



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  

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Diocese of Chester

# **Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry Additional Notes and Guidance**

**May 2022**

Last update: August 2023

**Please note:**

This information is to provide further clarification and guidance for those who are Self-Supporting, as well as (Training) Incumbents, clergy, and churchwardens / PCCs, who may have a self-supporting minister licensed to their benefice.

The information, advice and guidance provided herein does not replace or supersede any existing diocesan policy (such as the '*Clergy Information*' booklet, or the '*Guidance for Clergy on Receipt of a Gift*', that can be accessed via the HR pages of the Diocesan website) or practice, nor does it cover those who are ministering on a House-for-Duty basis - separate arrangements are in place for those ministers.

There is however information which those in receipt of PTO, who were SSM, may find useful to support them with their ongoing ministerial commitments.

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## **Preface**

We are really pleased to offer our support to this guidance for Self-Supporting Ministry in the Diocese of Chester. Change is a constant part of life, and the opportunities and demands which face the church in our day are as exciting and complex as they have ever been. As the whole people of God, lay and ordained, we are called to play our part in meeting that challenge, serving the Lord Jesus Christ with confidence and joy.

Those who exercise self-supporting ordained ministry in parishes, chaplaincies, schools, and workplaces are well aware of the unique possibilities and pressures inherent in exercising ordained ministry outside of what is regarded as 'the norm' – as if such a ministry exists. We hope very much that this guidance will help sustain you in your calling and ministry. We are also aware that there is more we need to hear and learn, so please do not hesitate to be in touch with us and with Lyndon with your feedback and suggestions.

With our prayers and our best wishes,

**The Right Reverend Mark Tanner**  
**Bishop of Chester**

**The Right Reverend Julie Conalty**  
**Bishop of Birkenhead**

**The Right Reverend Sam Corley**  
**Bishop of Stockport**

**May 2022**

## Introduction

Across the Diocese of Chester, the nature of ordained ministry varies hugely, not least in the extent to which that ministry is stipendiary or self-supporting, full-time or part-time. This diversity brings a great richness to the mission and ministry to which the church is called. Within that overall picture, the role of Self-Supporting Ministers (SSMs) is very important. SSMs hold the Bishop's Licence but are not in receipt of a stipend. They are more often than not licensed to a parish, but some do operate as sector ministers.

There is some debate as to the precise terminology that best describes their work, but essentially, SSMs fall into one of the following broad categories:

- Some SSMs are in either full or part-time employment, but see the main focus of their ministry in the parish;
- Some SSMs work in either full or part-time employment, and see the main focus of their ministry in the workplace;
- Some SSMs are not in any form of employment at all.

Some SSMs prefer to describe themselves as Non-Stipendiary Ministers (NSMs), but this phrase defines what they do not 'receive' rather than what they 'give'. In addition, some SSMs term themselves Ministers in Secular Employment (MSEs), if they receive payment for work other than parochial ministry. It could be argued that in the strict sense of the term, a 'true' MSE is someone who is employed as an ordained minister in that particular context (e.g., a school chaplain), as opposed to being an ordained minister who happens to work within a particular setting, and whose employment does not depend upon being ordained – however, this is a matter of debate!

In reality, whatever the terminology, this is unimportant when compared to the actual ministry being undertaken by SSMs. A very real expression of this, particular to the Diocese of Chester, is at ordinations, there is no distinction made between those who are stipendiary and those who are SSM. For example, in the *Church Times* issue in which ordinations are listed, there will be no reference against a newly-ordained deacon or priest indicating either NSM or SSM (where this has been the case, this distinction has been made by the publisher, rather

than by the Diocese!). The lack of distinction is also true in any appointment process and in the Diocesan Handbook, where clergy are not referenced as being either SSM or stipendiary.

SSM ministry can and does bring particular challenges with it:

- striking an appropriate balance between ministry in the parish and a secular job and/or other responsibilities;
- discerning what it means to be an ordained presence in a secular workplace;
- nurturing good relationship with stipendiary colleagues who might face different challenges.

It is also worth noting that some stipendiary ministers move in to SSM because of changes to domestic circumstances and callings, and vice-versa. To that end, SSMs should never see themselves or be regarded by any others within the church as the 'vicar's-helper', as the SSM is called by God to priestly ministry within His Church, regardless of personal circumstances, and regardless of whether they receive a stipend – they have their own unique and distinctive ministry / calling.

To conclude, regardless of the personal circumstances of SSMs, Canon C26 still requires that Morning and Evening Prayer is said, either publicly or in private, and that they celebrate, or be present thereat, Holy Communion on all Sundays and other principal Feast Days. SSMs, again regardless of personal circumstances, should also ensure seek regular and structured spiritual counsel / direction / accompaniment and attend regular retreats.

The notes that follow are offered in the hope of providing further guidance and clarification.



**Rev'd Lyndon R Bannon**  
**Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry**

# 1. Discernment & Selection

## a. Discernment

During the discernment process, there is no specific or formal provision for those exploring Self-Supporting Ministry, as all exploring the call to ordained ministry follow the same 'pathway'. This is because all callings to ordained ministry are just as valid as each other, although at 'selection' some candidates are selected as having 'incumbent status' (more often than not those wishing to undertake stipendiary ministry) and others as 'assistant minister' status (those generally looking to be SSMs). This does not necessarily preclude movement between the two 'categories' at a future date.

However, it might be helpful and relevant for those expressly exploring SSM to request a meeting with the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, as a further aid in the overall discernment process.

Additionally, a number of current, active and practising SSMs act as 'SSM Champions'. It is their role to meet on a one-to-one with those exploring SSM ministry if this is deemed to be of use. These 'encounters' usually number two, and consist of:

1. Observing the SSM / ministering alongside the SSM for a day or part thereof, to see what SSM ministry looks like in practice
2. To meet and discuss what being an SSM 'looks like' for the SSM concerned, and how they have responded in their own contexts to that vocational call on their life

More detailed guidance is available from the Diocesan Director of Vocations. SSM Champions can be contacted via the Diocesan Discernment Team at the DDVs Office.

## b. Selection

The selection process consists of two stages. At Stage 2 candidates are 'assessed' against both the **order** and **focus** of ministry for which they are sponsored. The order relates to whether the candidate is sponsored as:

- Ordained minister: **Distinctive Deacon**
- Ordained minister: **Priest**

Within the order of ministry, the sponsorship focus may be sponsorship as:

- **Incumbent / incumbent status** (please see below for further information)
- **Assistant minister**
- **Ordained local minister, or locally deployable minister**
- **Ordained pioneer minister** (always 'incumbent' or 'incumbent status')

Candidates **can only be recommended for the order and focus of which they have been sponsored**, except under very specific circumstances.

Additional potential focuses of ministry may be flagged by the diocese (such as potential theological educator, chaplaincy or a workplace focus).

It is important to note that the **Incumbent and Incumbent status** category is **not** related to whether a candidate is expected to receive a stipend. It is related to the complexity of the leadership and degree of responsibility expected of a candidate; a requirement to set a grow a vision; responsibility for others in ministry, and a level of ministerial autonomy. it is possible for a candidate to be sponsored as:

- A Distinctive Deacon **and** a potential incumbent
- A self-supporting ordained minister **and** a potential incumbent

Again, more detailed guidance is available from the Diocesan Director of Vocations (DDV) at Church House.

## 2. Training

During ordination training, those who intend to be SSM are given the opportunity to meet with the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry and discuss the future shape of their ministry, as well as review their training to date, with particular reference to ensuring their training needs are being met.

Those who are seeking to be ordained as SSMs should contact the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, if they feel their training needs are not being met, with the intention to discuss any concerns and address any perceived deficits.

Near the start of the final year of training, the Bishop will consult with the Diocesan Director of Vocations, and if applicable, the appropriate Archdeacon and/or the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, over the identification of a title parish for the ordinand following ordination. As SSMs do not require church housing, there is a greater degree of flexibility over where the ordinand can serve their title, and their views will of course be sought. Consideration will also be given to the ordinand's paid employment (where applicable), that of his/her spouse and the education of any children of school age. The ordinand may also wish to raise other factors concerning the identification of a title parish, and should feel entirely free to do so, but the parish in which the title is served, is ultimately at the Bishop's discretion.

An ordinand can be licensed to their 'sending parish', but this is exceptional, as good practice dictates new experiences and learning opportunities afforded by a different parish can only enhance the 'curacy-experience'. That does not preclude a move 'back' to the sending parish upon the successful completion of the curacy and Initial Ministerial Education at a later date.

## 3. Initial Ministerial Education

### a. The 'Curacy' / Training Phase

Initial Ministerial Education is not simply something that is 'done' to new curates, whether SSM or stipendiary! All those newly ordained should actively seek to be involved in the IME programme, through being as pro-active as possible.

The IME programme has been skilfully crafted to ensure that it makes a significant contribution to the formation and development of those recently ordained, whether they are stipendiary or SSM. It is important that SSMs are fully conversant with the 'IME Phase Two & Training Events' programme, which is available on the Diocesan website, as well as the *Formation Criteria for Ordained Ministry*.

SSM curates must ensure that they prioritise attendance at IME sessions, wherever possible, and certainly these should always take precedence over parochial commitments, in all but the most exceptional of circumstances. Thus, for SSMs, time given to IME must be a part of any agreed hours, as detailed in the Statement of Particulars and/or the Ministry & Training Agreement (MTA) (see sections 6 and 7 below). Training Incumbents should actively seek to support the SSM with their IME, as well as assisting with its prioritisation.

