

Guidelines for producing Working Agreements

Introduction:

Clergy, whether they are stipendiary or non-stipendiary, are not employees and have no contract of employment. Clergy are holders of a legally defined office, and the nature of their work is carried out through relationships, with goodwill and by God's grace. The concept of a contract is therefore not readily applied to it.

However, it is important in all cases for there to be a clear understanding of the type of work and working conditions under which the newly ordained or the new Associate Priest will minister if relationships are to flourish. The terms and conditions (and rights and responsibilities) of ministry will be outlined in the Statement of Particulars of Office that will be provided within one month of the post commencing.

A working agreement is a partner document that outlines the nature of the duties, and the mutual expectation in the way they will be done. For non-stipendiary ministry or for part-time stipendiary ministry the working agreement will also specify time commitments, days off and holidays.

It is important that the arrangements are agreed *before ordination in the case of training posts and before the post commences for all other curacies*. It is not fair to expect anyone to begin his or her ministry without some previously agreed boundaries concerning nature of duties, hours worked, time off etc.

Training incumbents are asked to send a copy of an agreed initial version of the Working Agreement to the Ordained Ministries Development Officer before the ordination takes place or the post begins. These may, of course, need to be adjusted by mutual consent in the light of experience, and as the curacy develops. The Ordained Ministries Development Officer will assist in the review process for all training posts and by request for new Associate Priests.

Please use this document while filling out the Working Agreement

The following thoughts, comments, or questions to think about may help you complete the template working agreement supplied with these guidelines:

Section 1: The Person and the Post

This section is largely self-explanatory. In some highly individual circumstances, it may be necessary to add more detail to the purpose of the working agreement. Please note:

- (a) Year Cohort indicates the year the curate was ordained deacon.
- (b) Please leave the 'Office use only' section blank.

Section 2: Mutual Expectations

The curate and training priest have discussed the purpose of ministry in the parish/benefice/pioneering context and how the priest sees their role in relation to the congregation and community. (Please note that all the boxes are expandable – use whatever space you need).

- (a) Please each say something about your hopes for the curacy. Please each write your own hopes, then compare and discuss them.
- (b) Please each say something about your hopes for the working relationship between you as curate and training priest. Please each write your own hopes, then compare and discuss them.

SECTION 3: Personal Prayer Life & Spiritual Accompaniment

In addition to participating in corporate prayer and worship, the curate should be encouraged to develop a personal prayer life which can be sustained when alone. To this end the acquisition of a spiritual director/soul friend/personal consultant is deemed to be essential, as is regular quiet time and a retreat at least once a year. Encouragement should also be given to enable personal, as distinct from professional, reading to be developed. Please set out what has been agreed in respect of the following:

- (a) A regular pattern of private prayer and daily worship
- (b) Provision of spiritual direction/companionship and time off to receive
- (c) Regular Quiet Days
- (d) Annual Retreat (at least a minimum of 5 days for full-time posts in addition to annual leave allowance)
- (e) Spiritual reading and reflection

SECTION 4: Prayer, Worship & Preaching

For curates in training, there is an expectation that they will be involved in leading worship every Sunday and that they should preach twice per month from the start of their curacy. It is expected that preaching commitments will increase as the curacy progresses.

Use this section to cover duties within the parish/context for the conduct of prayer, worship and preaching. You should describe what the commitment will be and how that commitment might grow or develop over time. Theological differences and any arrangement pertaining to them that is relevant should be included in this section, if applicable. This section may also be used to describe how the training priest and curate might want to pray and worship together.

The following additional thoughts are offered to guide your thinking for curates in training and all other assistant curates (associate priests).

(a) Prayer:

- What expectation is there that assistant and incumbent will share in saying the daily offices?
- Where and when will these take place?
- Does the existing pattern in the parish need to be rethought in the light of a new assistant's domestic responsibilities, or (in the case of some clergy in non-stipendiary appointments) secular employment or residence outside the parish?
- Are there other times/ways that colleagues in ministry will pray together?

(b) Worship:

- What will be the arrangements for leading worship?
- How will responsibility for design of the services through the preparation of Orders of Service and inclusion of other components be shared and/or developed?
- Attendance when not leading or preaching?

(c) Preaching:

- How often will a curate be expected to preach in normal church services?
- How will feedback be given?
- Are there any other forums where a curate will preach on a regular basis?

SECTION 5: Description of Other Duties within the Parish / Pioneering Context

It will be helpful to have an initial statement of the expectation of an assistant's involvement in parish duties. Use this section to cover other duties such as messy church, pastoral visits, building relationships with schools and any other community bodies within the parish.

