



Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:37-38

Curate Training Handbook

Helping you to flourish and thrive in curacy



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IME 2 OFFICER Diocese of Peterborough

 **The Diocese of
Peterborough**



Information

2025-2026 Edition

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Bishop's Welcome

Curacy is a gift from God and his Church to enable you to grow into the ministry which we all share. It is an opportunity to learn, to experiment, to practice, to fail and try again.

I am delighted that you are beginning your curacy journey with us and I will be praying for you throughout. It is my hope that you find your curacy to be a positive and encouraging experience.

The training you receive has been developed to assist you as you grow within your curacy. The Curate Training Team support you through the breadth and depth of your curacy using specific training modules designed to support the training and practice given by your TI.

I trust that you will enjoy your curacy and will learn much. Please do raise any concerns you might have as soon as possible so that we can do all we can to support you.

We delight in seeing you grow into the deacons and priests that God has called you to be and pray that He will continue to lead you to places where you will use the many gifts that He has given you.

With my prayers and thanks for your ministry.

+Debbie
The Rt Rev'd Debbie Sellin
Bishop of Peterborough



"What makes the Church is the dynamic rhythm of communicating the gospel with the world and deepening Communion with one another in Christ"

(From "Kingdom Calling" by the Faith & Order Commission 2020)



Introduction

Welcome to the Diocese of Peterborough's Initial Ministerial Education (IME) Phase 2 programme.

This Handbook contains practical information that will help you to navigate and thrive in your curacy. Do not hesitate to ask any questions that arise now, or during the next weeks, months, or years.

The curacy experience is intended to be a safe and nurturing environment where you can continue to grow in experience, knowledge and understanding, as well as be nourished through deepening your relationship with God. The Church of England ordinals state that deacons are to be expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as He reveals His Kingdom among us. It is my prayer for you that you will grow into the ministry God is placing into your hands as you profoundly experience God's presence in your curacy context, that you will find ways to draw attention to God dwelling amongst us, and that lives will be changed as more people encounter God: our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

IME 2 follows on from your prior training at a college (i.e. IME 1). It is, therefore, part of an ongoing process that will continue beyond the end of curacy and throughout your life. Our aim, during the next few years, is to provide you with opportunities for ministry, learning and

reflection that enable you to take your next steps along this life-long journey of growth and development.

To evidence your growth in ministerial proficiency, spiritual formation, pastoral experience, and theological wisdom we ask all curates to keep theological reflections, reports and logs which form your 'Portfolio'. These enables us all to be confident that you inhabit relevant ministerial qualities. The Handbook details what is required but be assured that committed engagement in parish ministry alongside conscientious participation in the IME 2 programme will provide what you need.

We recognise that the calling to ministry is one that we cannot bear alone. For this reason, you will be accompanied, given opportunities to flourish and, hopefully, have some fun along the way.

We look forward to journeying with you as you share in God's joyful mission.

Morna

The Rev'd
Morna
Simpson
IME 2 Officer



The majority of a curate's formation and training takes place in the local church as he or she gains everyday ministry experience.



A new minister will be provided with opportunities to learn at an appropriate pace, to observe, participate, experiment, and make mistakes. Curates should concentrate on preparing to be a blessing to others in the years ahead, taking time to reflect, be still and grow at God's pace.

Many people are involved in curacy training. These include people in the communities in which you live and serve as well as bishops and their staff. The key learning relationship, though, is with the Training Incumbent (TI).

There are three main factors in which curates and TIs can work to create and nurture this important relationship, namely, a clear Working and Learning Agreement at the outset of your curacy, frequent supervision and regular communication.

The Working and Learning Agreement



The Working and Learning Agreement (WLA) will help you to be clear about your mutual expectations and aspirations. The curate and TI should meet to discuss this and draft it out before arranging a meeting with the IME 2 Officer within the first six months of curacy. It should be sent to the IME 2 Officer by the end of February in the first year of curacy. Curates and TIs are asked to review, discuss, and renew the WLA each year.

The WLA sets out expectations like the curate's usual day off, when you will pray together, holidays and expenses. It also touches upon things like what time the curate is to arrive before services, dress codes, phoning each other on

days off, how quickly emails/phone calls should be replied to, as well as organisation, record keeping and any areas of ministerial focus and attention.

There are also some potentially trickier areas that it would be worth discussing such as how much the TI needs to know about what the curate is doing, and vice versa, or under which circumstances the authority of the TI needs to be acknowledged. Lack of clarity about these practical issues can cause difficulties later, so do take time to complete the WLA thoroughly.

So that the curacy is tailored to the individual's training needs, the Diocese of Peterborough emphasises careful,

detailed planning. We advise that the curate has one study day a week, and that the curate and TI agree how that time will be used outside of IME 2 training days or working on theological reflections and the wider portfolio. This will help you take account of your current experience and enable you to plan how to inhabit the ministerial qualities during your curacy.

