



‘Listening ear’ service of support and prayer run by curates in a rural area

Revds Jane Held and Alison Alder, who work in a large rural benefice in east Suffolk, have received calls from around 35 people so far on issues including bereavement and isolation since March 2020.

The service began under the first lockdown – advertising online and in emails – but since the easing of restrictions, notices inviting people to call the listening ear have been placed in all 14 of the churches in their benefice in east Suffolk.

Where appropriate, callers have been included in a pastoral prayer list and prayed for daily by the pastoral ministry team of clergy and laity serving the churches.

It started as a service people could call during lockdown if they felt isolated or were missing seeing family members.

"Sometimes people want just a listening ear, but other times they want me to pray for them there and then. We have had people who have not been able to see their families and others who have lost their friendship network. There have also been a number of people who were bereaved," Revd Jane said.

"The listening ear service has been a way of looking outwards beyond the church and saying to people 'we are here for you'."

*Revd Jane Held is an assistant curate in the benefice of Blyth Valley Team Ministry and Cluster in east Suffolk.*

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**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/stories-and-features/it-has-been-way-saying-people-we-are-here-you-listening-service>