The following may guide your thinking but is by no means exhaustive:

- (a) Visiting and pastoral care (within parish, at hospital, etc.)
- (b) Occasional offices / Life Events
 - How soon can a curate expect to baptise and /or to officiate at a funeral for the first time?
 - What preparation will be given for these 'firsts'?
 - (Note that curates should not solemnise marriages in their first year).
- (c) Involvement with parish groups
 - (Such as Messy Church, youth groups, house groups, cell groups, etc.)
- (d) Involvement with schools and community organisations
- (e) Attendance at PCC and committee meetings
- (f) Involvement in Mission Action Plans / other plans for church growth

SECTION 6: Ministry Opportunities Outside the Parish / Context (if any)

Use this section to describe any work outside the parish, for example any Deanery or Diocesan committees, membership, or participation in other forums. If the agreement relates to a Minister in Secular Employment (MSE) then agreed, additional, non-parochial ministry may also be mentioned here if required. If there is a plan to do further academic studies during curacy, please consult the training priest and Ordained Ministries Development Officer before doing so (and please note that we discourage someone from starting a further degree in the first year of curacy).

Are there important training or development opportunities that can only be found outside the parish (including the possibility of some voluntary work in the community, such as with Relate, Citizens Advice Bureau, Christians Against Poverty, those living with HIV/Aids, Street Pastors, etc.?)

Are there areas of diocesan or national church life where a curate (stipendiary and/or self-supporting) has existing commitments, skills, or links, or should they be encouraged to form new ones?

SECTION 7: Time Worked / Time Commitment

Use this section to outline time offered for ministry. If stipendiary the commitment will be outlined in the Common Tenure Statement of Particulars document, and you may use this section to expand on any salient points.

If a self-supporting minister, the Statement of Particulars will refer to this working agreement. The purpose of agreeing a commitment is to ensure that the same care is given to the well-being of self-supporting ministers as stipendiary and is not meant to inhibit flexibility.

Please note there can be no hard-and-fast rule about this for clergy as the work done is self-directed and flexibility is often required to secure lay involvement.

Some curates may have major domestic responsibilities for partners, children, or parents; others may live on their own, but need time to look after themselves. Additionally, those ministers who are in secular employment or self-employed will also face particular challenges as they balance the need to earn a living with the commitment they offer to God in his Church. Circumstances do vary enormously.

Further, it is not simply a case of balancing 'work' against 'leisure', but of balancing those activities which replenish energy against those that drain energy. Given that most clergy tend to overwork, it is important to agree a realistic working pattern, and to try to stick to it.

Here are three formulae that can be helpful to guide thinking in this area:

- In any one day in which morning, afternoon, and evening are all worked, there should be a substantial block of time (two or three hours) taken off during the day. Very few people can work more than eight hours in a day without a considerable falling off of effectiveness, unless they take a substantial break.
- Perhaps divide the day into three segments and have a principle that at least one segment a day should be work-free.
- Perhaps start with a basic working week of forty hours and add to it as many hours as you would be happy for a lay person with a full-time secular job to give voluntarily to the parish. That should give a usual ceiling of forty-eight hours.

A definition of a “working” day is also difficult to quantify but, generally speaking, it would not start before Morning Prayer and would end ideally no later than 10.30pm.

For clergy in self-supporting appointments where part-time ministry is offered the agreement **must** specify an agreed number of hours and what days in which a curate **is usually** available. Paid employment and parochial duties could easily overwhelm individuals and we must ensure that we have due regard for their well-being.

SECTION 8: Days Off / Holidays

Please use this section to identify usual day off and any agreement about when the allocated number of holidays will be taken for stipendiary posts. For self-supporting posts, enter into a commitment of holidays and time off that is pro-rata. For example, if there is a commitment to work 2 days out of 6, a curate should be encouraged to take $36/6*2= 12$ days and 2 Sundays away. This does not need to be exact, but it is included so that the health and well-being of self-supporting ministers is covered. It may also be helpful to include how holiday is booked/communicated.

Common Tenure gives full-time stipendiary clergy who hold office under that tenure the right to an uninterrupted rest period of 24 hours in every seven-day period. In this Diocese, clergy are encouraged to have an uninterrupted rest period of 48 hours or to take a Quiet Day once per month.

Clergy should have 36 days holiday a year including up to 6 Sundays, plus certain secular bank holidays. The Statement of Particulars lists the holidays that may and may not be taken and further detail is available in the clergy handbook (common tenure) at: www.derby.anglican.org/resources/clergy-support/clergy-handbook

Clearly self-supporting posts **will have individual arrangements agreed to suit their circumstances and this is absolutely fine**. This Diocese believes that is important that the principles of an uninterrupted rest break and sufficient holiday form a starting point for agreeing “time-off” and holiday arrangements for SSM’s so that expectations and limitations are clear from the outset.

