



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  

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Diocese of Chester

**Self-Supporting Ordained  
Ministry:  
SSM Handbook**

**May 2022**

Last update: August 2024

**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.

Other documents published by the Diocese that should be read alongside this **SSM Handbook** include:

- 1. *Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry: A Brief Vocations Guide***
- 2. *SSM Incumbent Level Appointments: Good Practice Guide and Notes***
- 3. *SSMs Moving to PTO: A Good Practice Guide***
- 4. *SSMs and Vacancies: A Good Practice Guide***

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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 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 the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry 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 especially important. SSMs hold the Bishop's Licence but are not in receipt of a stipend. They are often 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 generally SSMs fall into one of the following broad categories:

- Some SSMs are in either full or part-time employment, but see the focus of their ministry in the parish;
- Some SSMs work in either full or part-time employment, and see the 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* issues in which ordinations are listed, there will be no reference against those newly ordained, indicating they are 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 on the Diocesan Contact Management System (CMS), formally the 'Diocesan Handbook', where clergy are not referenced as being either SSM or stipendiary.

SSM ministry can and does bring challenges:

- 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 relationships with stipendiary colleagues who might face different challenges.

It is also worth noting that some stipendiary ministers move into 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 ordained 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 are present thereat, at 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, support, and clarification.

## 1. Discernment & Selection

**Please read this section of the Handbook in conjunction with the *'Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry: A Brief Vocations Guide'*, which can be found on the SSM page of the Diocesan website.**

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 National 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, via advice from the Candidates Panel.

However, it might be helpful and relevant for those expressly exploring SSM to request a meeting with the Bishop's Adviser 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. Discussing what being an SSM 'looks like' for the SSM concerned, and how they have responded in their own context to that vocational call on their life

More detailed guidance is available from the Bishop's Adviser for Diocesan Discernment of Ordained Ministry. SSM Champions can be contacted via the Diocesan Discernment Team at Church House.

**Please note - deciding what sponsorship, training pathways and deployment remain in the prerogative of the Bishop.**

## 2. Training

**Please read this section of the Handbook in conjunction with the *'Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry: A Brief Vocations Guide'*, which can be found on the SSM page of the Diocesan website.**

During ordination training, those who intend to be SSM are given the opportunity to meet with the Bishop's Adviser 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 Adviser 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 Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions, and if applicable, the appropriate Archdeacon and/or the Bishop's Adviser 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.

However, the standard expectation is that candidates will move to a different training context either for their initial (pre-ordination) training or for a curacy. Ordinands can be licensed to their "sending parish", though this is exceptional, as good practice dictates new experiences and learning opportunities afforded by a different parish can only enhance the curacy experience. This does not preclude a move back to the sending parish upon successful completion of the curacy and Initial Ministerial Education at a later date. In the exceptional cases where an ordinand is licensed to their sending parish, they will normally be expected to move to a different context for their pre-ordination training.



## 3. Initial Ministerial Education

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

The IME2 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 IME2 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 IME2, as well as assisting with its prioritisation.

There is no SSM specific input, as the Ordination Charge applies to all ordained ministers, regardless of whether they receive a stipend or not, although additional opportunities to meet, network, be supported are however built into 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 Adviser 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 IME2 Programme, should contact the Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions or the Bishop's Adviser 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 aspect of the IME2

programme. In this case, they should contact the Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions or the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry, as bespoke arrangements can, in some circumstances, be put in place for these curates.

Finally, during the IME2 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 Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions (if undergoing IME2) and/or the Bishop's Adviser 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. 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.

**Normally, an SSM who wishes to move to stipendiary ministry would 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 Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions 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 Bishop and/or 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!
- **SSMs who hold PTO, that is are not licenced, cannot claim the CMD grant.**
- Foxhill runs a number of courses for which there is a charge, but the SSM’s 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 Foxhill;
- 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. SSMs are reminded that the 'pot of money' available for CMD grants is limited and so 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).

SSMs are reminded they should also, as part of their commitment to CMD, ensure they have adequate pastoral and spiritual support throughout their ministry. This could include spiritual direction / accompaniment and / or Pastoral Supervision. Pastoral Supervision is available to all clergy within the Diocese, including SSMs, upon request.

