volunteers
- Supervise and support volunteers (up to 6 per Volunteer Coordinator)
- Maintain links with local eye health professionals for new referrals
- Initial visit to new clients and matching with volunteer
- Monitoring of each befriending relationship
- Keep the church and Torch Trust aware of the progress of the scheme

Church approval and commissioning of volunteers

Each volunteer will need to be approved by the local church. If the volunteer is not well known to the church or scheme leadership, then an application form would be filled in which asks for the names of two referees. If the volunteer is well known to the church leadership then the decision may be taken that it is not necessary to request external references. This decision is left with the church.

Once each volunteer has been satisfactorily recruited, has criminal record clearance in place and has received the full training from Torch, the church leader (or a delegated member of the church leadership team) will be asked to sign to give approval for this volunteer to begin to visit on behalf of the church as a *Journeying With* volunteer.

At this point, when volunteers are ready to begin befriending visits, the church should commission the volunteers - perhaps in a church service or other suitable event. This is a recognition that the volunteers are being sent out into a Christian ministry by the church.

Launch and promotion of the scheme locally

Once the volunteers have been commissioned and are ready to begin befriending, the scheme is ready to be launched.

The church should take the lead with the launch and ongoing promotion of the scheme locally, but Torch will work with you and will assist with guidance on creating leaflets and publicity material, and ensuring that information is available in accessible formats such as large print.

It is good to regularly promote the scheme in different ways - ensuring that people in the local area are aware of what is being offered. The church will already have many contacts such as other churches and church networks, newsletters, etc, but it may be helpful to try to reach a wider audience through local radio and newspapers, and local groups such as Age UK, etc.

Potential new clients are often reached through the local professionals who are in touch with people newly diagnosed with sight loss. It is important to maintain a relationship with professionals such as Eye Clinic Liaison Officers, Rehabilitation Officers, local sight loss charities, opticians, etc. These relationships are vital for ongoing referrals into the scheme, so it is ideal if someone within the church (possibly the volunteer coordinator, or perhaps someone else within the scheme) takes a lead in maintaining these relationships.

Pastoral support of volunteers and coordinator

As they come in to contact with people who are losing their sight, the volunteers and the volunteer coordinator will be faced with a variety of different situations. Every individual's situation will be different, and people's reactions to sight loss will be unique to themselves.

Sight loss is similar to other forms of loss, such as bereavement, and as people work through their experience of loss they may be faced with questions relating to how they are going to cope with their lives, or maybe deeper questions of faith... "Why has this happened to me?" "What have I done to deserve this?"

As the volunteers journey alongside individuals with sight loss, they will need pastoral support themselves. Much of this will be provided by the volunteer coordinator and at the regular group meetings at which volunteers will be able to share their experiences. However, it is important from the start that the church offers pastoral support to the volunteers if required, and to the volunteer coordinator in particular.

The church should make sure that there is a clear route for any volunteer, and in particular the volunteer coordinator, to receive pastoral support if this is needed. This may fit in with existing channels of support for pastoral visitors at the church, or perhaps an individual could be nominated to provide this support. It is up to the individual church to decide what will work best in its own situation, but it is important that the need for pastoral support is recognised.

Groups of churches working together

If a *Journeying With* scheme is set up by a group of churches working together, or a network such as a 'Churches Together' group, all of the same principles apply as outlined above. The biggest difference will be the need for liaison between the churches involved, a clear leadership structure for the scheme and the need for one of the churches to be the 'lead' church for the scheme, giving clarity for matters such as safeguarding.

A group of churches working together will bring a larger number of potential volunteers and may enable a larger geographical area to be covered by the scheme. There are many advantages, but it is important that everyone is clear about how the scheme is organised and who is responsible for each element of the scheme.

6. Practical aspects

Resourcing the scheme

It should not be costly to set up a *Journeying With* scheme. Many of the things which are needed can be provided at no extra cost by the church, or group of churches, running the scheme. For example, the church will usually be able to provide the venue for the training to take place, and for ongoing meetings with volunteers. Churches also often have an existing set up for publicity such as a newsletter, website, etc. which can help towards promoting the scheme.

