

Curacy Handbook

Dear Curates

As you begin this next chapter of your journey in ordained ministry, we write with deep gratitude and prayerful encouragement.

Curacy—your IME Phase 2—is a sacred season. It is a time of formation, discovery, and growth as you step more fully into the calling God has placed on your life. This is not just about learning ministry—it is about becoming the minister God is shaping you to be.

Your curacy will be rooted in the life of the local Church, in the schools and worshipping communities where you will learn by being and doing: preaching, praying, leading, listening, and sometimes stumbling. Each moment—whether joyful or challenging—is part of God’s shaping work in you.



At the heart of this journey is relationship: with God, your family, your Training Incumbent, your congregation, and with yourself. A clear working agreement, a thoughtful learning plan, and regular supervision will help you flourish. But so too will time with loved ones, space for rest, and rhythms of prayer that keep your soul anchored.

We know this season brings change—new patterns, new expectations, and sometimes the loss of familiar support. That’s why we want to say clearly: you are not alone. We are here to walk with you, to offer guidance, and to pray for you as you grow in grace and confidence.

We also want to affirm the Church's deep commitment to your well-being. Healthy boundaries, emotional maturity, and relational awareness are not optional extras—they are essential to your life and leadership. Safeguarding, self-care, and spiritual direction are all part of the same calling: to serve with integrity and compassion.

So go gently. Be kind to yourself. Let God's pace be your pace. And know that we are cheering you on—with hope, with joy, and with prayer.

With every blessing,



+Martyn Snow

Bishop of Leicester



+Saju Muthalaly

Bishop of Loughborough

*You cannot bear the weight of this calling in
your own strength,
but only by the grace and power of God.
Pray therefore that your heart may daily be
enlarged and your understanding of the
Scriptures enlightened.
Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The Ordinal

Introduction

Curacy is all about your continuing formation to be the person God is calling you to be in his Church. The majority of your formation and training at this stage takes place in the local church as you gain ministry experience over the next three and a half years (adjusted for self-supporting, ordained Pioneer and part time curates).

You will be given opportunities to learn by observing, participating and possibly making mistakes, but we all learn when we do that. It is to be hoped that all curates concentrate in curacy on preparing to flourish, and enabling others to flourish, both now and in the years of your ministry ahead, by taking time to reflect, pray, and grow, all at God's pace for you. IME2 not only takes seriously your previous life experiences but also seeks to ensure the development of these skills appropriately, and more, for ministry in the Church of England in its current context and bearing in mind the contents of the *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy. 2015*.

Lots of people will be working with you in this process, from the people you serve in your parish, to the bishops and their staff, but without doubt the key relationship you will make will be with your Training Incumbent.

There are three ways in which this relationship works best:

- Having a clear Working Agreement from the outset that is regularly reviewed.
- Creating a wise Learning Plan for each year.
- Frequent and good Supervision.

There are three companion booklets and a number of document templates to help you in arranging these, they will be very important to the success of your curacy and your flourishing as a Christian

disciple following God's call to be a priest or distinctive deacon, of course there is also the Ordinal.

It is easy to get caught up in the day to day round of ministry, especially during curacy, with a particular focus on inhabiting qualities, so we would like to encourage you to regularly reflect on what it is you are called to be and to do which is set out so clearly in the Ordinal which underpins all ordained ministry.

The liturgy for the Ordination of Deacons and Priests can be found here: [Common Worship Ordination Services | The Church of England](#) and it will be useful for you to reflect on these words, not just at your own ordinations but on-going in ministry, reminding yourself of the declarations you have made.



<https://atheobald.wordpress.com/>

The documents are:

- Working Agreement booklet and associated templates.
- Learning, Training and Assessment booklet with associated templates.
- Good Supervision booklet.

They will all help you to get the best out of your curacy and its associated relationships. The rest of this Handbook is dedicated to giving you some further hints and tips and answering some frequently asked questions to help you on your, noting this from Peter:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

1 Peter 5.14–4



Shall we begin:

How many hours am I expected to work?

We would normally expect a curate to be working no more than a 40-hour week, if it is regularly more than 55 hours per week for any minister then there is clearly a problem with the structure of the week and/or the minister's approach to it. You are entitled to an uninterrupted period of rest for 24 hours in each period of seven days and once a month two consecutive days. We also strongly encourage you to take all your annual leave (38 days including no more than 6 Sundays) and an annual retreat.

Expectations for self-supporting and part-time curates will be worked out in the working agreement. It is essential that this is done wisely and paying particular attention to self-care and wellbeing. It is important to be clear about work patterns rather having 'grey areas' – work out what does constitute work - it is more than just being in church on a Sunday – and reflection on things after an event with your TI is just as important as preparing them in the first place – it is work! Common sense alongside a reasonable and balanced approach is therefore essential.