There is no SSM specific input, as the Ordination Charge applies to all deacons / priests, regardless of whether they receive a stipend or not, although additional opportunities to meet, network, be supported are however built in to a wider SSM programme.

To ensure that SSMs feel their training needs are being met, and are understood by their Training Incumbents, the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry will usually attend aspects of the induction process for new deacons, including meeting and advising the training incumbents for SSMs where possible and desirable, and **especially with devising an MTA**.

Any SSMs who feel that their training needs are not being met through the IME Programme, should contact either the CMD Adviser and IME2 Officer or the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, who will be happy to discuss their concerns and address any deficits.

It may well be that some SSMs (e.g., those engaged in secular employment or with care commitments) may not be able to attend every aspects of the IME programme. In this case, they should contact either the CMD Adviser and IME2 Officer or the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, as bespoke arrangements can, in some circumstances, be put in place for these curates.

Finally, during the IME phase (and even beyond), it may also be helpful to the SSM to be assigned an 'SSM Mentor'. This will be an experienced SSM who can act as a 'sounding board' and provide further input and guidance around SSM issues, not least as Training Incumbents / Incumbents are always almost exclusively stipendiary. If an SSM feels they would welcome the support of a mentor, they should contact both the IME2 Officer (if undergoing IME) and/or the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry.

#### **b. As the 'Curacy' / Training Phase Ends**

It is worth noting that SSMs wishing to move on into stipendiary ministry, such as an incumbency, are required to have successfully completed IME2, as far as is possible. This is in addition to the successful completion of the curacy, in its broadest sense, in line with the 'Competencies'. This is especially important to note, as dioceses are increasingly insisting that *demonstrative evidence* that IME2 has been successfully completed in its entirety, as well as the successful completion of the curacy, in its broadest sense, is provided.

**Please note, it is not unusual for an SSM who wishes to move to stipendiary ministry to have to undergo a further 'Candidates Panel' (selection interview), especially if the SSM was not selected under the 'incumbent' 'order of ministry' sponsorship category** (more details are available from the IME Officer at Church House).

At the end of the 'Training Phase', there is, at present, no liturgy or ceremony to mark the end of the curacy. As SSMs are not in receipt of a stipend, it is entirely acceptable for them to remain in the parish, as opposed to moving on elsewhere. It may well be that they, along with their Incumbent, wish their 'title' to change to reflect that the SSM is no longer 'in training', although in the true legal sense all licenced clergy serving in a parish, who do not have incumbent status, are 'curates'. Nevertheless, 'post-IME' 'titles' could include: 'Associate Minister',

'Assistant Priest' etc. Any discussions regarding post-IME deployment should, in the first instance, involve the relevant Archdeacon and any change in 'title' should be requested and referred to HR at Church House, in order for the relevant approvals to be given.

If the SSM stays within their 'training parish', there is no common practice in offering a welcome to SSMs into a new relationship with an existing congregation. However, it is desirable that incumbents / Priests-in-Charge and PCCs communicate this change clearly within the church and the wider Parish and Deanery. Best practice could include marking and celebrating the role undertaken so far; highlighting where key training and roles have been completed and new responsibilities are being taken on; noting external ministries, outside work or personal responsibilities (as appropriate) and the granting and sharing of a new local role title, e.g. Associate Priest or Minister.

SSMs who change Parishes at the end of the IME-phase or at any point thereafter, will require a new Statement of Particulars (SOP), Licence and a Ministry Agreement (see below).

Any decisions regarding deployment must in the first instance be discussed and agreed with the relevant Archdeacon.

### **c. Formation Criteria**

For reference, the Formation Criteria can be found on the Diocesan website, on the IME2 pages.

## 4. Continuing Ministerial Development

### a. Continuing Ministerial Development

As with IME, SSMs should seek to be actively engaged in the CMD programmes – ministerial development should be seen as a life-long formational process and not a ‘one-off’ event.

It is however recognised that being SSM does bring specific challenges and as such, the Diocese is committed to providing additional bespoke CMD for SSMs through:

- Providing opportunities for SSMs to meet in fellowship and share experiences and good practice;
- Highlighting specific areas of interest / concern to SSMs through regular emails.

Those SSMs in employment, or who have care commitments, must ensure that they prioritise CMD whenever and wherever possible, ideally, this should be over parochial commitments.

SSMs are reminded that they can also access an annual CMD grant. Please note the following information:

- Most of the courses the Diocese runs are free, so there is no need for anyone to use their CMD allowance for any of these events!
- Foxhill runs a number of courses for which there is a charge, but the SSMs CMD allowance can be used to pay for these. However, to save unnecessary paperwork, SSMs are advised to check with Church House to see what allowance is left before booking. Church House can then advise Foxhill that the costs will be covered by the relevant allowance. Church House will then, on behalf of the SSM, arrange payment directly with them;
- SSMs can claim for retreats, subscriptions (e.g. *The Preacher* magazine) or events run by other organisations by completing a claim form, available via the Diocesan website. The Diocese reimburses claims for up to a month after an event (see terms and conditions on the reverse of form);

The downloadable form and CMD information are available on the diocesan website

Clergy are reminded that all claims are dealt with on a first come, first served basis.

An important aspect of CMD is an annual retreat, which all SSM clergy are advised to undertake. Time spent on retreat should not be considered as 'leave' and should count towards any 'agreed hours' the SSM serves. The CMD allowance can be used to fund the retreat, or part thereof (see above). However, where necessary, PCCs should be prepared to meet some (or all) of the costs incurred, if the CMD grant has been exceeded.

NB, all clergy, whether stipendiary or self-supporting are required to attend Safeguarding training as and when requested by the Diocese, as well as be subject to enhanced DBS checks, as per Diocesan cycle / requirements (see below).

## **b. Sabbaticals**

The guidance / 'rules' surrounding sabbaticals (which are generally granted every ten years) are the same for all clergy, whether they are stipendiary or self-supporting, as all hold the Bishop's Licence. However, it is crucial that SSMs in secular or sector posts are aware that sabbaticals do not apply to that aspect of their ministry / work.

For example, an SSM employed as a nurse, may take a sabbatical from church responsibilities, but the Diocese would not be able to contribute to their secular salary in order to cover any leave the sabbatical necessitated from nursing. Therefore, a sabbatical for some SSMs might mean they carry on working, but step back from church responsibilities for the duration of the said sabbatical. Thus, it is conceivable that in some circumstances, sabbaticals, in the full sense, are impossible for certain SSMs: it really does depend upon the individual's circumstances and context.

For further information about Sabbaticals, SSMs are required to contact the Diocesan Director of Ministry in the first instance, as any sabbatical must be agreed at Diocesan level, rather than simply between the SSM and their

Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge / Parish. Equally, the Sabbatical should have an agreed focus and desired outcome, mutually agreed between the Director of Ministry, the SSM and in some cases, the Parish.

### **c. Mentoring**

Regardless of 'length of service' or ministerial 'stage', some SSMs have found it useful to have an 'SSM Mentor'. An SSM Mentor is an experienced SSM priest, from outside the mentee's parish, who is able to listen and guide an SSM during their training and early years in ministry (or at any other point thereafter), assisting the SSM from their experience of ministry in an empathic way suitable to the context the SSM mentee finds themselves in.

The mentor and mentee meet together, as and when required. When they do, the mentor should discuss with and help the mentee discern what 'being' SSM might look like for them, as well as give other information, insights, support and advice, that perhaps stipendiary colleagues might not be able to share.

Mentoring sits outside of the Ministry Development Review (MDR) processes and is simply a further support mechanism available to SSMs to access, if required. SSMs can 'dip in' and 'out' of the mentoring depending upon need, thus some SSMs will require a mentor for maybe only a short period of time, whereas others find it useful to have one on a more 'permanent' basis.

If any SSMs would like to be mentored or become an SSM mentor themselves, they should get in touch with Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, who will facilitate the process, in the first instance.

For information, a 'broad' role description of an SSM Mentor is:

#### **Mentor Role Description:**

##### *Personal skills:*

- Experience of ministry in a self-supporting ministerial context, similar to the person being mentored
- Empathy, developed from having a similar ministry background to the person being mentored
- Listening skills

- Coaching experience is advantageous
- Discernment of what is not being said in ongoing conversations and the ability to reflect this back to the mentee

*What does it involve?*

Meeting up with the mentee, at least three times a year, either remotely or face to face. Probably for no more than an hour each time. The conversations will be confidential between the parties, with any issues being flagged up to the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry, with permission, if further action is required.