It is important that the curate and TI have a shared understanding of the curate's ministry and how it might develop and grow. For this reason, thinking about how and when you will acquire particular ministry experiences is time well spent. A 'Skills Checklist' is also available to help you think through and plan different areas of learning and development.

Supervision



Positive relationships are vital to clergy development. Effective professional supervision has been shown to be key in maintaining good relationships and successful curacies. This is separate from regular staff meetings where the TI and curate, as well as any other clergy and lay ministers, meet to update on parish(es) and ministry matters

The TI, as supervisor, is in a position of authority in the working relationship. Yet he or she also has a burden of care. His or her role has three elements: educational (formative), supportive (restorative) and managerial (normative). Training for the successful exercise of the supervisory role is provided and support is available for both the curate and TI throughout the curacy.

The purpose of supervision is to aid reflection and learning and to plan, manage and tailor the curacy. It is a vital part of IME 2. Supervision is purposeful and intentional and for the day-to-day work of ministry. It involves skills of reflection and reflexivity that help to bridge the gap, as Donald Schön

famously expressed it in the *Reflective Practitioner*, 'between the high ground of theory and the swampy lowlands of practice.' (1984, p.41) It is reflection in the present, on the past, for the sake of the future.

Supervision is a process that takes place in a regular, focused, structured and co-creative way. It is time and space set aside (a form of Sabbath) which 'interrupts' practice for the curate to be listened to, gain perspective, develop new insights, or find restoration and vocational regeneration. Supervision is a place where accountability in ministry is held in high regard. The quality of the relationship between curate and TI is critical to its flourishing.

It is for the curate and TI to agree the frequency, length and place of supervision sessions and the agenda or particular areas for discussion and reflection. For full-time stipendiary curates, however, I would expect curates and TIs to meet once a week for an hour or so. For part-time or self-

supporting ministers I suggest meeting about every two weeks.

If you do not have a formal agenda, you could begin by asking 'What are the main things we want to work on in the time we've got?', 'What is the focus of our time together?' or you may wish to identify a suitable experience, a 'critical incident' or issue to reflect on together.

We require curates to keep a Supervision Log of the date and length of supervision sessions along with a note of the topics discussed. Curates are also required to write reflections on selected supervision sessions which will be included in the Portfolio.



IME 2 Programme

An essential part of curacy training is the IME 2 programme, summarised below.

Aims

Our aim is to equip curates for service in the 21st century church of the present and future which may look substantially different from that of the past. However, inspired by our diocesan emphases on prayer, growing disciples and growing young people in ministry, the principles underlying the IME 2 Programme are to:

- Character - develop the character, knowledge and skills required for the practice of effective, Christ-like leadership.
- Context - further enhance curates' ability to interpret their contexts, anticipate potential issues and navigate complex interpersonal relationships, all of which are essential to effective leadership.
- Reflection - encourage learning through reflective practice upon experience that includes theological insight.
- Self-Awareness - emphasise the importance of self-awareness and self-care for long-term sustainability in ministry.
- Mutuality - create a mutually supportive community of learners and a culture of grace/graciousness towards one another.

Attendance



Attendance at the whole of the programme is compulsory for curates preparing for Incumbent Status ministry. A record of attendance is made and included in the Annual Report to the Bishop. Please put the dates in your diary now and make sure your Training Incumbent is aware of them, too. When a day clashes with a day off, an alternative day off should be taken. As far as possible, arrange holidays so that they do not clash with IME 2 Study Days or Residentials. If you are unable to attend an IME day or residential because of illness or other extenuating circumstances, please let the IME 2 Officer know. Note that if you do miss a study day or residential because of illness or holiday or another circumstance then you may need to provide evidence that you meet the formation qualities in another way. In addition to the IME 2 programme, curates are expected to attend Bishop's Study Days and are welcome to attend other Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) events as they wish.



IME 2 Programme for 2025-2026

The following table provides a general overview of the IME Phase 2 programme for the academic year 2025-2026.

Year 1

Date	Type	Theme
10/09/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 1	Induction - A day for all new curates to meet key people in the diocese including safeguarding, communications, vocations, mission and the library.
17/09/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 1	Being a Deacon - Reflect on the transition to life as a Deacon, to think through the theology of the diaconate, and to help you make the most of your time as a Deacon, as the underpinning for the rest of your life in ordained ministry.
01/10/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 1	The Enneagram - Learn about how and why you might respond to things in the way that you do, and to think about ways of handling difficult conversations. This