## **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, 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 Adviser 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 Adviser 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?*

- The SSM is invariably being “trained” by a member of clergy who is stipendiary 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
- Working with SSMs (who are effectively ‘volunteers’) is a particular skill. Support and understanding are required to help both stipendiary clergy and SSMs explore the joys and pitfalls
- 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
- 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, being withdrawn.** Without a licence, or PTO an SSM cannot exercise ministry as an ordained minister 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 Foundation module

The above two modules will have a three-year renewal date. However, unless the contents change substantially, they do not need to be renewed. That said, it is good practice to renew them after the three years, 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, 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, it does not need to be renewed, although it is also good practice to renew it after the three years, 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 the responsibility of the SSM to keep all Safeguarding training up to date, so it is important a careful note is made of any expiry dates, as well as to retain electronic and/or paper copies of the course certificates.**

**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 Foundation 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 the responsibility of those in receipt of PTO, who were previously SSM to keep all Safeguarding training up to date, so it is important a careful note is made of any expiry dates, as well as to retain electronic and/or paper copies of the course certificates.**

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
Foundation	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 regarding training.

## 5. Managing Expectations

SSMs are subject to the same expectations regarding their conduct, as stipendiary clergy. As such, attention should be given to the '*Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*' and the '*Clergy Discipline Measure*'.

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 Adviser for Self-Supporting Ministry should be involved in devising any MTAs or MAs as necessary, as should the Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions, if the SSM is undergoing IME2.**

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 Adviser 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).

Expectations around absence and holidays should also be made clear and discussed / agreed (see also the section below detailing Ministry Agreements). If an SSM is 'absent' from ministry for more than five consecutive days due to sickness (for which they can 'self-certificate'), ideally, they should provide a 'Fit to Work Note'. This is only required so that appropriate support can be put in place for the SSM. For further details around sickness and absence, then please contact HR at Church House.

## 6. Common Tenure

### a. Common Tenure

All clergy appointed to a post are appointed and licensed under Common Tenure – whether a stipend is offered or not. Thus, both stipendiary and SSM clergy have the same rights and privileges. This means, all clergy on Common Tenure 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 clergy to operate within a certain geographical area. It also enables clergy 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 it terms of service.

When an Ordinand intending to be SSM draws near to the end of their training, they should, in consultation with the Bishop's Adviser for Diocesan Discernment of Ordained Ministry (and where necessary the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry), agree what contribution they can make to parish life (e.g., Sunday plus seven hours a week etc.). This will then be used when negotiations take place between an Ordinand and parish re: a possible appointment.

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 amended and revised.

In summation:

- ‘Common Tenure’ applies to all licensed clergy;
- All clergy have a Statement of Particulars;
- ‘Local’ Ministry & Training Agreements should also be in place but must cohere with the Statement of Particulars

Further guidance on Common Tenure and SOPs, can be provided on request by the 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.

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 training 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 Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions and Bishop's Adviser 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 Adviser 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 Adviser 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 SSM's 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 SSM's 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, including Pastoral Supervision, spiritual direction etc
- 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 of the 'duties' required of them and recorded on the Ministry (& Training) Agreement. These 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 to successfully complete their 'curacy'.

However, SSMs must also ensure:

- They do not 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 SSM's 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.

The Bishop's Adviser 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.

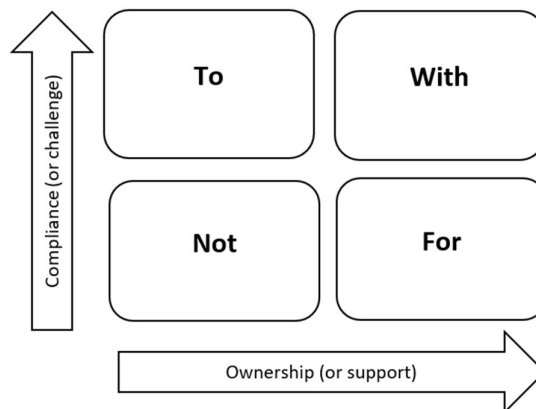
SSMs who work and/or see themselves as MSEs should make clear reference to this in their agreement, and ideally it is helpful to outline how the parish can support the MSE in their secular role(s). It may also be that some further ‘agreement’ is also negotiated with the workplace.