*What is its purpose?*

1. To ensure that the Incumbent / Training Incumbent and SSM understand each other's pressures and points of view, and value the others' skills, gifts and talents
2. To monitor the support and Ministry and Training Agreement (MTA), to ensure they are being followed, to develop the SSMs ministry skills as necessary within their own context
3. To encourage a sound theological understanding that SSM ministry is different from but not essentially subordinate to stipendiary ministry, working within collaborative teams.
4. To encourage good practice in the balancing of time commitments, priorities, "being versus doing", a healthy understanding of authority and responsibility, an outward focussed mission focus, and to understand the responsibility of "leading from the second chair"
5. To support the SSM in an ongoing relationship of mutual trust and support outside of a line management or spiritual directional relationship

*Why Mentoring?*

1: The SSM is invariably being "trained" by a stipendiary priest and / or ministering alongside a stipendiary colleague with little or no experience of simultaneously working within two or more contexts, and with little understanding of the peculiar pressures faced by SSMs. Some stipendiary colleagues may also have a preconceived idea of the role of an SSM working

within a subordinate role, which limits their future 'deployability'. Appropriate mentoring might help SSMs to imaginatively explore the possibilities

2: Working with SSMs (who are effectively 'volunteers') is a particular skill, which IME and CMD does not always cover as well as it might. Support and understanding are required to help both stipendiary clergy and SSMs explore the joys and pitfalls

3: Many SSMs have held senior posts in a different context prior to training for ministry, and some need support and help to adjust to working within collaborative teams, whilst understanding the role of their transferrable skills where appropriate

4: For ongoing mentoring post-IME2 to enable SSMs to receive support, nourishment, and challenge regarding outcomes and accountability, with a view to producing ministry which flourishes within a team context

The length of the mentor role will be subject to personal chemistry, but given good will and a positive approach, it could last a lifetime!

#### d. Safeguarding

**Safeguarding training is absolutely non-negotiable - non-compliance will result in either no licence being issued and/or any current licence, including PTO, possibly being withdrawn.** Without a licence, or the PTO you currently hold, you cannot operate as a priest in or for the Church of England.

*For SSMs who hold a licence (that is, are not designated as in receipt of PTO):*

You must complete (and keep / provide when requested, a certificate of completion as evidence for) -

- The online Basic Awareness module
- The online Safeguarding Foundations module

The above two modules will have a three-year renewal date. However, unless the contents changes substantially, they do not need to be renewed. That said, it is good practice to renew them after the three years, in order to keep your knowledge and understanding up to date.

You also need to complete (and keep / provide when requested, a certificate of completion as evidence for) -

- The Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse module
- The online Safer Recruitment and People Management module

These modules also have a three-year renewal date. These, however, have to be renewed after the three years, in order to keep your knowledge and understanding up to date – renewal is not optional.

Additionally, you may also wish to complete, as a matter of good practice (and keep / provide when requested, a certificate of completion as evidence for) -

- The online Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking module

This module also has a three-year renewal date, however, unless the contents changes substantially, it does not need to be renewed, although it is also good practice to renew it after the three years, in order to keep your knowledge and understanding up to date.

This is in addition to completing every three years, the obligatory Safeguarding Leadership Pathways training, delivered by Church House staff. This, in most cases, takes place online and is booked via the Diocesan website. When you complete this training, you will receive certification, which you need to keep.

The Leadership Pathways training needs to be renewed every three years, at least two months before any current certification is due to expire.

**NB, it is your responsibility to keep your Safeguarding training up to date, so please make careful note of any expiry dates etc.**

*For SSMs who do not hold a licence, and are designated as in receipt of PTO):*

You need to complete, as above, these two modules:

- The online Basic Awareness module
- The online Safeguarding Foundations module

Additionally, you need to complete the 'Safeguarding for those with PTO' obligatory training, as per guidance for the Leadership Pathways training above.

**NB, it is your responsibility to keep your Safeguarding training up to date, so please make careful note of any expiry dates etc.**

So, in summary –

<b>Licensed SSMs</b>				
<i>Module</i>	<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Renewable</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>How</i>
Basic Awareness	Yes	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Foundations	Yes	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Domestic Violence	Yes	Yes	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Safer Recruitment	Yes	Yes	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Human Trafficking	No	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Leadership Pathways	Yes	Yes	Every 3 years	Online Diocesan Course
Safeguarding for PTO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>SSMs in receipt of PTO</b>				
<i>Module</i>	<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Renewable</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>How</i>
Basic Awareness	Yes	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Foundations	Yes	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Domestic Violence	No	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Safer Recruitment	No	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Human Trafficking	No	Desirable	Every 3 years	Online: CofE SG Portal
Leadership Pathways	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Safeguarding for PTO	Yes	Yes	Every 3 years	Online Diocesan Course

Remember, the Safeguarding Team at Church House are always available to answer any questions or queries re: training.

## 5. Managing Expectations

SSMs are subject to the same expectations with regard their conduct, as stipendiary clergy. As such attention should be given to the 'Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy' and the evolving procedures of the 'Clergy Discipline Measure' or its equivalent.

It is true to say that where conflicts arise between SSMs and stipendiary colleagues, this is mainly due to disagreements over expectations, often in terms of time commitment and/or the type of ministry / activity the SSM is engaged in. It is important that expectations are made clear and managed at every stage, from during the training phase, through to IME2 and beyond.

SSMs need to be clear with their incumbents as to the level of their commitment and activity within the parish. Equally, incumbents need to be realistic as to what they can expect an SSM to undertake, always remembering that although SSMs hold the Bishop's Licence, they are nevertheless 'volunteers', with commitments and callings outside of the church.

For this reason, it is clear that both Incumbents and SSMs need to be fully conversant with the Statement of Particulars as defined by Common Tenure (see below). Nevertheless, flexibility and transparency are required at all times. It is for this reason that Ministry & Training Agreements (formally Written Working Agreements) are key to providing clarity. **The Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry should be involved in devising any MTAs or MAs as necessary.**

Equally, it is hoped that some consideration will be given to the timings of parish ministry team meetings, Deanery Chapters etc. in order to accommodate SSMs, but for practical reasons, this may not always be possible.

It is worth noting that any misunderstandings and/or grievances should be discussed in private, and never in public within the parish. The SSM should feel free to contribute openly and with integrity to parochial matters and discussions but should also demonstrate loyalty to colleagues and church officers. The SSM and the incumbent should always seek to support one another publicly.

Although the SSM has a ministry and calling 'in their own right', they are and should nevertheless minister and work under the authority of the Incumbent / Training Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge of the parish to which they are licensed. It is true to say that although an 'Assistant Priest' is not the 'priest's assistant', the SSM should at all times be mindful, despite sharing the *Cure of Souls*, where the legal authority within the parish rests.

Where there are difficulties and issues that cannot be resolved, and they are too fundamental for colleagues to simply agree to differ, clergy should contact the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry in the first instance, who can assist in the resolution of any conflicts that may arise and provide clarity and guidance. Clergy are also free to seek additional support and advice from the relevant Rural Dean, Archdeacon, Bishop and/or the Diocesan Director of Human Resources.

In some extreme cases and situations, a 'move' can be brokered for the SSM, although this must be with the full agreement and support of the relevant Archdeacon and Bishop(s).

## 6. Common Tenure

### a. Common Tenure

Any clergy person appointed to a post is appointed under Common Tenure – whether a stipend is involved or not. Thus, both stipendiary and SSM clergy have the same rights and privileges. This means, all clergy should have:

1. A licence;
2. A Statement of Particulars (often referred to as a SOP);
3. A 'local' Ministry (& Training) Agreement (MTAs / MAs).

The Licence is simply the legal document permitting the clergyperson to operate within a certain geographical area. It also enables the clergy-person to share the 'cure of souls' with the Bishop.

The Statement of Particulars is a 'non-contractual contract', in line with the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009. It includes within its terms of service.

When an Ordinand intending to be SSM draws near to the end of their training, they should, in consultation with the Diocesan Director of Vocations (and where necessary the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry), agree what contribution they can make to parish life (e.g., Sunday plus seven hours a week etc.). This SOP will then be used when negotiations take place between an Ordinand and parish re: a possible appointment. When agreeing a SOP, it is perhaps worth noting SSMs can of course do more than their SOP detail, as it is often when they do less, issues can occur.

This Statement of Particulars will 'broadly detail' hours, holidays, sickness arrangements etc. As SSMs are in effect 'volunteers' their holiday entitlement, number of Sundays 'off' per year etc. will not necessarily be the same as that of stipendiary colleagues, but negotiated, as per SOP, prior to appointment. It is therefore 'unhelpful' for stipendiary Training Incumbents / Incumbents to impose the same terms and conditions on SSMs as exist for them, in terms of time and holiday commitments. Equally, many stipendiary clergy quite rightly 'guard' their time off and ensure adequate holiday provision – the same courtesy should also apply to all SSMs.

**Therefore, as the SOP will only 'broadly define' hours, holidays etc, it is important that the 'local' Ministry (and Training) Agreement reflects adequately what the time commitment, in the case of the SSM, will be to the Parish, as well as arrangements for holidays etc.**

The 'local' Ministry & Training Agreement should take account of what the statement says, and should include details re: expenses etc. If the local agreement has to be changed overtime it may be necessary for the SOP to be redrawn, although if this is the case, HR at Church House must be involved in this process.

In summation:

- There's only one 'Common Tenure', which applies to everyone;
- All clergy have a Statement of Particulars;
- 'Local' Ministry & Training Agreements should also be in place, but that must cohere with the Statement of Particulars.

Further guidance on Common Tenure and SOPs, can be provided on request by the Diocesan Director of HR at Church House.

## **b. Insurance**

As SSMs are office holders and not in receipt of a stipend, they are not covered under or by any Diocesan Insurance policy. Instead, they should be covered by the policy / policies held by the parish to which they are licensed. Nor does any Diocesan Insurance policies cover the SSM if and when engaged in any secular work commitments.