		event is for both Yr 1 curates and their Training Incumbents.
05/11/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 1	Portfolios and Reviews - Expectations around portfolios will be outlined and to begin to build the portfolio. The Review process will also be explained, and all of your questions shall be answered.
25/11/2025 10am-4pm	Reflective Practice Groups	Reflective Practice Groups where curates will embark on theological reflection in groups with a facilitator.
26/11/2025 6-9pm	Core – Yr 1	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
28/01/2026	Core – Yr 1	Children and Youth Ministry – Intergenerational ministry: theology and practice for a younger and more diverse church
25/02/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 1	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
06/03 – 08/03/2026	Residential	Curate Training Residential where curates will learn about Pioneering Parishes as an approach to Church growth and enabling and inspiring mission to be part of the culture of the whole parish.
29/04/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 1	Check-in – This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
13/05/2026 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 1	Mission Project Planning – Curates undertake a mission project in their second year. This session begins the planning and prayer for a contextually appropriate project. By the end of the session, you will have a much clearer idea of what to do and how to start.
19/05/2026 10am-4pm	Reflective Practice Groups	Reflective Practice Groups where curates will embark on theological reflection in groups with a facilitator.
03/06/2026 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 1	Sacraments - An opportunity to think about the theology around Baptism and Holy Communion and prepare for celebrating Holy Communion for the first time.

Year 2

Date	Type	Theme
03/09/2025 10am-4pm	Optional	An opportunity to consider how to approach the more challenging aspects of funeral ministry (eg. Death by suicide, infant death, accidental death).
01/10/2025 6-9pm	Core – Yr 2	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.

15/10/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 2	Reconciliation and Confession - Look at some of the complex issues surrounding reconciliation, from its history within the Church, to recent developments in understanding and practice. Personal experience will also be included, which can have an impact on how we understand reconciliation when in ordained ministry.
19/11/2025 10am-4pm	Optional	Rural Ministry – Discerning where God is calling us to and being creative with how we draw attention to God's activity in the world.
25/11/2025 10am-4pm	Reflective Practice Groups	Reflective Practice Groups where curates will embark on theological reflection in groups with a facilitator.
17/01/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 2	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
04/02/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Estates and UPA Ministry - Re-thinking mission and ministry for areas of social and economic deprivation. Issues such as church and class, difficult discipleship, reaching those with addictions and in crime will be explored.
04/02/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Chaplaincy - How does chaplaincy ministry differ to that of parish? What are the tools of a chaplaincy kit bag? What does the day of a chaplain look like and might you be suited to it?
04/03/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Find out about Pioneer Ministry, learn about different pioneering and the values of pioneering in order to connect with people who currently have little or no connection with church.
06/03 – 08/03/2026	Residential	Curate Training Residential where curates will learn about Pioneering Parishes as an approach to Church growth and enabling and inspiring mission to be part of the culture of the whole parish.
22/04/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 2	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
29/04/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Church planting - As our Bishop, +Debbie is well placed to facilitate a conversation about church planting models and how they might work in the context of our diocese.
19/05/2026 10am-4pm	Reflective Practice Groups	Reflective Practice Groups where curates will embark on theological reflection in groups with a facilitator.
20/05/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Younger and more diverse – A deeper dive into the theology and practice of intergenerational mission & ministry in your context.
17/06/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 2	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.

Date	Type	Theme
03/09/2025 10am-4pm	Optional	An opportunity to consider how to approach the more challenging aspects of funeral ministry (eg. Death by suicide, infant death, accidental death).
10/09/2025 6-9pm	Core – Yr 3	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
24/09/2025	Core – Yr 3	Next steps – Think about where God might be calling you next, applying for, and interviewing for, a position of responsibility. This will be followed up by an optional interview on another occasion with one of our retired Bishops or one of our Archdeacons.
08/10/2025 10am-4pm	Core – Yr 3	Discernment - An opportunity to think about how we hone skills of discernment and use them in ministry for the growth of disciples and the Church.
19/11/2025 10am-4pm	Optional	Rural Ministry – Discerning where God is calling us to and being creative with how we draw attention to God's activity in the world.
25/11/2025 10am-4pm	Reflective Practice Groups	Reflective Practice Groups where curates will embark on theological reflection in groups with a facilitator.
07/01/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 3	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
21/01/2026	Core – Yr 3	Discipleship - An opportunity to think about how we build disciples in our contexts and how we draw others into ministry for the growth of the Church.
04/02/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Estates and UPA Ministry - Re-thinking mission and ministry for areas of social and economic deprivation. Issues such as church and class, difficult discipleship, reaching those with addictions and in crime will be explored.
04/02/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Chaplaincy - How does chaplaincy ministry differ to that of parish? What are the tools of a chaplaincy kit bag? What does the day of a chaplain look like and might you be suited to it?
04/03/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Find out about Pioneer Ministry, learn about different pioneering and the values of pioneering in order to connect with people who currently have little or no connection with church.
06/03 – 08/03/2026	Residential	Curate Training Residential where curates will learn about Pioneering Parishes as an approach to Church growth and enabling and inspiring mission to be part of the culture of the whole parish.

15/04/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 3	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.
29/04/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Church planting - As our Bishop, +Debbie is well placed to facilitate a conversation about church planting models and how they might work in the context of our diocese.
19/05/2026 10am-4pm	Reflective Practice Groups	Reflective Practice Groups where curates will embark on theological reflection in groups with a facilitator.
20/05/2026 10am-4pm	Optional	Growing Connection – A deeper dive into the theology and practice of intergenerational mission & ministry in your context.
10/06/2026 6-9pm	Core – Yr 3	Check-in - This will be an opportunity to share experiences so far and pray for one another.