Other modes and sources of support for the SSM can also be included in the M(T)A, such as the **Employee Assistance Programme** provided by the Diocese.

For further information re: support mechanisms available to support SSMs, please contact the Bishop’s Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry.

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 may get 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 effectively led.
- **High challenge and high support** = this is where ministry is 'done with' the SSM, in a collaborative environment.

### c. A Note on PCCs that are Registered Charities

There is much that could be said about PCCs and the role of the SSM, unless they are the incumbent of the parish, they will sit in the 'second chair'. However, for brevity, if the PCC is registered charity, then the Charity Commission will require details of all trustees (including the SSM), and will disclose names of trustees on the register, but no other details.

If disclosure would put someone in personal danger, for instance, they can apply for a dispensation, allowing their name not to be disclosed. In these circumstances, the SSM should, in consultation with their incumbent, contact the Charity Commissioners, via the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website.

An SSM can't avoid disclosure because they don't like the idea! Information, where applicable, pertaining to the PCC being a charity, and expectations thereof, should be captured in the M(T)A.

## 8. Ministerial Development Review

As a Diocese, we are as committed to supporting the development of SSMs. Ministerial Development Review (MDR) is about investment, and not simply a 'process'.

MDR is administered and runs in exactly the same way for all clergy, whether they are stipendiary, SSM or an SSM Incumbent. All are encouraged to engage as actively as they can in the process.

Ministry Review is not about appraisal, but about equipping, resourcing and encouraging those involved in ministry. Although SSMs may be 'time poor', they are nevertheless requested to prioritise MDR at every stage of the process.

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

At the various stages of the process, SSMs may wish to consult the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry for further support and guidance and should feel entirely free to do so.

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

### **A Note on other forms of Review and Support:**

Within six months of ordination, to both diaconal and priestly ministry, you will be invited to meet with the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry. The purpose of these meetings will be to review the nature and pattern of ministry, as well as to ensure relevant support is in place for those recently ordained.

Further, when an SSM moves post, and / or changes role, a 'Post-Move Review' will also take place with the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry,

after around a period of 12 months. This meeting is similar to the reviews undertaken by stipendiary colleagues – Post-Induction Review.

For further information about the above, please contact the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry.

## 9. Expenses

**For SSMs who are in receipt of PTO, reference should also be made to ‘SSMs Moving to PTO: A Good Practice Guide’, published on the SSM page of the Diocesan website.**

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, within these parameters, 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 the current HMRC rate, per mile. Mileage should be calculated from the start to the end of the journey (return), e.g., from the SSM’s 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.

- Expenses should be claimed regularly (monthly or quarterly), as agreed with the PCC Treasurer.
- 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 Licensed Lay Ministers!). 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.

It is worth noting that every parish is different and has multifarious financial constraints under which they work, but expenses still need to be paid. However, if there are any issues, or any clarification is sought, then do contact the Bishop's Adviser 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

**Please also refer to *'SSMs and Vacancies: A Good practice Guide'*, that is published on the Diocesan website, for more detailed information, advice and guidance.**

### 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 Adviser 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 support collaborative working at every opportunity.

It is worth noting that the role of an SSM during a parochial vacancy is often misunderstood. Legally, during any vacancy, responsibility for the Parish falls to the 'sequestrators' - the Churchwardens, **and** the Rural Dean: it is they who have overall legal responsibility for the parish in question. However, the SSM has 'spiritual authority', in that they share the 'Cure of Souls' with the Bishop.

Although Churchwardens are legally in charge of the parish, they do not have any line-management or supervisory responsibility over or for the SSM. This is exercised by the Archdeacons and/or Bishops.

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.

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. 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, it is expected the SSM should be included as a matter of course.

Once an appointment has been made, it is 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 priest begins their work.

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

Finally, SSMs, Churchwardens and Rural Deans may wish to consult the Bishop's Adviser 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, even if in the same diocese.

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 Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry can be contacted for advice.