SSMs are strongly advised to check the provision of insurance within the parish with their Training Incumbents / Incumbents, and where necessary, refer to it in the Ministry & Training Agreement (see below).

However, any aspects of the work the SSM undertakes for the DBF (Diocesan Board of Finance), is covered by Diocesan Policies, although in most cases, it is unlikely the SSM will be engaged in work directly for the DBF. For further information, SSMs are advised to contact the Diocesan Secretary and/or the Director of HR at Church House.

## 7. Ministry (& Training) Agreements

### a. What's in a name?

In one sense, what the 'agreement' is called is irrelevant, it is what it captures and perhaps more importantly, the conversations around that. However, the following terminology is used in this document:

- **Ministry & Training Agreement (MTA):** this term is used generally for the agreements of SSMs who are undertaking IME / are in their 'curacy-phase'. The inclusion of the word 'training' emphasises that training is very much ongoing and attendance at this (see Initial Ministerial Education above) is an expectation
- **Ministry Agreement (MA):** this term is used for the agreements of those SSMs who are post-IME. They may still be termed a 'curate' or another title, but the training-phase has been completed. However, although the training phase is complete, it is worth stressing ongoing ministerial development and review, and a commitment to life-long learning is still expected
- **Written Working Agreement (WWA):** this term will increasingly be replaced by Ministry Agreement (MA)

### b. Contents

**Prior to, or shortly after ordination, curates-in-training will draft an MTA with their Training Incumbent (TI). It is expected practice that the IME Officer and Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry will be involved in this process.**

**As the IME phase comes to an end, it is expected practice for a new Ministry Agreement (MA) to be drawn up - regardless of where the post-IME phase of ministry is carried out. The Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry should be involved in this process.**

**Equally, where a new MA is required, perhaps due to a 'move', or as and when there are significant re-drafts of a MA, the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry should also be involved in this process.**

The agreement is designed to support the SSM in their ministry and should not simply be seen as an administrative exercise / task. The agreement should set out those things that will help the SSM to give structure to their vocation and calling, thus it should help fulfil the SSMs vocational response.

To avoid any misunderstandings, it is important that the agreement is clear re: expectations on the part of the SSM and the Training Incumbent / Incumbent. To this end, it is helpful, as part of the agreement, to consider the following :

- The SSMs skills and experience
- Expected time commitment to parochial work
- Details of time 'off' and holidays
- Details of supervision meetings, including frequency
- What other meetings the SSM is expected to attend e.g., PCC
- Any specific or special responsibilities the SSM may have in the parish
- Provision of office and clerical support
- Expectations around clerical dress, including during services
- Expenses
- Ministerial formation and continuing ministerial development
- Confidentiality.

As stressed above, it is important that any 'local' Ministry (& Training) Agreement takes account of the relevant Statement of Particulars.

In the past, these agreements were called Written Working Agreements, in part to emphasise that they should always be 'under review'. However, agreements should always be 'more' than a Working Agreement, as it should not simply be about what an SSM 'does', but also about what they 'are' and will 'become'. Formation is thus an important aspect of any agreement.

Agreements should therefore be informed by the Ordinal, as well as any list of competencies.

Newly ordained SSMs need to be aware ordination is a life-changing event and it will inevitably take some considerable time to make the necessary adjustments, in terms to 'settling down' as an ordained minister. For that reason, the Ministry & Training Agreement is likely to change and develop and should be seen as a

working document – it is important that it is regularly reviewed, at least annually if not more often.

It is worth recognising it can take some time to achieve an equilibrium and pattern of ministry in terms of expectations, commitment and time, between parochial duties, work (where applicable) and family / leisure time. In some cases, the pattern may well be there is no pattern! However, until a pattern is discerned and works well between the Training Incumbent / Incumbent and the SSM, in some cases, much patience may well be required!

SSMs should be aware ‘duties’ required of them and recorded on the Ministry & Training Agreement, should be wide-ranging, to give them the necessary skills and expertise (and certainly in the case of curates, a ‘full experience’ of ministry), notwithstanding any particular ‘specialisms’ clergy may have.

To that end, Training Incumbents / Incumbents should ensure:

- SSMs in their parish(es) experience a broad and balanced range of ministerial experiences, and certainly for those in the IME phase, have the relevant experiences in order to successfully complete their ‘curacy’

However, SSMs must also ensure:

- Despite, in some cases, limitations on time, they should not and cannot simply ‘cherry-pick’ those aspects of ministry which they wish to be involved in – the needs of the parish must always be considered, as well as the needs of the SSM

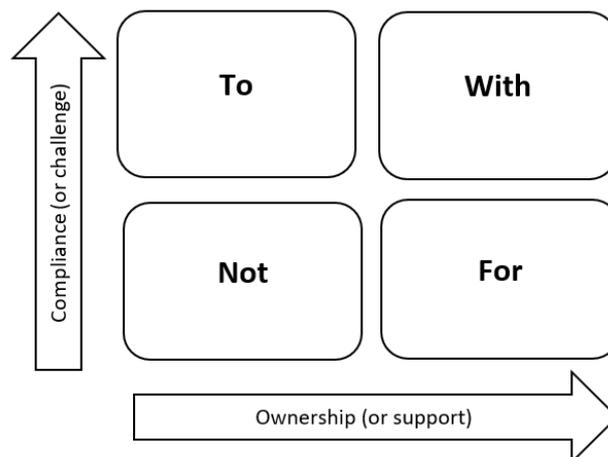
It is worth noting, the ultimate decision regarding the SSMs ministry within the parish, in terms of ‘duties’, rests with the Incumbent / Training Incumbent, although the SSM should ‘lead’ the formation of the agreement, as it is ‘their’ ministry, calling and vocation. However, for ‘experienced’ SSMs (those who have successfully completed IME), it may be that agreement can be reached where the SSM focusses upon particular aspects of ministry, to the exclusion of others.

The Bishop’s Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry is available to advise and assist with the contents of role descriptions, including the specific expectations of scale and nature of parish responsibilities.

SSMs who work and/or see themselves as MSEs should make clear reference to this in their agreement, and ideally it is helpful to outline how the parish can support the MSE in their secular role(s).

Templates for SSM agreements can be downloaded from the Diocesan website. Please note, there are more than one template that can be used / adapted (see the appendices below).

Finally, ministry should be collaborative and the not 'done to' the SSM. The below diagram may help with discussions concerning the M(T)A and how the Incumbent can facilitate better working practices with their SSM colleague(s):



'Challenge' is to have set limits and boundaries, as well as having high expectations. 'Support' is to provide encouragement, to be empathetical as well as nurturing:

- **High challenge and low support** = things will be 'done to' the SSM, and the relationship can become punitive. Doing things 'to' people maybe gets compliance, but there will be little ownership on the part of the SSM.
- **High support and no challenge** = things will be 'done for' the SSM, who then becomes dependent on the incumbent. They become a passenger, rather than 'part of the crew'.
- **Low support and low challenge** = without adequate challenge and support, the SSM is not being effectively led.
- **High challenge and high support** = this is where ministry is 'done with' the SSM, in a collaborative environment.

## 8. Ministerial Development Review

This is administered and runs in exactly the same way for all clergy, whether they are stipendiary or SSM. Those who are SSM are encouraged to engage as actively as they can in the process, as it is not about appraisal, but about equipping, resourcing and encouraging those involved in ministry. SSMs are therefore requested to prioritise MDR at every stage of the process. At the various stages of the process, SSMs may wish to consult the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry for further support and guidance and should feel entirely free to do so.

It is worth stating that MDR for SSMs should reference and make explicit any aspects of ministry that are not parochial the SSM is engaged in, and this should always include secular work commitments (whether they are deemed a focus of ministry or not) and/or care commitments.

Further information, advice and guidance is available from the Bishop's Adviser for MDR and on the Diocesan website.

## 9. Expenses

Those newly ordained to the diaconate will receive a 'first appointment grant' to cover the cost of robes, vestments, books and/or other requisites of ministry as determined by the SSM. How and where this money is spent is entirely down to the discretion of the SSM concerned.

The more general question of expenses is however essentially between the SSM, the incumbent and the PCC. However, it is important that reference to expenses is made explicit and detailed in any Ministry (& Training) Agreement.

It is worth highlighting the following points:

- The decision to claim out of pocket expenses is down to the SSM (in consultation with the relevant Incumbent / PCC). However, SSMs are entitled to expenses and should never be 'out of pocket' in order to resource their ministry. It is for this reason it is highly recommended expenses are claimed by the SSM – if only to ensure parishes understand the cost of SSM ministry.
- Expenses are normally claimed for:
  - Travel, such as to and from a funeral visit, PCC meetings etc. This is usually paid at 45p per mile. Mileage should be calculated from the start to the end of the journey (return), e.g., from the SSMs home address to the crematorium and back again, unless it is explicitly agreed this is not the case. Where other arrangements are implemented, the MA / MTA should clearly detail them
  - Parking (e.g., at a hospital), if conducting a pastoral visit
  - Postage
  - Stationery (e.g., paper and/or ink for printing)
- SSMs should not suffer any undue hardship due to out-of-pocket expenses.
- Some PCCs agree a budget each year to support further development in the SSMs practice, e.g., for books, learning resources, software,

professional mentoring, and the like, and encourage the SSM to fully use this support in her / his practice.