*Please note, TIs of Year 1 curates are also required to attend the Enneagram training day on 01/10/2025.





Preparing for the Curate - 2025

Date	Place	Theme
27/03/2025 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	Supervision
27/05/2025 (10am)-28/05/2025 (11am)	Launde Abbey	Starting Well
04/09/2025 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	Leadership Styles and Group Time


Working with the Curate - 2026

Date	Place	Theme
10/03/2026 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	Pioneering Parishes
11/06/2026 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	Dealing with Conflict and Group Time
03/09/2026 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	To be decided and Group Time

Releasing the Curate - 2027

Date	Place	Theme
To be decided 03/2027 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	Team Building and Group Time
To be decided 06/2027 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	To be decided and Group Time
To be decided 09/2027 10am-3:30pm	Bouverie Court	Ending well Review of TI experience

We usually gather for IME days at Bouverie Court (Diocesan Offices, Bouverie Court, Unit 1, 6 The Lakes, Northampton, NN4 7YD) usually on Wednesdays throughout the year.



Occasionally training days will be hosted elsewhere due to the need to be in a particular context and, occasionally for room allocation reasons. Please be sure to consult your Curate Training Diary to make sure you know where training days are being held.

These days are opportunities to be with other curates, and to learn and reflect together. The programme engages with key areas of ministerial formation. There are three types of IME Day. The first focus upon skills learning and are therefore named 'Core Training Events'. These sessions are delivered in year groups and led by various facilitators throughout the academic year.

The second type are 'Optional Training Days' and allow you to tailor your learning and training to areas of ministry which God may be calling you to. These will involve input from specialists in the particular area of ministry or spirituality. They will be delivered to curates who sign up, as well as those involved in lay ministry who may also sign up. These days are available to all year groups, with the expectation that Year 2 and 3 curates will sign up for four of these sessions. Year 1 do not have a requirement to sign up to any of these due to the weight of Core Training Days in the first year of curacy, however they are welcome to sign up and attend

should they wish to. Optional Training Days are available on a rolling programme with topics relevant to ministry such as, for example, preaching, prayer and the spiritual life, evangelism and pioneering, church planting, children, youth and schools, etc. The aim is to balance a mixture of the practical and the theological and seek to be relevant to the nature of ministry in our Diocesan context and beyond.

During both types of IME Day, you will consider the themes of the day, enjoy lunch and catching up with curate colleagues.

A further type of IME Day involves reflective practice. Here you will explore experiences of ministry in a facilitated Reflective Practice Group (RPG) with your peers. This is largely concentrated on over two days throughout the year, where groups will have curates from each cohort. In addition to this curates will meet in their cohorts four times a year, facilitated by the IME 2 Officer, for less formal reflection, sharing experience and praying for each other. These occasions will take place in the evenings, hosted by different curates who will provide an evening meal.

Each year there are also sessions on Presiding at the Eucharist for Deacons and Applying for Jobs in the Church of England for those nearing the end of their curacy.

IME 2 Residentials

There is one Residential during the year in March, which addresses leading churches in a pioneering way, which encourages growth in depth and numbers of disciples from the

[Pioneering Parishes](#) team at [Church Mission Society](#) (CMS). Further details about the programme and practical arrangements will be circulated nearer the time

Curate's Personal Reflection & Study Days

We expect that an average of one day a week, in addition to the curate's day off, should be set aside for ongoing reflection and study. Attendance at IME 2 programme events will normally take place on this day.

Year 3 Placements

The final year of your curacy is a time of discernment in relation to what God might be calling you to next. There may well be an opportunity for a placement in a different context, or in a chaplaincy situation to help this. Speak to TIs and the IME 2 Officer if this might be helpful.



Assessment of Curacy

Curacy will be assessed against the formation 'qualities' (for those ordained post 2023) approved by the House of Bishops.



The Church's aspiration is that these formation qualities are helpful rather

than restrictive or detrimental to genuine learning. Nonetheless, evidence that they have been met is the way in which curacy is assessed, as outlined below.

Planning to Meet the Formation Qualities



We have prepared a table (entitled Planning to meet the Formation Qualities) that will enable the curate and TI to identify how the experience that the curate already has fits alongside the formation qualities and, in turn, agree what ministry experience the curate still requires. As mentioned in the previous section, the table is available on the diocesan website.

At the beginning of curacy, the curate and TI should complete the table with

an extra column which highlights what ministry experience they agree the curate should aim to acquire during the next year and plan how this will be achieved. This will provide a clear set of objectives for the year which can be the subject both of regular review when the curate and TI meet for supervision sessions as well as the Annual Review (see below). This exercise should be repeated at the beginning of the second and third year of curacy.