## 12. Retirement

**Please read this section of the Handbook in conjunction with the *'SSMs Moving to PTO: A Good Practice Guide'*, which can be found on the SSM page of the Diocesan website.**

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 Ministry Administrator. Without PTO, they cannot carry out ministry on behalf of the Church of England. Often, those retiring will be required to take a three-six month '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 SSM 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, there are numerous things that both the SSM and their parish should consider. These are detailed in the *'SSMs Moving to PTO: A Good Practice Guide'* which can be found on the SSM page of the Diocesan website.

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.

Once PTO is obtained, although SSM 'status' has ceased, any clergy who hold PTO having previously been an SSM, 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 '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.

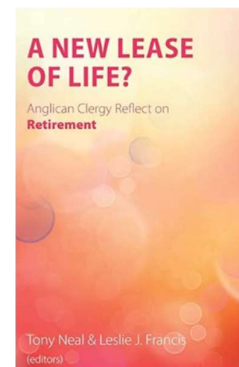
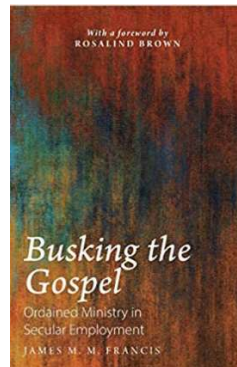
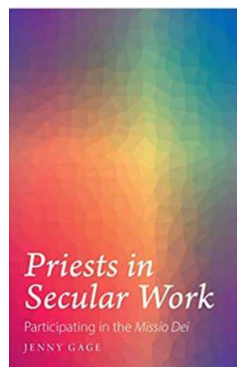
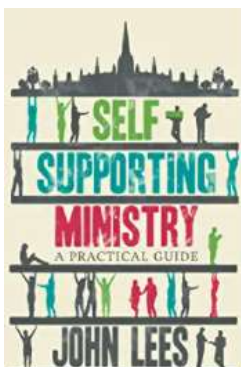
## Conclusion

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 Adviser 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 Adviser 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 Adviser 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 SSMs 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, including those holding or exploring incumbency roles (with the last book also being relevant to those SSMs approaching 'retirement'):

- J. Lees, *Self-Supporting Ministry: A Practical Guide* (SPCK, 2018)
- J. Gage, *Priests in Secular Work: Participating in the Missio Dei* (Sacristy Press, 2020)
- J. Francis, *Busking the Gospel: Ordained Ministry in Secular Employment* (Sacristy Press 2021)
- T. Neal & L. Francis, *A New Lease of Life: Anglican Clergy Reflect on Retirement* (Sacristy Press, 2020)





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

This was reviewed and revised in summer 2024.

### ROLE DESCRIPTION

#### Pastoral Support for SSMs

- To be a resource for SSMs, including the provision of advice on specific challenges of the role;
- To ensure all SSMs know they can access the support of the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry and/or other members of the Ministry Team at Church House;
- To keep an up-to-date and accurate record of all those who are operating as SSMs in the Diocese of Chester;
- To facilitate the provision of events for SSMs to promote fellowship and sharing of good practice. These events will include Quiet Days, Diocesan SSM Conference, SSM Chapter / Network meetings etc.
- To circulate, at least twice each year, a newsletter / email briefing relating to their role(s), to help SSMs feel part of the wider mission and ministry of the diocese;
- To survey SSMs at least once every five-years, to gauge their views on provision, support, training etc;
- To work with the Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions 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;

- To meet with all those ordained (deacon and priest) within six months of their ordination and then again one year after priesting;
- To meet with any SSM who has had a change of role and/or moved parish, or who is new to the diocese.