There may be additional expenditure involved such as refreshments, publicity, volunteer expenses and any additional training. When a scheme is being set up a decision should be made about whether volunteers will be paid expenses. This is up to the discretion of the church involved and may be affected by existing church policies, the availability of specific funding and the individual situations of volunteers.

Torch does not charge a fee for its support or the training provided, but leaves it to the individual church to consider making a donation towards these costs as they feel able. Torch is not funded for the work of *Journeying With* and relies on donations and legacies to support this work.

Geographical area

Each *Journeying With* scheme should decide before it is launched exactly what geographical area it will be covering. This will depend upon practicalities such as whether your volunteers have their own transport and are able to visit further afield. Your town may have natural boundaries which make it fairly obvious what area your scheme would naturally cover, but it is wise to be clear from the start so that the referrals which come in are appropriate.

The clearest way of defining which area your scheme covers is often to use postcode areas - such as “the scheme is open to anyone living within the GT4 postcode area”

Safeguarding

Any issues of safeguarding which may arise should be dealt with in the same way as any other safeguarding issues within the church. The safeguarding

officer of the church should be aware of the development of the *Journeying With* scheme and offer guidance on the correct procedures if any concerns should arise.

If a group of churches is working together, there will need to be agreement about which church will take responsibility for the safeguarding cover for the scheme.

Every volunteer involved in a *Journeying With* scheme will need criminal record clearance (through DBS in England and Wales, Disclosure Scotland, or Access NI). This should usually be done through the existing safeguarding set-up at the church in the same way as other church ministries. If there is any problem with arranging criminal records checks then please get in touch with Torch. This is an important part of the scheme as it helps to ensure the safety of the client and shows that the scheme is taking safeguarding seriously.

Insurance

A *Journeying With* scheme is part of the ministry of the local church in the same way as pastoral visiting, etc. The usual insurance for church activities should cover befrienders visiting individuals with sight loss, but it is always wise to inform the church insurers of the beginning of a new scheme and to check with them that the existing insurance arrangements will cover this.

If volunteers use their own cars as part of the *Journeying With* scheme, they should check with their own car insurance company that they are covered for using their own car in a voluntary capacity in this way - this is something that should be routine, and Torch Trust will assist with explanations to insurers if any queries arise.

7. Partnership Agreement

As an endorsement of the partnership between the church and Torch Trust, a 'Partnership Agreement' will be signed by both parties. A copy of this agreement is available from Torch Trust. Guidance on the use of The Torch and *Journeying With* names and logos, and the Torch Ethos and Basis of Faith are available as appendices to this handbook.

8. Ongoing support and management of the scheme

Monitoring and reviewing the scheme

The volunteer coordinator, or leadership team, will oversee the day-to-day management of the scheme, but Torch would recommend that the church leadership meets with those running the scheme a minimum of once every 6 months. This allows opportunity for reviewing how the scheme is going and gaining feedback on the work of the scheme.

Once a year, more formal feedback should be sent to Torch outlining the work of the scheme during the year. This report should outline the number of clients and volunteers involved in befriending arrangements and any other appropriate feedback for the year ending 30th September (to be sent by 30th November).

Individual feedback

Each befriending arrangement will last approximately 6 months so there will be opportunities for feedback from both clients and volunteers which will help to shape your scheme for the future.

Whilst the relationship between a volunteer and client is subject to confidentiality, an individual client may be happy to share about the difference the scheme has made to them. This is a great way of bringing really positive feedback to everyone involved in the scheme, encouraging others to get involved and keeping prayer supporters informed too.

Prayer support

Prayer support is essential for the scheme. At Torch House the team prays regularly for each *Journeying With* scheme. Any particular prayer requests

from your scheme can also be sent through to Torch House for inclusion in prayer.

Prayer support from your local supporters, and from the church as a whole is vital to the healthy running of the scheme. Any particular prayer needs can be shared (bearing in mind the confidentiality of clients). When the volunteers meet there will also be opportunity to pray for each client and volunteer and for the scheme as a whole.

Planning for the future

All schemes will vary in size, shape and how they develop. It is important to fit the needs and opportunities of your local area. A useful exercise is to look at the number of referrals compared with the number of volunteers. Are enough clients being referred to the scheme, or do you need to advertise more or build more contacts with eye health professionals? Or do you need more volunteers to keep up with demand?