Annual Review



All forms, such as for the Annual Review are available on the diocesan website. Each year the curate will have a Review Meeting with the TI and the IME 2 Officer or another member of the team. It is the responsibility of the curate to ensure that this is scheduled. These meetings will usually take place in March or April.

Prior to this the TI and curate should have a Pre-Review Meeting where they discuss progress over the last year, relating to how the curate is inhabiting the Qualities. The TI will then submit Pre-Review notes to the IME 2 Officer in advance of the Review Meeting. After these notes have been reviewed, the IME 2 Officer, or another member of the team will then meet with the curate and TI for the Review Meeting. Following

this, the IME 2 Officer, or Reviewer, will make any necessary additions to the Pre-Review Notes and write a short summary of the progress made; all of this will form the Annual Review paperwork. The IME 2 Officer will then write to the bishop.

In the final year of curacy, in addition to this process, the curate will also submit their portfolio prior to the review meeting. The portfolio is reviewed by the IME 2 Officer and a Portfolio Assessment is written.

Portfolios



Throughout your curacy you will develop a portfolio of your best examples of ministry and work. This will be submitted electronically to the IME2 Officer on 31st January in your final year and will include:

- Working Agreements for each year of curacy
- Previous Annual Review Final Paperwork
- Skills checklist
- Log of all supervision meetings with Training Incumbent
- Log of attendance at IME 2 and CMD events
- Log of books read
- Selection of six supervision records (which summarise what was discussed and any action points.)
- Mission Project Report (1000 – 1500 words)
- Selection of your best work – this may include copies of sermons, service liturgy designed by you, summary of ministry with a particular group, sermon feedback from members of the congregation, etc. and needs to include an explanation of what was offered, as well as a

reflection on how this was received. (up to nine examples)

- Evidence of how your ministry has been received – this may include emails that parishioners have sent, sermon feedback or comments on other aspects of your work from the congregation/group, etc.
- Qualities Theological Reflections (1500 – 2000 words)

The Qualities Theological Reflection will need to be sent to the IME 2 Officer on the last day of November, February and May each year. The curate, in conjunction with their TI can choose which Quality to reflect on each time, ensuring that all Qualities have been reflected on at least once during their curacy.

As well as submitting your portfolio in your final year, you will be required to present your work so far to the IME 2 officer and your cohort at a catch-up session in April for each year of your curacy. There will be an IME day dedicated to portfolios and the Annual Review process in November of the first year of your curacy, so please bring any questions you may have to this session.



HOLY BONES

Grids of Evidence

When the curate has met all the formation criteria, they complete the Grids of Evidence to meet the Formation Qualities for the appropriate status ministry. The submission of the final portfolio containing the curate's statement of how they fulfil the formation qualities will normally be at the end of Year 3. Note, however, that the bishop's licence is usually for four years and there are often very good reasons why some curates take more than three years to provide evidence that they fulfil the criteria/qualities.

When the final portfolio has been received and reviewed by the IME 2

Officer the Director of Ordinands writes with a recommendation to the Bishop, who then confirms to the curate that the curacy has been successfully completed. It is the responsibility of the curate, with the help of the TI, to ensure that the curate has met each of the criteria/qualities by the end of their curacy: careful planning at the outset and during the curacy, as outlined above, is very strongly encouraged.

Completion of the portfolios as noted above will enable curates to evidence fulfilment of the formational criteria/qualities.

FORMATION QUALITIES	HOW THE QUALITIES COULD BE MET
Love for God	Morning Prayer Retreat Spiritual Direction Preaching Leading Services Ecumenical prayer events
Call to Ministry	Preparing candidates for baptism/confirmation IME Case Study
Love for People	Pastoral Visiting Occasional Offices Community project Care home/schools visits
Wisdom	Supervision Log Theological Reflections Annual reviews IME, CMD & Bishop's Study Days Reflective Practice Group
Fruitfulness	Leading courses Developing Teams Schools work Mission Taking civic services Encouraging others in discipleship & vocation
Potential	Initiating a new course or project Chaplaincy placement Pioneering
Trustworthiness	IME attendance and participation Safeguarding PCC involvement Deanery & Diocesan involvement Annual Reviews

Sign Off

Once the curate has had their final review, their Annual Review paperwork will be sent to the Bishop. The curate will then be invited to a Sign Off meeting with the Bishop. Once this has taken place, the Bishop will write to the Curate to formally confirm that they have been signed off. Following receipt of this letter, the curate is free to apply for their first post of responsibility.

Help should things go awry

It is quite normal for difficulties of one kind or another to arise during curacy


Clear expectations, along with regular supervision sessions, are key to providing opportunities for issues to be discussed.

Matters of concern should be raised gently and humbly but also clearly. Avoid blame or general complaints, acknowledge that you find something difficult and suggest what would be better next time.

