

# Guidelines for priests with the bishop's permission to officiate undertaking locum duty or ministry in the diocese

Important: All priests undertaking any locum duty or ministry in the diocese must have the Bishop's Permission to Officiate. There are several formalities to be undertaken before Permission to Officiate can be given and full details can be obtained from the Locum Ministry Administrator: [emma.biaggi@churchofengland.org](mailto:emma.biaggi@churchofengland.org)  
Formalities take eight weeks on average from start to completion and must be completed in advance of the locum duty or ministry.

## INTRODUCTION

When a Parish / Church / Chaplaincy or Congregation is without a permanent priest for any reason (vacancy, sickness, holiday, or it is a seasonal chaplaincy), a locum priest is appointed simply to ensure the continuity of worship, the availability of the Sacraments and the pastoral care of all who need it.

## CONTINUITY OF WORSHIP

Services normally available should continue to be made available. It should be noted that changes to the usual pattern or style of worship must not take place without the written permission of the Bishop.

## AVAILABILITY OF THE SACRAMENTS AND OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRATIONS

The locum priest must maintain the normal pattern of parish life including baptisms, marriages and funerals. There are usually local laws governing marriages and funerals so, when requests for either of these are received, advice must be sought from the Churchwardens or the Archdeacon.

## PASTORAL CARE AND VISITING THE SICK

The Churchwardens must advise the locum priest of any members of the Congregation who are sick and require a visit, and also those who are in need of pastoral care together with any background information which may be helpful.

## **PARISH / CHURCH / CHAPLAINCY COUNCIL MEETINGS (PCCS) AND OTHER MEETINGS**

A locum priest is not required to attend any meetings although the Vice-Chairman of the Parish / Church / Chaplaincy Council may, as a courtesy, extend an invitation to attend and an invitation to speak. It is the decision of the locum priest whether he/she accepts the invitation or not. The locum priest should never chair any meetings of any kind. A locum priest is not to be involved in any of the decision-making processes in the Parish / Church / Chaplaincy.

## **ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

The maintenance of good ecumenical relationships is an important area of work in the Diocese and locum priests are asked to ensure that this is continued by being courteous to local priests.

## **ANY PROBLEMS?**

The Diocesan Handbook is intended to be a guide to the general law of the Church of England in the particular circumstances of the Diocese in Europe and a helpful tool in the administration of Parish / Church / Chaplaincy affairs. This should cover most of the "how do you go about x?" or "who will help sort out y?" questions. The most up-to-date version can be found on the Diocesan Website: <http://europe.anglican.org/diocesan-handbook/diocesan-handbook>

The Churchwardens, who can, if necessary, contact the Archdeacon for advice, should deal with any problems, which may arise. The locum priest is also welcome to contact the Archdeacon for advice or guidance at any time. Contact addresses and telephone numbers of archdeacons are listed on the Diocesan Website. <http://europe.anglican.org/who-we-are/archdeacons>

## **REPORTS**

The locum priest should leave a brief report, for the incoming chaplain (or next locum priest), of anything of importance which has happened during his period of duty and should also include the names of those who are sick or in need of ongoing pastoral care. A copy should be sent to the Archdeacon and the Suffragan Bishop.

## **HONORARIUM**

The Chaplaincy Council is normally responsible for paying an honorarium (currently set at £150 a week). Variations to the set amount must be agreed with the Diocesan Office. Chaplaincies should not expect to pay an honorarium to clergy already in receipt of a stipend. If an honorarium is paid, the locum priest may need to consider the extent of any personal tax liability. If the duty is covering a chaplain's holiday period, the normal practice would be that accommodation only is provided by the Church Council.

## TRAVEL EXPENSES

If travel expenses are paid as part of the terms of the locum duty, the locum priest must agree these, and the method of travel, in advance with the Churchwardens, ie before any tickets are booked. Due regard for economy should be given. The Chaplaincy Council is normally responsible for the cost of travel and authorised expenses.

## SUMMARY OR POSTSCRIPT

These brief guidelines can best be summarized in the advice once given by a Bishop who said "A good locum should take the services, visit the sick, smile at everyone and keep his head down"!

The Diocese is extremely grateful for the help you are giving and it is hoped that your ministry as a locum priest will be a happy and rewarding experience.

## SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese in Europe is committed to doing all it can to promote safeguarding in our churches. The two links below are from the Church of England Theological Resources. These are designed to assist you to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the risks of abuse, and explore forgiveness in the aftermath of abuse. They give guidance on how to respond well in challenging circumstances. We hope you will use them and find them helpful.

[Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Sexual Abuse](#)  
[The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church](#)

### Extra Note

Priests who are resident in the Diocese, and who assist with ministry whether occasional or regular in a Anglican Church in Europe where there is a Chaplain in post ie not an interregnum are accountable to the Chaplain and must minister as directed.

Requests for baptisms, marriages or funerals must be directed to the nearest Chaplain.

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