What about safeguarding, who might help me with this?

In our Diocese we take safeguarding very seriously and to that end we encourage every curate to regularly check out the Diocesan policies and procedures on the website alongside talking to your Parish Safeguarding Officer to ensure best and most up to date practice, perhaps talk through some possible situations that might arise to see if your instincts and reactions are appropriate and best practice. Your TI will support you in this and they will be ensuring that your practice always hits the highest safeguarding benchmarks to encourage and enable the safety of all God's people.

Please note that it is **your** responsibility to ensure that your safeguarding training is always up to date and you can find more about this in the companion booklet called Learning, Training and Assessment.

Am I expected to say morning and evening prayer every day?

Yes. The canonical obligations for Church of England Clergy to say morning and evening prayer daily still stands. It is underpinned by some very important values including above all that it is our work of worship offered freely to God.

All ministers will have some form of rule of life or regular ‘quiet time’ and this will be true of the newly ordained too. Maintaining and/or adapting this pattern is likely to be discussed in supervision early on as the you get used to the changes in everyday life and ministry alongside being sensitive to your spirituality as a new curate as well as stretching you to encounter other aspects of the spiritual life.

How often should I be preaching and will I get time to prepare?



It is likely that you will preach once a month initially, and then more often over time. Your TI may well encourage you, if you are fairly new to preaching, to discuss your sermon both before and after delivery. It can also be beneficial to talk to members of the congregation(s) too, who hear you preach, to see if you are indeed ‘scratching where they

are itching'! There are templates for evaluations of leading worship and preaching available on the Hub. And of course, the time frames around all of this should all be built into your working agreement.

What about occasional offices?

The new curate (depending on their past) will normally need to be trained in funeral, initiation and marriage rites. This will include some specific IME2 training courses but also shadowing and working alongside your TI. The particular needs associated with the different types of visiting and caring for people in these situations will be carefully explored, as well as good practical instruction and advice offered. This is particularly important in terms of the legalities of marriage registrations and returns. We would normally anticipate that a curate would not undertake a wedding until they have been priested.

What about family and friends – how can I get a good work/life balance?

Family life is always a primary concern for all curates, married, in a civil partnership or single. Careful working out of the balance of what is work time and what is time off needs to be discussed thoroughly with all concerned. Family and friends are the relationships that will support us for our lifetime in ministry, they need to be honoured and cherished. There are no expectations for any spouse or partner to participate in a curate's ministry, but if they wish to do so in some way they should not be discouraged from doing what they feel able and called to do, providing it is clear that they are doing so in their own right.

Children need to be allowed to be themselves, especially where their parent's commitment to this licensed ministry is new in their family life together. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in training to ensure that the new curate takes seriously their own responsibility of maintaining their home life and good relationships.

For those who remain in secular employment there are further relationships to navigate, namely with your employer and your employment colleagues. It will be important to note in your Working Agreement that your responsibilities to your employer will normally need to take precedence over ministerial work.

Who will travel with me?

Alongside your TI, there are a number of other people who will travel with you through your curacy. For instance, there will be those in your year group, ordained at the same time as you, together you will meet at various points through the year with an experienced priest facilitator who will help you all ponder, in a safe and confidential space, some of the things that you are facing as you learn. There is also an IME2 Officer, who will work with you for annual reviews etc to ensure your progression. The DDO is also available for support if or when you need it.

At the point of priesting, we are also offering Pastoral Supervision to Curates. This is to enable you to have another safe place to talk about things you are encountering but also begin to create a good habit going forwards for your personal wellbeing.

What about expenses?

All working expenses should be fully reimbursed by the Parish or Benefice as long as they have been approved beforehand. Your TI will explain the particularities of this process for you. This includes both stipendiary and self-supporting curates. Noting that expenses of office include telephone, stationery and postage. They include travel at the diocesan rate when on parish business. Desirable items of expenditure (e.g. items for children's work, books, robes, extraordinary expenses in connection with housing etc) should be agreed first with the PCC before incurring the cost. Please note too that travel expenses for IME should be claimed from the PCC.

It is important to explain too, that for tax reasons, you should get into the regular habit of recording all actual mileage and expenditure claimed and claiming on this basis rather than being given a monthly or annual sum which might make you liable for more tax than you expect. There are specific Clergy Tax experts who will be able to help you in making an annual tax return.

It is also suggested that to help your Parish Treasurer, and their juggling of cash flow, that expenses should be claimed monthly – this a good habit for the long-term to make sure you don't lose any receipts etc. so you then can't claim that expense back.



Can I take further or external studies?