If serious issues or difficulties persist then the following serves as a guide to the process that is typically followed:

- 1) **Contact the IME 2 Officer** to discuss your concern. Although conversations are informal, they may let others, for example, the Director of Ordinands or Archdeacon, know about any issues so that they can be properly addressed.
- 2) **Meet with the IME 2 Officer.** A meeting often enables matters to be clarified and a way forward to be identified. If not, then...
- 3) **Meet with all parties.** The IME 2 Officer, or someone else, might facilitate a conversation between, for example, the curate and TI to address the concern. If the matter is still not resolved, then...
- 4) **The Director of Ordinands** is advised and they, along with the Sponsoring Bishop, determine the next steps. In addition to the above, curates and TIs can consult [Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy \(revised 2015\)](#), which can be downloaded from the Church of England website.

Training Incumbents



The [Report on Good Practice in the Appointment and Training of Training Incumbents](#) (Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council, 2021) contains a 'statement of expectations' of Training Incumbents.

Undergirding all the criteria set out below is the necessity that the TI, as an experienced parish priest, be committed to a life of prayer as the basis of all ministry, both personally and in the ministry that is shared with the curate who is being trained.

The report then lists desirable and essential features of a TI, including the following:

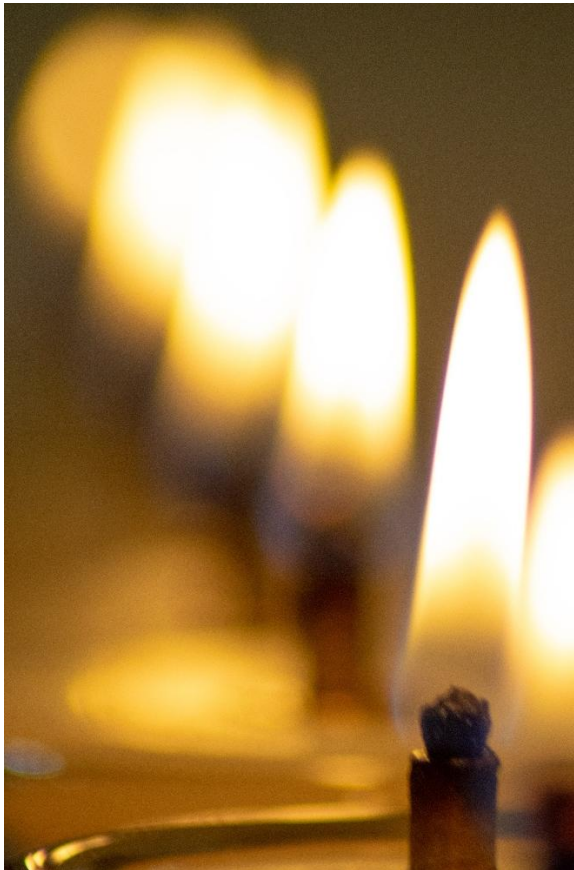
- Is settled in her/his parish, will make a commitment to stay for the curate's diaconate, and expects to be there for the majority of the four-year training period.
- Has a genuine willingness to train a curate, as distinct from merely wanting an assistant, and is engaged in her/his own continuing ministerial education and development making use of review to support their ministry development.

- Has a well-established pattern of personal prayer, reflection and reading, and, is committed to life-long learning including Ministerial Development Review.
- Has a mature degree of self-awareness and understanding of his/her own strengths and weaknesses in ministry.
- Is prepared for a curate to develop in ways different from her/his own with regard to the deployment of special gifts of ministry.
- Can work in a collegial rather than hierarchical style, maintaining a healthy professional, spiritual and social relationship with the curate, sharing both the joys and sorrows of ministry while at the same time establishing and respecting clear boundaries.
- Value the curate's experience from previous employment and responsibilities.
- Complete all reports required by the diocese and attend meetings for TIs.

This (abbreviated) list is quite long. In essence, though, it boils down to a willingness to learn from and support each other in ministry.

Training Days and opportunities for TIs to gather together have been arranged by the Diocese and are overseen by the Clergy Training Officer. The Clergy Training Officer offers support to TIs and will meet with each one at least once a year.

Frequently Asked Questions



*Open my lips,
Lord,
and my mouth
will declare your
praise.*

Psalm 51:15

AM I EXPECTED TO SAY MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER DAILY?

Yes. The canonical obligation for Church of England clergy to say Morning and Evening Prayer daily still stands. It has very important values:

- It's an act of prayer shared with the wider church which helps to unite us in fellowship with it.
- It provides for a regular reading of the Psalms and of almost the whole of the rest of Scripture.
- It provides a balanced devotional diet, drawing on the best of Christian liturgical tradition.
- It helps to train the newly ordained in conducting public worship by familiarising them with the services, collects, lectionary etc.
- Above all, it is our work of worship offered freely to God.

All TIs should already have a rule of life or a regular 'quiet time'. Supervision should be concerned to maintain and adapt this individual pattern in response to changes in life and ministry of the curate. This needs to be sensitive to the spirituality of the curate, as well as stretching her or him to encounter other aspects of the spiritual life. Individual patterns of prayer and rules of life need to be complemented by ways of praying corporately. A TI may need to be adaptable in changing corporate patterns of prayer to fit the curates' circumstances. For example, a non-stipendiary minister may be able to make an early morning or evening twice a week, or a curate may have a new baby and so a weekly or even monthly pattern may be more realistic than a daily one.



