

Welcoming a new chaplain and their family



After the challenges and opportunities of the vacancy period, the arrival of a new Chaplain is a joyful occasion. This User Guide provides a simple 'check list' for Chaplaincies to think about to help the Chaplain and their family to settle into what may be an entirely new experience for them.

Whilst support will be provided at different levels by the Bishop, the Archdeacon or Area Dean, the Chaplaincy community is often best placed to offer practical help and support on the ground. The first impression that a Chaplain and family get of their surroundings and the care shown to them by the community can set the tone for the whole ministry. The following are some things you might like to bear in mind.

It is often beneficial to identify someone in the Chaplaincy to 'mentor' the Chaplain and their family members and to help to make the desired introductions.

Practical Support and welcome

- On their day of arrival, helping the new Chaplain and their family to settle in including suitable arrangements for meeting and greeting them and showing them round their new home.
- Checking that the heating, water and lighting are working and turned on in plenty of time.
- Providing some basic groceries in the kitchen cupboards and refrigerator.
- Advising on local shops, markets, hairdressers, banks, post offices, medical facilities etc.
- Helping with registration with the local medical practice and other local medical requirements.
- Helping with setting up local bank accounts
- Assisting with registration for social security, the police, immigration office etc.
- Advising where to find any necessary advice on local tax and any 'social welfare or equivalent systems.
- Providing information on local rules & conventions about driving (including what documents to carry) and any requirements to change driving licences.
- Providing a list of important telephone numbers and email addresses.

Language Training

- Language training is vital for both the Chaplain and their family in helping them to settle in and integrate into the local community. Financial support for the Chaplain may be available from the 'Friends of the Diocese' or your Archdeaconry's 'Continuing Ministerial Development' funding – please ask your Archdeacon.

Social and Cultural Matters

- The Diocese will provide some basic training including on topics such as general ecumenical issues, or working with the local embassy or other local bodies.
- The Chaplaincy is probably best placed to advise the new Chaplain and their family on local cultural and social expectations including modes of address, how to greet local people, expectations of punctuality and any other local matters.
- Local introductions to other churches can also often be best done locally by Chaplaincy members who know the local situation and conventions.
- The Chaplaincy can also help the Chaplain and their family to integrate into local community networks, clubs and societies.

Please do not forget the Christian virtue of hospitality and don't allow this fade. Help, support and friendship should continue throughout the period of the Chaplain's ministry.