Any new or further formal courses of academic study the curate may wish to engage in during the term of the curacy are not usually to be undertaken in the diaconal year, and in subsequent years only

after consultation with the DDO/IME2 Officer. Please note that whilst the Diocese will work with all curates in their continuing academic development post-ordination, the first year of any curacy is of immense significance, and the several and significant changes experienced then take considerable energy and learning. The development of a new training relationship is also crucial. This period of transition therefore needs to be protected for the sake of both the arriving curate and their future ministry and development.

What about my own wellbeing?

The national church and the diocese are committed to clergy wellbeing. You will be very strongly encouraged to establish good healthy patterns of work, rest and play! This will mean making adequate time for developing a clear working agreement and learning plan, taking regular supervision, spiritual direction, rest, retreat and annual leave. You are also encouraged to look at the Diocesan website section on wellbeing for information about other support you may wish, or need, to access from time to time.

What if things are not going well?

Difficulties can and do arise in working relationships at any time, even between training incumbents and curates who are full of good will and conscientious and sensitive to each other. This is why the working agreement is such a key part of your early working relationship; it is essential to have some clarity over how any difficulties should be dealt with.

It is important to note that the IME2 Officer has a pastoral responsibility towards both the training incumbent and the curate. So, it is far better to raise any matter informally with them sooner

rather than later if there is the need. It is not a sign of weakness or failure to admit something which you think others may think insignificant: these things can have a habit of growing out of control and damaging relationships. A process to follow might be:

- Contact the IME2 Officer to discuss the concern. They may well need to share this with others (DDO or Archdeacon typically) so the matter can be properly addressed.
- Meet the IME2 Officer, this will often identify a way forward.
- Meet with other parties – the IME2 Officer or someone else may facilitate a conversation e.g. between the curate and the TI to address the concerns. If the matter is still not resolved:
- The Archdeacon and/or the DDO is advised, and they determine the next steps. (Remember too, the *Guidelines for the Conduct of the Clergy* document – it is really helpful!)

Changing Personal details?

It is important to let the Diocesan Bishop and his office, as well as your Archdeacon know of any change in your personal circumstances such as marriage or birth of children, change of address, etc.

If you should change your bank account information, please let the Diocesan Finance Officer know.

Living in Diocesan Property?

A stipendiary curate is expected to occupy the housing that is provided for them. For those to whom this applies a copy of the Curates Housing Policy will be given whether the house is Diocesan Board of Finance owned, or a rented property. Information about the

Diocese's and the Curate's responsibilities in respect of the house can be found in the Diocesan Housing Guide which is available for download via the website. Curates can also contact the Property Department at the Diocesan Offices.

Help! My TI is going on a sabbatical / taking study leave/ leaving / retiring – what do I do?

Curacy is always planned with a priority on your learning and so is usually assumed to be with the same Training Incumbent throughout. However, sometimes the unexpected happens and the parish goes into vacancy, or your TI might go on extended leave for some reason or even retire.

The first thing to say is: don't panic! Whilst this can feel unsettling, it can also be an opportunity for growth and to experience working with different colleagues. If this occurs during your curacy, the IME2 Officer and DDO will be in touch with you to discuss the situation. It is important that supervision continues, and all the necessary arrangements will be put in place and agreements made in a timely fashion.

What happens when my curacy ends – can I apply for jobs?

The Tenure of Office: a curacy (for regular stipendiary curates) lasts 3 years and 6 months (5 years for Ordained Pioneer Curates) and is negotiated with self-supporting curates (between 3 years 6 months and 5 years).

Curates may **not** start looking for their next post until they are signed off as having satisfactorily completed their training period and please note that it is the policy of this diocese that all curates

should have received their confirmation letter of signing off from the Sponsoring Bishop **before** seeking a post of greater responsibility. Please note too, that once applying for posts it is important to keep the Archdeacons and Diocesan Bishop informed, and to notify them before you apply for a specific post in another diocese so that they are aware that they may be asked to supply a reference and, of course, if you have been accepted for that post.

In certain very exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to terminate a curacy before the agreed time, this would be done in accordance with the provisions of Common Tenure and with reference to your Statement of Particulars.

Who's who:

IME2 Officer

Rev Andrew Hall

DDO

Rev Sue Willetts

Vocations and Training Administrator

Claire Stapleton

Curacy cohort facilitators

Rev Gareth Hutchinson

Rev Jenny Ridge

Rev Rowena Bass

Diocesan Safeguarding Support

Rachel Spiers

Clergy Housing Support

Lesley Whitwell/
Dinta Chauhan

Diocesan Finance Officer

Jim Pullen

Archdeacon of Leicester

Ven Richard Worsfold

Archdeacon of Loughborough

Ven Claire Wood

