

The Church of England has announced today a new set of resources outlining the support available for those in ordained ministry, and those training for ordination, who become parents.



The new resources will help bishops, archdeacons, Diocesan Directors of Ordinands, Principals of Theological Education Institutions, and others to provide appropriate assistance during this important and sometimes challenging life phase.

Clergy office holders who become parents have always been entitled to statutory benefits but the new guidance seeks to provide clear recommendations in a range of areas including where people move between dioceses or roles or where they are in training for ordained ministry.

The new guidance encourages dioceses to be as generous as possible in offering parental support. This includes an encouragement to offer enhanced maternity pay in situations where the new parents have not yet met the statutory requirements. It also encourages dioceses to continue to pay discretionary grants to ordinands for an additional period of up to one year to allow them to take time off from training. The guidance also recommends that shared parental pay should be paid at the enhanced rate.

Clergy on maternity or paternity leave are encouraged to be clear about boundaries and be scrupulous about observing any arrangements they make about contact with the parish during their leave. Dioceses are encouraged to support clergy in making these arrangements.

Christine Hewitt-Dyer, Director of People for the National Church institutions, said: “We are pleased to see this work come to fruition, after much consultation. We hope that it will encourage more consistent and visible support for and investment in ordinands and clergy who become parents. We hope this will enable them to return to training or ministry after time off with their baby and help them to have a lifetime’s flourishing ministry.

“Our aim is that clergy becoming parents is seen less as “a problem that needs to be solved” and more as a cause for celebration. “

The Rt Revd Chris Goldsmith, Director of the National Ministry team added: 'This new guidance recognises that God often calls his people to more than one vocation at a time. The vocation of parenthood is to be celebrated and supported as generously as possible. We want to invest in our clergy to ensure they complete the race marked out for them and this is one way of doing that.'

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