- Some parishes will also support with the purchase / replacement / mending of robes as and when required. Again, this needs to be made explicit in any MA / MTA what can and cannot be claimed.
- Many parishes also rightly assist with the purchase of clerical shirts, notwithstanding guidance given in the publication *'The Parochial Expenses of Clergy'*. This is because for SSMs, ministry is not their 'day-job' / paid employment, thus it is entirely appropriate, with agreement, for these claims to be made. It is important that the MA / MTA details arrangements for the purchase of clerical shirts.
- SSMs cannot claim any fees for baptisms, weddings or funerals or for taking services in a church and/or at a crematorium (neither for that matter can stipendiary colleagues or Readers!). This includes during any vacancy / interregna or at other churches in which the SSM is invited to minister. It is for this reason SSMs should ideally only undertake the 'occasional offices' at their will and in a voluntary capacity. In the extremely rare and exceptional circumstances where SSMs do receive fees, it is important that this is first agreed in writing with the relevant Archdeacon, in consultation with the Diocesan Secretary. SSMs do need to be aware of their personal tax position in respect of any fees paid.
- When an SSM 'retires' and ceases to hold a licence, they need to seek PTO from the Diocesan Bishop, via the Bishop's Chaplain. Without PTO, they cannot carry out ministry on behalf of the Church of England. Often, they will be required to take a three month 'study break', but this is at the Bishop's discretion. Thus, once an SSM retires and is in receipt of PTO, they cease to be SSM and so can claim the fees due to all retired clergy. It is hoped when the SSM retires, even if they remain in the same parish, that churches will mark this significant event in the life of the SSM and parish (see below for more details re: retirement).

It is worth noting that every parish is different and has multifarious financial constraints under which they work. However, if there are any issues, or any clarification is sought, then do contact the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry.

Reference should also be made to the Church of England's publication: *'The Parochial Expenses of Clergy'* and attention is drawn to the various societies that offer financial support to clergy facing hardship. It should not be assumed such groups only exist to support and benefit stipendiary clergy. For example, the **Clergy Support Trust** gives grants to thousands of clergy and their families including SSM clergy and their families. Their wide range of grants includes financial, wellbeing, health, emergency and debt support. Ordinands and curates are given access to an online theological library. All clergy and their spouses / partners who struggle with sleep are eligible to receive access to 'Sleepstation' for free. The website [clergysupport.org.uk](http://clergysupport.org.uk) includes an easy online eligibility checker. All requests made are treated as strictly confidential.

Additionally, it is worth noting that *'Report of the Review of Clergy Remuneration 2020-21'* (GS Misc 1298), which was published in June 2021, states:

*'...we acknowledge that some SSMs may encounter financial difficulty at various points in their life, it is also important to consider the long-term welfare of clergy in self-supporting ministry. Although most will have income from other sources, this should not be assumed, particularly when their ministry is full time and leaves them no opportunity to earn other income and accrue a pension. Self-supporting clergy who are provided with a house for the better performance of their duties will still need to house themselves once they reach retirement age and could suffer hardship if they do not own a house of their own and have not accrued sufficient pension to be eligible for assistance with retirement housing via the Pensions Board's CHARM scheme.'*

Finally, please remember, it is not possible to designate an office as self-supporting and then make payments, by calling the payment an honorarium, or by using such terms as housing allowance, payments in lieu of expenses, or compensation for not receiving benefits. **Such payments are taxable and will need to be declared to HMRC.**

## 10. Vacancies / Absence of Incumbents

### a. Vacancies

**Any SSM who finds themselves at a Parish which is in, or about to be Vacant, is strongly encouraged to speak to the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry at their earliest convenience.**

Essentially, there are four stages to any vacancy:

1. Pre-vacancy, once the incumbent has announced their resignation
2. The Vacancy (proper)
3. Post-appointment, pending installation and licensing
4. Post-installation and licensing

Each stage of the Vacancy can bring challenges for the SSM, and Churchwardens in particular, need to ensure sensitivity of approach and ensure collaborative working at every opportunity.

#### Pre-Vacancy:

This is the time decisions can be made re: roles and responsibilities. It is worth noting that the role of an SSM during a parochial vacancy is often mis-understood. Legally, during any vacancy, responsibility for the Parish falls to the 'sequestrators' - the Churchwardens, and the Rural Dean: it is they who have overall responsibility for the parish in question. As such, SSMs work / minister under their direction. Thus, the SSM and/or the 'Ministry Team', have no legal position, yet SSMs can often be expected to assume great responsibility for parochial matters, with zero authority.

To avoid any misunderstandings, as the vacancy begins, the SSM, together with the Churchwardens and where possible, the Rural Dean, should meet to clarify roles and expectations. Thus, it is entirely appropriate that agreement is reached as to what the SSM might, could and should do, as well as not do, during the Vacancy.

It should be made clear to parishes, in most, if not all cases, a Vacancy doesn't mean 'business as usual' and SSMs cannot and should not simply be expected to fulfil the role of a full-time Vicar!

### The Vacancy:

During the Vacancy, care should be taken to ensure that Churchwardens in particular, are not 'disenfranchised' of their status and responsibility, with regard to their leadership during the vacancy. Equally, Churchwardens should ensure the SSM is fully included and that communication is open, clear and transparent.

It is entirely appropriate that liturgical matters (e.g., worship rotas, arranging baptisms etc.) may be devolved to an SSM, but it is of paramount importance that all remember the SSM is not 'in-charge' of the parish. Equally, the SSM must ensure the 'status-quo' is maintained and service patterns, policies, procedures etc. are not changed ahead of the appointment process.

Under no circumstances should any clergy licensed to serve within a parish that is in vacancy, as stipendiary or as SSMs (this also includes retired clergy), be appointed or nominated to serve as the 'Parish Representatives'. They may however take part in PCC meetings and be asked to *contribute* to the Parish Profile, but they certainly should not write it.

It is important that the Parish Profile, when created, includes detailed reference to SSMs and the contribution they made – this goes in part to ensure expectations are understood, in terms of the SSMs contribution, even before any formal interviews have taken place.

In terms of the PCC, there should be no expectation that the SSM will act as chair during a vacancy. SSMs may be invited to do so, but they have no right to do so (this normally falls to the Lay Vice Chair), or hold any official capacity, save that of being '*ex-officio*'.

It is the Rural Dean's responsibility to provide pastoral support and oversight of SSMs in a parish in vacancy within their deanery, in the first instance.

That said, Parishes and Churchwardens should be aware that the vacancy and the process of finding of a new Incumbent are key times of change and can also be sources of great concern for SSMs. Thus, it is clear that PCCs and Churchwardens can help by:

- Ensuring all SSMs are *included* in discussions and *contribute* towards the drafting of the Parish Profile

- Ensuring the role(s) and scope of the ministry the SSM undertakes is *clearly and explicitly referred to* in the role description and/or the parish profile
- Ensuring existing Ministry (and Training) Agreements are upheld during the vacancy, with a view to the agreement being renegotiated within the first year of any new incumbency
- Ensuring any areas of additional responsibility held temporarily (e.g., co-ordinating worship) during the vacancy are acknowledged and discussed with sensitivity

For the actual appointment process, the SSM should have no involvement. However, it is entirely right that candidates may meet with the SSM ahead of any formal interviews, to provide an opportunity for them to ask any questions of the SSM, either about the Parish, or the ministerial contribution they make. It is clear the SSM in this context, can often hold the 'collective memory' of ministry and mission in the Parish, as well as to provide useful insights, intelligence and history. Equally, this also gives the SSM a 'feel' for those candidates being interviewed.

SSMs should ask the relevant Archdeacon, in the first instance, if it is appropriate for them to meet candidates, if it is their wish to do so, ahead of the actual interviews. NB, this may not always be possible, but good practice dictates this should happen more often than not.

If during the appointment process, there is an opportunity for candidates to meet 'key people' within the Parish (besides the Parish Representatives), it is expected the SSM should be included as a matter of course.

#### Post-appointment, pending installation and licensing:

It is good practice for the SSM to meet with the appointee and begin to forge a positive working relationship.

The appointee and the SSM need to be aware of each other's sensitivities and acknowledge the changing roles and dynamics that this new relationship will bring.

It is also appropriate to discuss ways in which the licensing service / Induction could include the SSM and acknowledge the role(s) played by SSMs as the new incumbent / Priest-in-Charge begins their work.

### Post-installation and licensing

It is hoped parishes would want to thank the SSM and recognise the work they have undertaken during the Vacancy.

After a period of no more than one-year, it is appropriate for the Ministerial (and Training) Agreement to be reviewed.

SSMs should be careful not to 'drop' any additional responsibilities, but ensure a smooth transfer of ministry / tasks, under the guidance of their new Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge.

The appointment of a new Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge can be unsettling for an SSM. If the SSM feels unhappy in post following a new appointment, it is suggested they give things time to settle. However, if any perceived issues continue, they should feel free to consult the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry for further support and guidance.

Finally, regarding Vacancies in their broadest sense, SSMs, Churchwardens and Rural Deans may wish to consult the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry for further support and guidance in these matters and should feel entirely free to do so.

### **b. Absence of Incumbents**

If for any reason the Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge of a parish is absent for a prolonged period of time (e.g., due to illness or a sabbatical), the same expectations as outlined above apply, in so far as the Churchwardens, with the Rural Dean, have overall responsibility for the parish in question.