If there are notice requirements for holiday so that rotas may be prepared accurately and efficiently, they should be agreed here.

SECTION 9: Staff Meeting / Chapter Meeting, etc

Use this section to state when/what meetings will take place and what attendance is expected. It is possible to cover other relevant meetings in this section if appropriate.

- When and where does a regular staff meeting take place for planning and making decisions about the regular run of parish business?
- What level of attendance is expected at Deanery Synod, Chapter, or other regular meetings?
- Do you have links with any Ecumenical organisations that you need to ensure the curate is included in?

SECTION 10: Expenses

Common Tenure gives all clergy the right to claim reasonable expenses for their duties. In this section to cover what the arrangements will be for the payment of expenses and when/how claims must be submitted. For example, most parishes cover broadband and/or telephone. Some parishes give additional allowances such as a book allowance. Please add any such arrangements in this section. Travel costs are always covered by the parish and are currently 45 pence per mile. Please identify how often expenses will be reimbursed and be clear that invoices / receipts are required in support.

SECTION 11: Office Arrangements and Administration

Please use this section to say what arrangements will apply to the use of parish facilities and / or personnel, and to agree what space (home or office) will be used for pastoral visits / other meetings. Use this space to agree on things like keeping each other informed of whereabouts, diary management, punctuality, etc.

- (a) **Office Arrangements:** A curate should have the use of a working base where there is a desk, which is adequately heated, which has facilities for making hot drinks, where there is access to a toilet, where belongings can be left securely, and preferably where pastoral interviews can take place. If the curate's house is in the parish, they may be content to use it in this way. Please note that not all curates have a house that fits clergy housing guidelines and therefore it may not be appropriate (or safe) to hold pastoral meetings at their homes. If the curate is not able to use their house in this way, or does not wish to, or lives outside the parish, then the parish should provide a working base.

- (b) **Administration:** Consider expectations here about punctuality, diary management and keeping each other informed about whereabouts. If there is a parish office and any clerical support, please identify how it may be used.

SECTION 12: CMD / IME2 Arrangements

Please use this section to affirm the importance of training and agree anything that needs to be considered to make sure attendance at the training is possible.

Common Tenure gives clergy the right to participate in CMD and the responsibility to attend. Provision should be made in the Working Agreement for the fulfilment of any CMD requirements, including time off in lieu if attendance at the training clashes with a usual day off or other holiday.

For curates in training, attendance at IME2 is compulsory and takes precedence over parish commitments and other diocesan commitments, unless specifically agreed with the Ordained Ministries Development Officer.

SECTION 13: Supervision

What regular occasions will there be for the training incumbent and curate to reflect on the assistant's experiences in the parish?

Use this section to agree how and when training incumbent and curate will meet to reflect on the curate's learning experiences in the parish. Minimum theological reflection once a month but encourage at least twice a month (especially in deacon year). Please refer to the Curate Handbook for more detailed information.

If anyone else needs to be part of that process, agree it here.

SECTION 14: Confidentiality

Please use this section to agree what expectations you have regarding confidentiality and sharing information - especially in relation (but not necessarily exclusively for) pastoral matters.

SECTION 15: Grievance Procedure

There is a grievance procedure prescribed by common tenure. The procedure has recourse to informal and formal resolutions, as appropriate to the situation. Details are available in the clergy handbook (common tenure). The procedure is not meant to substitute mature and sensitive daily discussion of issues; it is an open and transparent framework to enable difficult conversations if needed.

SECTION 16: Other expectations or agreement(s) required and not covered above

Please use this section as a “catch-all”. There may be other expectations and agreements that are relevant to your circumstances.

Review

It is important that the Working Agreement is seen as a dynamic document that will be reviewed annually (at a minimum) and may be reviewed at any time by either party to the agreement.

Curates will have their training plan and progress reviewed and there may be changes to the working agreement that stem from any of these reviews.

And Finally, What’s Next?

A copy of the Working Agreement should be sent to the Ordained Ministries Development Officer for approval when it is finalised. Once approved and signed by the OMDO, please ensure that copies (signed by all parties) are distributed to:

- (a) Frances Morrison at the Bishop’s Office
- (b) Ian Blaney, the Diocesan Registrar
- (c) Mandy Francis in Human Resources for attaching to the Statements of Particulars, if required.

You should also retain a copy of your Working Agreement for your records.

Thank you!