HOW MANY HOURS AM I EXPECTED TO WORK?

The expectation is that clergy are able to balance their time for rest, hobbies, life administration, family and friends, etc. with the demands of ministry. It is not always practical to put a number of hours to a work week, but guidance suggests that we should aim to only work two of the three sessions of a day (morning, afternoon and evening) allowing part of the day to rest, or do other things that need to be done. Overwork with its consequent loss of humanity and space for others is not good. You are entitled to an uninterrupted rest period of not less than 36 hours in each period of seven days, but are also strongly encouraged to take two consecutive days off at least once a month, when you are not taking annual leave in that month. You are also encouraged to take all your annual leave and an annual retreat.

The expectation of hours for Self-Supporting Ministers and part-time stipendiary curates will be stipulated in the WLA. It is essential that Self-Supporting and part-time stipendiary curates also ensure adequate time for rest, refreshment, self-care and well-being. The way in which work patterns develop will vary according to each individual situation. The 'working two sessions out of three' model only works if four-hour sessions are rigidly adhered to. Another possible pattern is to work four weekdays and evenings and then to have a lighter Saturday.

The definition of work can be a 'grey area' and will need exploring in the training relationship. Work includes more than being in church, or writing emails or sermons, e.g. reading and reflection are part of the ministerial calling to be a practical theologian and daily private devotions are part of normal Christian discipleship but saying the Office and interceding for the parish are ministerial commitments, and therefore to be counted as work. Common sense and a reasonable and balanced approach are required. Reflecting on use of time after the event can be as important as planning beforehand: a possible helpful exercise for supervision might be for the TI and curate to undertake a mutual time analysis.

WHAT ABOUT EXPENSES?

All working expenses should be fully remunerated by the parish or benefice. If a car or public transport is required for official duties, then the expenses involved must be remunerated in accordance with Diocesan procedures. For tax reasons, curates should acquire the habit of making records of all actual mileage and expenditure and claiming on the basis of this, rather than accepting a monthly or annual sum which, if not justified by such records, will be liable to tax.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS AROUND OCCASIONAL OFFICES DURING CURACY?

The curate, depending on the nature of their work, will normally need to be trained in preparing participants for funeral, initiation and marriage rites, and this should include sitting in on sessions taken by others. The particular requirements of bereavement visiting and pastoral care should also be covered carefully, and further training sought as required. Good practical instruction needs to be given in the conduct of Occasional Offices. There also needs to be instruction about the legalities of marriage registration and returns. Although deacons are legally able to solemnise marriages, this is often better left until the curate is priested.

HOW OFTEN AM I EXPECTED TO PREACH?

Once a month initially, increasing frequency with time. Where a new minister would find it helpful, it is possible for a draft of the sermon to be discussed with the TI by the middle of the preceding week and/or for the sermon to be heard beforehand. It can also be beneficial to discuss the sermon afterwards with sensitive and supportive members of the congregation.

CAN I TAKE A RETREAT?

A regular quiet day and an annual retreat of at least three days are strongly encouraged.

WILL I GET PREPARATION TIME FOR PREACHING AND TEACHING?

Yes, this should be built into your week in agreement with the TI. Initially curates will need longer preparation time for creative work than more experienced clergy, so preparation time is vital.

WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY AND A 'WORK/LIFE BALANCE'?

Family life is always a primary concern. Careful working through of issues to do with work and time off needs to involve the spouse or partner. The amount of involvement curates' spouses wish to have in their ministry may vary enormously. Spouses shouldn't be pressurised into participation. Neither should they be discouraged from involvement provided that it's clear that they're participating as lay people in their own right. Children also may need space to be themselves, especially where a parent's commitment to licensed ministry is a new factor in family life. Part of all of our work is a responsibility to maintain home life and good relationships, whatever our marital status or ministerial aspirations may be.

New ministers who have other employment need to have this clearly recognised by colleagues, and in their WLA: their responsibilities to their employer will normally need to take precedence over their ministerial work. Mutual support, friendship and hospitality among ordained and lay colleagues is very valuable.

CAN I UNDERTAKE EXTERNAL OR FURTHER STUDIES?

Curates are welcome to consider further study following successful completion of their diaconate year. The key considerations are:

- Is the curate committed to the course/study in the light of their possible future ministry?
 - Is the TI satisfied that the course is compatible with the curacy, as envisaged?
 - Is the Bishop happy that the curate should undertake the course/study (the Bishop will probably consult the DDO to form a view)?
 - Are the DDO and IME 2 Officer satisfied that the course/study is compatible with the IME programme, which is the curate's priority?
 - Is the course/study affordable?
- Curates are responsible for raising any funds required for the course of study.

WHAT IF THE TRAINING PARISH CAN'T OFFER ME WHAT I NEED?