Again, it is however entirely appropriate that liturgical matters (e.g., worship rotas, arranging baptisms etc.) may be devolved to an SSM, but roles and expectations should be clarified as far as is possible. Thus, it is entirely appropriate that agreement is reached as to what the SSM might, could and should do, as well as not do, during any prolonged period of absence by their Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge.

For clarity, it is worth emphasising that the SSM is not in any of the above cases 'in charge' of the parish and thus has no 'legal' responsibility for the life and work of the Parish, save that of 'sharing the Cure of Souls' with the Bishop.

## 11. 'Extra-Parochial' Work

Many SSMs by virtue of secular working or established networks, may be asked to conduct occasional offices or other expressions of ministry by work-colleagues, friends and neighbours, in churches and parishes other than those to which they are licensed.

SSMs are reminded to be mindful of the sensitivities around parish boundaries and seek the support of the incumbent in whose parish they intend to carry out any work, prior to any commitment being made – this includes in the workplace for those who consider themselves MSE.

It is hoped that incumbents will offer a welcome and hospitality to SSMs from outside their parish, as and when the need arises, but the SSM does not have an automatic right to minister outside of the parish to which they are licensed.

If any difficulties arise, the SSM is advised to speak with their own incumbent in the first instance, who may be able to resolve the issue. Alternatively, the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry can be contacted for advice.

## 12. Retirement

As stated above, when an SSM 'retires' and ceases to hold a licence, they need to seek Permission to Officiate (PTO) from the Diocesan Bishop, via the Bishop's Chaplain. Without PTO, they cannot carry out ministry on behalf of the Church of England. Often, those retiring will be required to take a three month 'study break', but this is at the Bishop's discretion, who may decide, in agreement with the SSM-retiree, that no 'break' is necessary.

As with stipendiary clergy, the retirement age for SSMs is 70 and can only be extended in exceptional circumstances by the Diocesan Bishop. Upon retirement and the issue of PTO, the 'status' of SSM ceases, and the now retired priest / deacon with PTO falls under the pastoral care and supervision (remit) of the Diocesan PTO (Retirement) Officer(s). Additionally, they will have a 'designated responsible person', who is usually their Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge, or their Rural Dean, to whom they are accountable.

When preparing for retirement, the SSM should:

- a) During an MDR review, ideally two years before the SSMs anticipated retirement date, review their recent ministry, and share with their reviewer and Incumbent the nature of their contributions
- b) Consult, discern and pray about the style and extent of ministry the SSM can envisage for the next 3-5 years – thus, the transition period from being SSM to a holder of PTO
- c) Consider seriously whether ministry in retirement will be largely based in their current parish, or possibly elsewhere

A ministry with 'Bishop's Permission to Officiate' (PTO) is in the gift of the Bishop and then by invitation(s) from the/an Incumbent, which can be accepted or declined.

If the SSM, post-retirement, wants and is invited to continue to minister on a regular or settled basis in a particular parish, then the drawing up of a Ministry Agreement will help everyone to have some clarity of expectation (see the above section, covering Ministry Agreements, and the Appendices for templates). For SSMs moving into retirement, the agreement, post-retirement, should not

officially be drawn up and finalised with the incumbent until six months after the date of retirement. This will allow a time for reappraisal after a period of rest and refreshment. However, an agreement post-retirement is not in any way a 'requirement'.

Ideally, when the SSM ends their service under Licence, their retirement (even if they are to remain in the parish) should be marked with parochial / community expressions of appreciation and followed by the suggested period of three months before the resumption of any form of ministry under PTO.

Resuming after a break, if remaining in the same parish, can be celebrated in an act of worship or other appropriate event emphasising the diversity of ministry available locally.

The SSM, once retired and holding PTO, will find it helpful to consider how they respond to invitations now that their licensing arrangements have been changed (NB, PTO is ministry 'by invitation' only). Additionally, in any ensuing vacancy, they must ensure responsibility rests with the Rural Dean and Churchwardens, who can 'invite' as they choose. With the arrival of a new Incumbent, the agreement (if there is one) should be reviewed fully as explained in previous sections.

Incumbents / Parishes with an SSM entering retirement should:

- i. Consider the current and future ministry needs of the parish. There is a task to discern how resources and gifts available should best be developed and deployed in the next period of time
- ii. Remember that a minister operating under PTO does so at the express invitation of the Incumbent – invitations which the minister can accept or decline. For someone who wishes to continue to play a part regularly, the process is eased by the creating of an agreement, which could be drafted before the transition, but only finalised and ratified by the incumbent about six months after the 'transition'
- iii. The ending of a minister's service under Licence should be marked with parochial / community expressions of appreciation and followed by a period of around three months before the taking up of any form of ministry under PTO

- iv. In this three-month (or longer) period, it is very important that the congregation / community grow to understand the changing nature of the SSMs future involvement in ministry. Every effort needs to be made to communicate the change - and fresh points of contact be established and well publicised to help all concerned
- v. The start of PTO 'retirement' ministry in the parish could be marked with a special celebration and used as an opportunity to outline the diversity of ministries exercised in the parish, within which the new ministry of this person will sit.
- vi. In any ensuing vacancy, when responsibility for the parish rests with the Rural Dean and Churchwardens, the retired SSM, with PTO, can be invited to conduct worship etc. With the arrival of a new Incumbent, any agreement should be reviewed fully as detailed elsewhere
- vii. Although the 'voluntary nature' of the ministry of the retired SSM continues, as a retired priest /deacon in receipt of PTO, they can claim any fees due to retired clergy

For further information, support and guidance regarding retirement, please feel free to contact the Diocesan Retirement Officer(s) or the Director of HR at Church House.

Finally, once PTO is obtained, although the SSM status has ceased, any clergy who hold PTO having been an SSM prior to receiving PTO, will still be on the 'SSM List', in so far as they will still be invited to any SSM Diocesan Events, despite not legally retaining the status of being SSM. This is to ensure 'ex-SSMs' still feel very much a part of what we strive to be and do as a Diocese, as well as still feel they belong to the SSM Diocesan Network. Attendance at any events is however entirely voluntary.

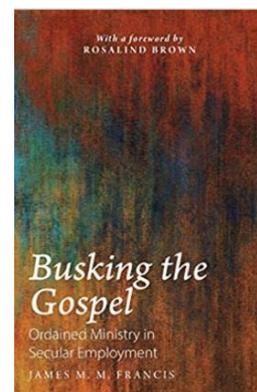
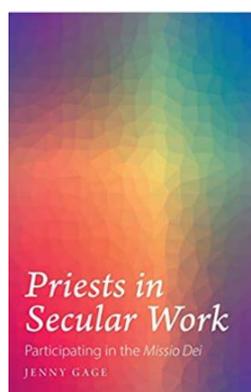
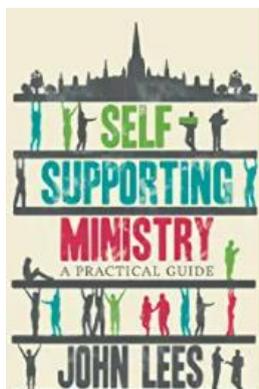
## Conclusion

It is hoped the information above provides further clarity for those involved in and with, or who support SSM. The role of the Bishop's Officer for those in Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry is to be a resource for the diocese as a whole, through providing advice and guidance on the role of SSMs. Therefore SSMs, other clergy, churchwardens and PCCs are reminded to make use of that provision, with the aim of further resourcing and equipping all those who seek to serve the church and build the Kingdom of God. To that end, some Deanery Chapters and Deanery Synods have requested a presentation to promote a wider appreciation and understanding of the work of SSMs, as well as the privileges and challenges.

In addition, the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry contributes to and attends the Diocesan Committee for Ministry and relevant inter-diocesan events, to further support and promote the ministry of SSMs. In addition, the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry is also responsible for highlighting to Bishop's Staff any particular issues or concerns relating to SSMs.

Finally, although there are a wealth of resources and books that can support the SSM in living their vocational response to God's Call, the following books may be of particular use to all those who are SSM or work with SSMs in whatever capacity:

- John Lees, *Self-Supporting Ministry: A Practical Guide* (SPCK, 2018)
- Jenny Gage, *Priests in Secular Work: Participating in the Missio Dei* (Sacristy Press, 2020)
- James Francis, *Busking the Gospel: Ordained Ministry in Secular Employment* (Sacristy Press 2021)



## Appendix 1: Outline Role Description for the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry

**The outline role-description below is provided to inform SSMs and those who minister with and alongside them, of the remit of the Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry:**

### **Pastoral Support for SSMs**

- To be a resource for SSMs, including the provision of advice on specific challenges of this role;
- To facilitate the provision of events for SSMs to promote fellowship and sharing of good practice;
- To circulate, via email, any such information relating to their role(s), to help SSMs feel part of the wider mission and ministry of the diocese;
- To work with the CMD Officer to ensure that ongoing training and development is as accessible as possible to SSMs, and to be someone to whom those who are SSM can refer if they feel that they are being excluded from diocesan provision and/or if they feel their training needs are not being met;
- To be available alongside bishops, archdeacons and rural deans, as a resource to help with the resolution of conflicts involving SSMs.