You may feel that there is potential for expanding the scheme in your area. If so, think about how this would best be achieved. If you have sufficient volunteers you may be able to expand your existing scheme. If you do not have enough volunteers to do this, then look at other options such as perhaps involving another church.

Whatever the situation, and however your scheme develops, Torch will be available to support and advise you. Please remember that this is a partnership and Torch will be there to journey alongside your team as they do the important work of journeying alongside individuals experiencing sight loss.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Use of Name and Logo

Torch Trust grants to the Church permission to use the name and logo in connection with its activities.

This permission will remain in effect until terminated by mutual consent or until suspended or revoked by Torch Trust as set out under the section 'If a Problem Occurs'.

The Church will use the name and logo only on materials produced in support of the running of *Journeying With* and in ways that protect and enhance the reputation of Torch Trust.

Torch Trust retains the right, at its discretion, to approve any materials produced by the Church, which bear the name and/or the logo before such materials are distributed. All materials produced by the Church, which bear the name and/or logo will be designed and produced in ways consistent with the house style of Torch. (Torch Trust will provide house style Brand Guidelines and to give advice on their use).

The Church recognises Torch Trust owns the name and the logo and will not claim any right, title or interest in the name or the logo except as granted by this Agreement. Torch Trust names include - Torch, Torch Trust, *Journeying With*, Torch Fellowship Group, Torch Family and other similar names in use at any time by Torch Trust.

The Church will not allow anyone else to use or benefit from this permission.

If the licence is revoked or for such period as the permission is suspended, the Church must cease all use of the name and logo.

Upon termination of this licence the Church will discontinue its use of the name and the logo and will dispose of all materials bearing the name and/or the logo of Torch.

The Church may not use the Torch Trust charity registration details on any correspondence, bank accounts or promotional material.

Appendix 2

Torch Trust Ethos

The Torch Trust aims can be summarised as enabling people with sight loss to discover Christian faith and lead fulfilling Christian lives. To achieve this we provide Christian resources and activities for blind and partially sighted people worldwide.

Torch Trust has a distinctive culture that reflects its Christian beliefs and has been shaped by its history of seeking to be faithful to God's guidance.

Our values inform the choices made by Torch, what we do and the way we do it. Our Values are:-

- Christian - that Torch is engaged in doing God's work, and doing it God's way.
- People-focussed - that in all that we do we accord the dignity to people we serve as those made in the image of God, and - regardless of ability - seek to cultivate relationships of an interdependency of mutual giving and receiving.
- Open - that Torch is open-hearted and welcoming to all, and open in the conduct of its activities.
- Creative - that we constantly strive to find better ways of doing what we do, drawing on the God-given creativity of all involved.

We are a Christian mission and will seek to faithfully represent the Christian message in what we do and in what we say but we will never seek to impose our faith or belief on others. In presenting our resources and activities we will always be explicit about the Christian ethos that is reflected in them. All that Torch Trust offers is open to those of all faiths or none.

Those in leadership or who have contact with those who benefit from the services and activities offered by Torch Trust and/or the Church are required to have an active Christian faith. Others who work for us as staff or volunteers are not necessarily required to have made a Christian commitment but are required to acknowledge that they are working for a Christian organisation, and to have sympathy with and cooperate with the principles by which Torch Trust operates.

Appendix 3

Torch Trust - Basis of Faith

- We accept the revelation of the true God given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and confess the historic faith of the Gospel therein set forth. We here assert doctrines which they regard as crucial to the understanding of the faith, and which should issue in mutual love, practical Christian service and evangelistic concern.
- The sovereignty and grace of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in creation, providence, revelation, redemption and final judgment.
- The divine inspiration of the Holy Scripture and its consequent entire trustworthiness and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- The universal sinfulness and guilt of fallen man, making him subject to God's wrath and condemnation.
- The substitutionary sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God as the sole and all-sufficient ground of redemption from the guilt and power of sin, and from its eternal consequences.
- The justification of the sinner solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ crucified and risen from the dead.
- The illuminating, regenerating, indwelling and sanctifying work of God the Holy Spirit.
- The priesthood of all believers, who form the universal Church, the Body of which Christ is the Head, and which is committed by His command to the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world.
- The expectation of the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ, in power and glory.



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