If the parish can't offer a particular experience which a curate seeks or needs then arrangements can be made, in consultation with the IME 2 Officer and the Director of Ordinands for additional placements.

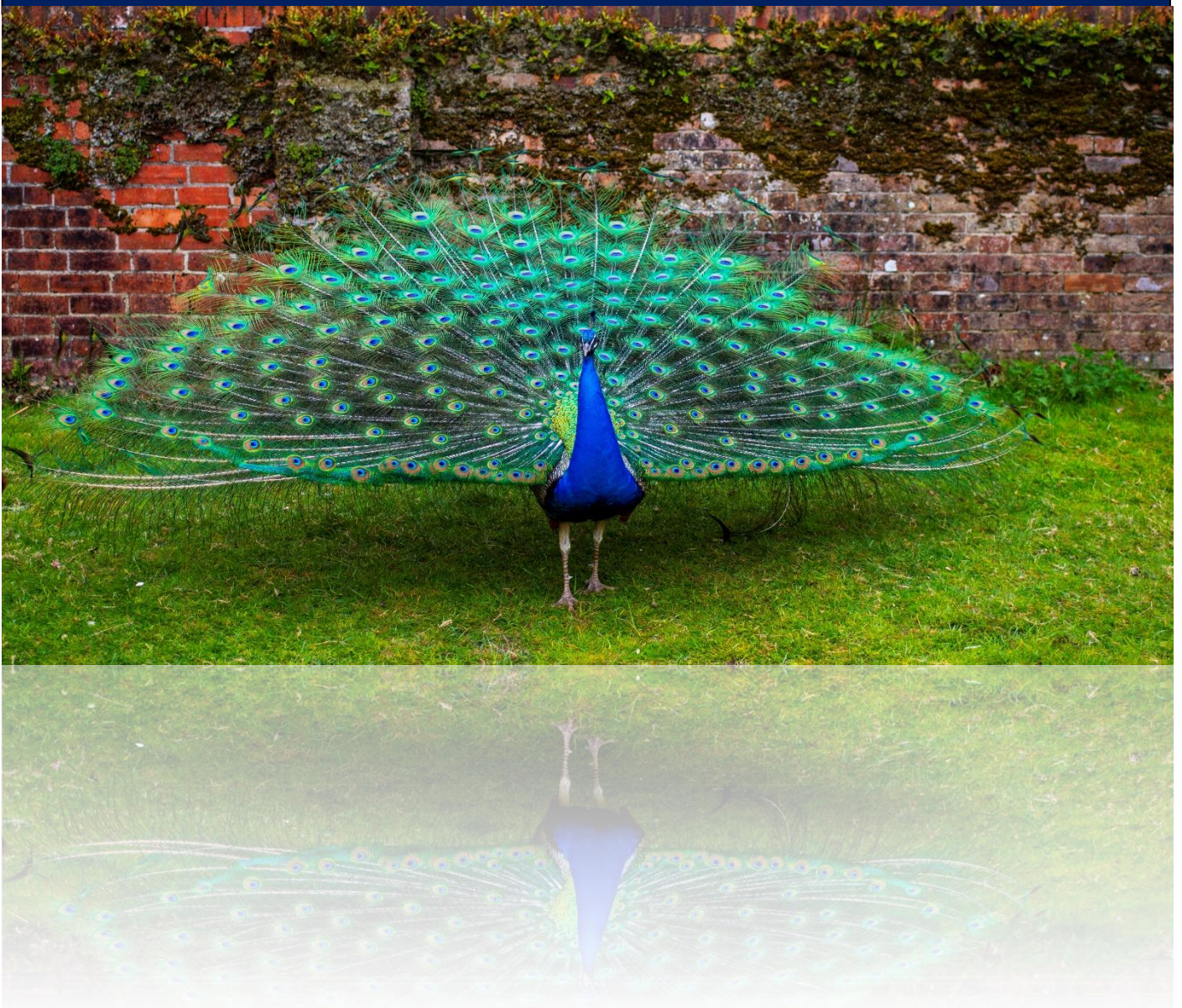
IF I SEE THE PERFECT FIRST POST OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ME BEFORE I AM SIGNED OFF, AM I ABLE TO APPLY?

You are not able to apply for a post outside of the diocese until you have been signed off. In some circumstances, you may be able to apply within the diocese, but it is important that you speak to the relevant Archdeacon, as well as the IME 2 Officer to seek permission.

WHAT ABOUT MY WELLBEING?

The national church and the diocese are committed to clergy wellbeing. Clergy are strongly encouraged to establish healthy and sustainable work patterns including a clear working and learning agreement, regular supervision and making time for adequate rest, retreat and annual leave.

You are also encouraged to have a [Spiritual Director](#) and, when necessary, to make use of the diocesan confidential Counselling Service – details of how to arrange this can be found on the diocesan [Wellbeing](#) page.



Key Contacts



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'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.'

Proverbs 4:23