## Selection & Training of SSMs

- To work alongside and under the direction of the DDO in supporting and assisting those exploring self-supporting ministry with the discernment process;
- To offer all Ordinands who have been selected for self-supporting ministry the possibility of at least one conversation during their training on an individual basis;
- To advise training incumbents and SSMs as requested on the contents of SSM role descriptions, including the specific expectations of scale and nature of parish responsibilities;
- To attend where possible, the key events in the induction process for new deacons, such as the residential for training incumbents and curates;
- To work with the MDR, CMD and IME officers to facilitate continuing ministerial development opportunities for SSMs, with particular attention to those who are Ministers in Secular Employment and to those who have work (or care) commitments, and with particular attention to those in IME Phase 2;
- To ensure that SSMs are being proactive in their IME and making the most of the opportunities available to them.

## Wider Policy Matters

- To contribute to the work of the Committee for Ministry, including through Officers' Meetings and through attendance as appropriate at meetings of the Committee;
- To attend relevant inter-diocesan events including conferences;
- To highlight to Bishop's Staff any particular issues of concern to SSMs;
- To bring insights from the role of SSM to the attention of the wider diocese, for example in the area of whole-life discipleship;
- To attend where practical and desirable, Deanery Chapters and Deanery Synods to raise awareness of SSM issues and promote a wider understanding of the role(s), as well as the privileges and challenges.

## Appendix 2: Ministry & Training Agreement Template for Self-Supporting Curates - MSEs (for those undertaking IME)

The Agreement Template below can be downloaded from the Diocesan website but is reproduced here for information purposes. Ideally, this is the template that should be used for those undertaking Initial Ministerial Education, who have a 'Supervising Minister' (usually the Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge of their parish to which they are licenced).

**NB, this template is for Curates / those undertaking IME who consider themselves as Ministers in Secular Employment – MSEs.**

When drawing up the Ministry & Training Agreement, please always refer to the above notes, especially the sections entitled:

- Common Tenure
- Ministry & Training Agreements

**For SSMs not MSEs who are undergoing IME , please refer to Appendix 3 and for SSMs/MSEs who are 'post-IME clergy', please refer to Appendix 4.**

## Ministry and Training Agreement (MTA) for MSE Curates in IME 2

Please note that this template is for use by curates in training, and not those who have completed IME2.

<b>Name of curate</b>	<b>Name of training incumbent</b>
<b>Date of MTA</b>	<b>Agreed review date</b>
<b>Sponsorship category (delete as applicable):</b> Incumbent / Assistant / MSE / Pioneer	

This document is not a contract, but acknowledges the discussion and agreement between the curate and training incumbent of the following:

### MSE curates will have:

- At least one regular full day off each week
- Protected time for IME 2 events, placements and meetings
- A retreat of up to 3 days each year
- At least six weeks holiday including six Sundays each year

### Provision will be made for:

- Regular times of prayer together and for each other
- Spiritual Direction / pastoral supervision / mentoring
- Business / staff / diary / planning meetings
- Regular supervision time
- Attendance at Chapter, Deanery and Diocesan meetings where possible
- Attendance at other CMD events as appropriate
- Full expenses to be paid

The incumbent and curate will work with the IME 2 Officer and others to engage in all aspects of training for formation and professional and personal development. Where opportunities for training are not readily available (e.g., a parish with few weddings), arrangements can be made for experience beyond the parish.

The MTA will be **reviewed and updated every 6 months** and will evolve depending on the curate's training needs and availability. MTAs should be sent annually with end of year reports to the IME 2 Officer.

The MTA is intended to describe a working relationship, manage expectations, check assumptions and anticipate areas of tension or role conflict. It is not a contract. It complements the more generic *Role Description for the Post* and the *Statement of Particulars of Office*. This MTA should be read and interpreted in light of the SSM guidance notes (available on the Diocesan website, or from the Bishop's Officer for SSM or the IME 2 Officer). **Any questions or concerns should be raised at the earliest opportunity with the IME 2 Officer or the Bishop's Officer for SSM.**

**Part 1:**

**To be completed as the curacy is arranged, and then amended as necessary**

**Employment and other commitments**

For Ministers in Secular Employment, what is the place of work and employment status (e.g. part-time or full-time)? What are the basic responsibilities? Who will oversee and facilitate ministerial formation within the MSE's workplace context? *(This might be the parish training incumbent or another suitable person: advice can be sought from the IME 2 Officer if necessary).*

**Prior experience**

What are the particular skills and experience that the curate brings with him/her which should be accounted for in terms of his/her formation and in terms of what he/she can offer in ministry?

**Time commitment within the parish**

Questions to consider:

- *Roughly how many hours per week is the curate realistically able to commit to their curacy? (This should be detailed on the Statement of Particulars, which is issued just prior to ordination)*
- *What are the expectations about how the curate will use their time in the curacy?*
- *What will be the weekly pattern of expectation as regards attendance and involvement in services, occasional offices, and parish events?*
- *What time will the curate have for preparation, planning, reading, and prayer?*
- *How will holidays and other time off be arranged and communicated?*

**Meetings**

Questions to consider:

- *When will the curate and incumbent/others meet?*
- *How regularly will supervision take place, and where?*
- *How will the curate and incumbent prepare for and follow up on topics discussed at supervision?*
- *What additional meetings will the curate attend?*

**Other things to consider**

What office/meeting space will the curate have?	
What is normal/expected liturgical dress?	
What other expectations are there regarding dress code?	
How will the curate claim expenses, what can they claim for, how frequently, and to whom? (Reference should be made to <a href="#">Parochial Expenses of the Clergy 2017</a> , available online)	

**Part 2:**

**To be completed as the curacy begins, and then kept up to date throughout the curacy**

What areas for development have been identified in the IME Phase 1 Final Report, and how might these be met in the curacy?

*Or, for curates in Years 2 and 3:*

With reference to the Formation Criteria for Ordained Ministry and the curate's envisaged future ministry: What areas for development have been identified in the first/second year of curacy, and how might these be met in the remaining time?

Will the Curate have any particular responsibilities within the parish? If so, what are they?

What arrangements are in place in terms of professional support in terms of mentoring, pastoral supervision, and spiritual direction?

**Signed (electronic signatures are acceptable):**

**Training incumbent**

**Curate**

## Appendix 3: Ministry & Training Agreement Template for Self-Supporting Curates - SSMs (for those undertaking IME)

The Agreement Template below can be downloaded from the Diocesan website but is reproduced here for information purposes. Ideally, this is the template that should be used for those undertaking Initial Ministerial Education, who have a 'Supervising Minister' (usually the Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge of their parish to which they are licenced).

**NB, this template is for Curates / those undertaking IME who are Self-Supporting Ministers, but do NOT consider themselves as Ministers in Secular Employment – MSEs.**

When drawing up the Ministry & Training Agreement, please always refer to the above notes, especially the sections entitled:

- Common Tenure
- Ministry & Training Agreements

**For SSMs who consider themselves to be MSEs who are undergoing IME , please refer to Appendix 2 and for SSMs/MSEs who are 'post-IME clergy', please refer to Appendix 4.**

## Ministry and Training Agreement (MTA) for Self-Supporting Curates in IME 2

Please note that this template is for use by curates in training, and not those who have completed IME2.

<b>Name of curate</b>	<b>Name of training incumbent</b>
<b>Date of MTA</b>	<b>Agreed review date</b>
<b>Sponsorship category (delete as applicable):</b> Incumbent / Assistant / MSE / Pioneer	

This document is not a contract, but acknowledges the discussion and agreement between the curate and training incumbent of the following:

### Self-supporting curates will have:

- At least one regular full day off each week
- Protected time for IME 2 events, placements and meetings
- A retreat of up to 3 days each year
- At least six weeks holiday including six Sundays each year

### Provision will be made for:

- Regular times of prayer together and for each other
- Spiritual Direction / pastoral supervision / mentoring
- Business / staff / diary / planning meetings
- Regular supervision time
- Attendance at Chapter, Deanery and Diocesan meetings where possible
- Attendance at other CMD events as appropriate
- Full expenses to be paid

The incumbent and curate will work with the IME 2 Officer and others to engage in all aspects of training for formation and professional and personal development. Where opportunities for training are not readily available (e.g. a parish with few weddings), arrangements can be made for experience beyond the parish.

The MTA will be **reviewed and updated every 6 months** and will evolve depending on the curate's training needs and availability. MTAs should be sent annually with end of year reports to the IME 2 Officer.

The MTA is intended to describe a working relationship, manage expectations, check assumptions and anticipate areas of tension or role conflict. It is not a contract. It complements the more generic *Role Description for the Post* and the *Statement of Particulars of Office*. This MTA should be read and interpreted in light of the SSM guidance notes (available on the Diocesan website, or from the Bishop's Officer for SSM or the IME 2 Officer). **Any questions or concerns should be raised at the earliest opportunity with the IME 2 Officer or the Bishop's Officer for SSM.**

**Part 1:**

**To be completed as the curacy is arranged, and then amended as necessary**

**Employment and other commitments**

For self-supporting ministers who are otherwise employed or who have other commitments (e.g. caring or volunteering roles), what is the place of work and employment status (e.g. part-time or full-time)? What are the basic responsibilities? Are these commitments seen as integral to ministerial formation, and if so, will they form part of supervision?

**Prior experience**

What are the particular skills and experience that the curate brings with him/her which should be accounted for in terms of his/her formation and in terms of what he/she can offer in ministry?