### Selection & Training of SSMs

- To work alongside and under the direction of the Bishop's Adviser for Diocesan Discernment of Ordained Ministry in supporting and assisting those exploring self-supporting ministry with the discernment process;
- To fully participate in vocations work, such as the 'Called to Serve' vocations event at Foxhill;
- To offer all those exploring self-supporting (incumbent or associate minister 'status') ministry the opportunity of a face-to-face meeting, prior to any selection panel, to fully explore and discern what SSM ministry might involve;
- To offer all Ordinands who have been selected for self-supporting (incumbent and associate minister 'status') ministry the possibility of at least one conversation annually, both prior to their training beginning and during their training programme on an individual basis;
- To attend any Diocesan discernment events, as requested by the BADDOM (such as Vocations Quiet Days, 'Called to Serve' events etc);
- To attend, where practical, all ordinations at which there are SSMs being ordained in to either the diaconate or priesthood;
- To advise (training) incumbents and SSMs as requested on the contents of SSM role descriptions (Ministry & Training / Ministry Agreements), including the specific expectations of scale and nature of parish responsibilities, in line with the relevant Statement of Particulars;
- To attend where possible, the key events in the induction process for new deacons, such as the residential for potential training incumbents, the Deacon's Induction Evening etc;
- To work with the various Bishops' Advisers 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 meet with the various Bishops' Advisers at least once every two years, to review SSM provision in relation to MDR (Ministerial Development Review), CMD and IME2;
- To attend specific IME2 and CMD events, as identified and requested, including 'Common Rooms' and 'Kaleidoscopes', at which SSMs can be supported;
- To ensure that SSMs are being proactive in their IME and making the most of the opportunities available to them;
- To produce and update as required any specific material pertaining to encouraging vocations to SSOM;
- To produce, and update as required, materials pertaining to the selection and appointment of SSMs to incumbent level posts, such as a Priest-in-Charge;
- To work alongside the Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions in supporting SSMs appointed to incumbent level positions, and where necessary, to also offer support to those parishes where SSMs are the incumbent.

### Wider Policy Matters

- To ensure the SSM pages(s) of the Diocesan website are updated and contain information of relevance and interest to SSMs and those who work alongside them;
- To produce and update the 'SSM Handbook', which acts a primary point of reference for SSMs, pertaining to matters such as MAs / MTAs, expenses, etc;
- To produce and update other documents that inform and direct SSMs, including around PTO (permission to officiate) and appointment to incumbent level posts;
- To meet at least annually with the Diocesan Director of Ministry, who will review the work of the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry;
- To contribute to the work of the Committee for Ministry, including through Team Meetings and through attendance as appropriate at meetings of the Committee;
- To, when requested, either mentor or recommend a mentor for clergy new to the diocese who are SSM;
- To attend relevant inter-diocesan events including conferences;

- To meet, as is required and necessary, with other Bishop's Officers from neighbouring dioceses, such as the Dioceses of Carlisle, Blackburn, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sodor & Man;
- To highlight to Bishop's Staff any issues of concern to SSMs;
- To bring insights from the role of SSM to the attention of the wider diocese, for example around whole-life discipleship;
- To ensure Rural Deans and Incumbents / Training Incumbents know they can access the support of the Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministers, as required;
- 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.

### Practical Matters

- The role is not remunerated but reasonable expenses in connection with the role, including travel and attendance at inter-diocesan events, will be covered;
- It is expected that the post-holder will offer around seven hours per week on average in the role, plus occasional attendance at further events as necessary;
- There would be advantages to spending some office time with colleagues in the department at Church House, but this will depend on their work commitments – otherwise attention will need to be given to developing alternative structures for collaborating with colleagues.

It would be an advantage for the post-holder to have had personal experience of SSM ministry, including working in secular employment alongside parish ministry.

## **Appendix 2: Ministry Agreement Template for SSM Clergy (for those post-IME2, as well as in receipt of PTO)**

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-IME2, regardless of whether they have moved parishes or not.**

**This template should also be used by those SSM clergy, no in receipt of PTO.**

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, including those who consider themselves as MSE, separate MTAs are available on the IME pages of the Diocesan website.**

# Ministry Agreement for Self-Supporting Clergy



## The Ministry Agreement

for those SSMs who are post-IME or SSMs now in receipt of PTO

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

***It is important that MAs reflect the SSMs Statement of Particulars (SOP) for those who are licenced (not in receipt of PTO).***

*NB, this template is for use by SSMs who have completed the IME phase of training. A separate template for those undertaking IME2 is available from the Bishop's Adviser for Curate Development and Clergy Transitions. 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?

*Refer to the SSM Handbook. 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*

### **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 Adviser 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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