**Time commitment within the parish**

Questions to consider:

- *Roughly how many hours per week is the curate realistically able to commit to their curacy? (This should be detailed on the Statement of Particulars, which is issued just prior to ordination)*
- *What are the expectations about how the curate will use their time in the curacy?*
- *What will be the weekly pattern of expectation as regards attendance and involvement in services, occasional offices, and parish events?*
- *What time will the curate have for preparation, planning, reading, and prayer?*
- *How will holidays and other time off be arranged and communicated?*

**Meetings**

Questions to consider:

- *When will the curate and incumbent/others meet?*
- *How regularly will supervision take place, and where?*
- *How will the curate and incumbent prepare for and follow up on topics discussed at supervision?*
- *What additional meetings will the curate attend?*

**Other things to consider**

What office/meeting space will the curate have?	
What is normal/expected liturgical dress?	
What other expectations are there regarding dress code?	
How will the curate claim expenses, what can they claim for, how frequently, and to whom? (Reference should be made to <a href="#">Parochial Expenses of the Clergy 2017</a> , available online)	

**Part 2:**

**To be completed as the curacy begins, and then kept up to date throughout the curacy**

What areas for development have been identified in the IME Phase 1 Final Report, and how might these be met in the curacy?

*Or, for curates in Years 2 and 3:*

With reference to the Formation Criteria for Ordained Ministry and the curate's envisaged future ministry: What areas for development have been identified in the first/second year of curacy, and how might these be met in the remaining time?

Will the Curate have any particular responsibilities within the parish? If so, what are they?

What arrangements are in place in terms of professional support in terms of mentoring, pastoral supervision, and spiritual direction?

**Signed (electronic signatures are acceptable):**

**Training incumbent**

**Curate**

## Appendix 4: Ministry Agreement Template for SSM Clergy (for those post-IME)

The Agreement Template below can be downloaded from the Diocesan website and edited accordingly, but is reproduced here for information purposes. This template should **NOT** be used for those undertaking Initial Ministerial Education, who have a 'Supervising Minister' (usually the Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge of their parish to which they are licenced).

**NB, this template is for SSMs and MSEs who are post-IME, regardless of whether they have moved parishes or not.**

When drawing up the Ministry Agreement, please always refer to the above notes, especially the sections entitled:

- Common Tenure
- Ministry (& Training) Agreements

**For SSMs who are undergoing IME, please refer to Appendix 2 for SSMs who consider themselves to be MSE or Appendix 3 for SSMs who do not consider themselves to be MSE.**

# Ministry Agreement for Self-Supporting Clergy



## The Ministry Agreement (post-IME)

***When drawing up a 'local' Ministry Agreement (MA), clergy are reminded to read the 'SSM Guidance Notes' pertaining to Common Tenure and MAs on the Diocesan website.***

***It is important that MAs reflect the SSMs Statement of Particulars (SOP).***

*NB, this template is for use by SSMs who have completed the IME phase of training. A separate template for those undertaking IME is available from the IME Officer. All text in italics can be deleted.*

Name of SSM	<i>Enter name here...</i>
In the Parish, the SSM is to be known as	<i>Curate, Assistant Priest, Associate minister etc</i>
Name of Incumbent / P-i-C	<i>Enter name here...</i>

<b>Contact details</b> (preferred email and phone details for contact regarding parish matters)	Home: Mobile: Email:
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### Employment / Other Commitments

*Enter details of employment and how this can / could impact upon availability in the Parish. If not employed, there may well be other demands on your time, such as childcare or care commitments etc. Indicate also, any non-Parochial commitments in the Diocese, such as spiritual director, or community commitments, such as school governor etc.*

### Employment / Other Commitments: Further Details

*For each entry above, please indicate how the parish / ministry team will:*

- *Recognise the other commitments / callings the SSM has upon their life.*
- *Support the SSM as they respond to these callings / commitments.*
- *Celebrate these callings / commitments as part of the ministry the SSM offers.*

### Skills and Experience

*Enter in this box any specific skills that the Parish could utilise, such as funeral ministry, working with children etc. also indicate your experience as a whole, such as ordained for 12 years'... The skills and experiences identified in this box may also be informed by the two sections above*

### Time commitment within the parish

The self-supporting minister's time spent on parochial duties will include time for leading worship, taking occasional offices (including preparation and follow-up), meetings, reading, prayer and sermon preparation. Time spent within the parish must take account of special responsibilities and commitments outside the faith community, as well any at a Diocesan level.

How many hours per week is the SSM offering to the parish?	<i>Refer to the SOP</i>
How many Sundays per month will he/she be leading worship?	<i>This needs not be a 'hard and fast' rule, but more a generalisation, such as 'at least...' or 'at most...'</i>
How many times per month will he/she be preaching, including homilies and other addresses?	<i>This needs not be a 'hard and fast' rule, but more a generalisation, such as 'at least...' or 'at most...'</i>
Approximately how many funerals, weddings and baptisms will the SSM be doing through the year?	<i>This needs not be a 'hard and fast' rule, but more a generalisation, such as 'at least...' or 'at most...'</i>

What are the expectations regarding the daily offices?	<i>Work commitments may prohibit saying the Offices with other clergy within the Parish</i>
When will the SSM and Incumbent / P-i-C pray together?	<i>Indicate when, where, frequency etc</i>

### Time off

What is the day off?	<i>Or even days...</i>
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### Holidays

What holidays will be taken, and how will holiday dates be coordinated between the SSM and Incumbent / P-i-C?

<i>Refer to the Guidance Notes. It is important that holidays are taken by SSMs, in addition to however many Sundays per year may be given as 'time off'. It is unhelpful for SSMs to be limited to only six Sundays per year off, especially if they are in fulltime employment</i>
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### Meetings for supervision

These meetings are for mutual support, personal review and growth, and theological reflection.

How often will they take place?	<i>Suggest at least four times per year?</i>
Where will they take place?	<i>Indicate where and when...</i>
What will the "rules" of meeting be?	<i>These may include standing items</i>

### Other meetings

At what meetings (e.g., ministry team, Chapter, Synod) will attendance be expected (subject to availability)?

*Be realistic in terms of time commitment. These meetings 'count' towards the 'hours per week' allocation / agreement*

### Special responsibilities within the parish

Will the SSM have any particular responsibilities within the parish? If so, what are they?	<i>Such as pastoral ministry, children's work etc</i>
Will the SSM have opportunity for pioneering ministry? If so, how?	<i>State how, and what format this will take if necessary</i>

### Office space

What office space and/or administrative support will the SSM have?

*This can include support towards the purchase of consumables etc.*

### Clerical dress

What is normal liturgical dress? What other expectations are there regarding dress code?

*Within the Parish generally, when undertaking ministry (e.g., clerical collar), and for services – cassock, stole, chasuble etc.*

### Expenses

Reference should be made to *Parochial Expenses of the Clergy 2017* (available online) which gives guidance to clergy and Treasurers about the reimbursement of expenses.

How will the SSM claim expenses? How frequently and to whom?	<i>Also, will a claim for be used?</i>
What can the SSM claim for?	<i>The SSM should never be out of pocket for ministry</i>

**Ministerial formation and continuing ministerial development**

The SSM should take responsibility for his/her own professional / ministerial development, and be supported by their Incumbent / P-i-C:

What time is to be allocated to learning events, ministerial formation and study?	<i>This should be included in the hours per week offered to the Parish</i>
What plans are there for making a retreat and attending conferences?	<i>Additionally, can / will the parish pay anything towards the cost of these?</i>

NB, all clergy, whether stipendiary or self-supporting are required to attend Safeguarding training as and when requested by the Diocese, as well as be subject to enhanced DBS checks, as per Diocesan cycle / requirements.

**Ministerial support**

What arrangements are in place in terms of professional support in terms of mentoring, coaching and spiritual direction?

*How can the Parish support and facilitate this? Additionally, if MSE, how can the Parish support you in this sphere?*

*Other boxes can be added at this point to capture any aspects not covered elsewhere in this template*

**Insurance**

SSMs and their Incumbent should check arrangements re: insurance of the SSM whilst engaged in parochial activities.

*Enter insurance details in this box*

**Confidentiality**

Parishioners should be made aware by the SSM and the Incumbent / P-i-C that all matters disclosed to one another may be shared between them, for the purposes of pastoral

oversight and ministerial provision, although professional / ministerial judgement will be used accordingly.

In the case of any safeguarding matters, all disclosures will be dealt with in line with Diocesan guidelines and confidentially will **NOT** be maintained.

**Grievance procedures**

The SSM and the Incumbent / P-i-C agree that any misunderstandings and/or grievances they experience will be discussed in private, never in public, although it may be appropriate to invite Churchwardens to any meetings. The SSM should be free to contribute openly and with integrity to discussions within the parish but should also demonstrate loyalty to colleagues and church officers, as well as be afforded the same loyalty back.

The SSM and Incumbent / P-i-C therefore agree to support each other publicly but maintain their individual viewpoints and contributions. If any issue cannot be resolved and is too fundamental for colleagues simply to agree to differ, then advice should be sought from the Bishop’s Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry in the first instance, or the relevant Rural Dean, before approaching the Archdeacon and/or Bishop.

Signed and dated:	<i>Enter name</i>	<i>Date</i>
Signed and dated:	<i>Enter name</i>	<i>Date</i>

Agreed date for reviewing this agreement	<i>Generally, annually...</i>
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