

## **Supplementary advice Issued by the Archbishops' Council in December 2017**

### **Interim Posts made under Regulation 29 (7C) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009**

*This is supplementary advice. It does not constitute formal guidance issued by the Archbishops' Council and the bishop is not legally required to have regard to it.*

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Archbishops' Council has issued formal guidance to which bishops are required to have regard when making appointments designated as interim posts under Regulation 29. This is supplementary advice, which provides some additional background and is intended to be illustrative and not prescriptive.

#### **2. General Principles**

2.1 The Council's guidance is based on the following general principles.

- i. An interim post should primarily be a response to a particular pastoral need or mission opportunity.
- ii. Before an interim appointment is made, there needs to be a clear understanding and articulation of the particular benefits that will be conferred by making the appointment interim rather than open-ended.
- iii. The parish should be consulted at an early stage. An interim appointment is only likely to work when the parish accepts that the purpose of the interim appointment is to help it make shifts in understanding, relationships and leadership that will enable it to move forward.
- iv. An interim post is not a substitute for a proper appointments process. Making an interim appointment 'just to see if it works' or in order to avoid the time required by a proper appointments process is not acceptable.
- v. An interim post should be a response to the particular circumstances and needs of the parish, not the minister: posts should not be fitted around the needs of an individual.

#### **3. Before making an interim appointment**

3.1 The Council's formal guidance applies only to time limited posts that are designated as interim under Regulation 29 (1)(j) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009. It is important to remember that a fixed term post is not *necessarily* the appropriate – or the *only* appropriate - response when a parish is at a point of change or transition - and also that other forms of fixed-term or temporary ministry may be more suitable in a particular situation (see sections 5 and 8 (ii)-(v)).

3.2 Sometimes it may not be clear what is going on in a particular parish (and whether an interim appointment is appropriate) or there may be a need to respond quickly at a time of crisis to ensure that a parish feels that it is being looked after. In these cases, an appropriate first step may be simply to arrange for someone with permission to officiate (PTO) to be available to parishioners, preside regularly (but not necessarily exclusively) at the Eucharist, and provide pastoral support, and a listening ear. Someone in this position will not be exercising any leadership role, and must not attend or chair PCC meetings. It is important to make it clear to the parish that they are *not* acting as a temporary vicar.

3.3 Someone in this position is not an interim minister, but can enable the Bishop to demonstrate pastoral care, and find out more clearly what the parish might need in the short to medium term, which might then include a period of interim ministry. Early intervention in this kind of way can often prevent a situation from getting toxic or out of hand, as problems are easier to deal with before they become acute.

3.4 Sending someone in with a brief to find out what is going on can help to determine

- whether an interim minister might be required
- what particular qualities and skills a future incumbent or priest in charge might need (whether interim or not)
- what other interventions (for example, mediation) might be helpful
- what kind of term might be suitable if an interim or other form of fixed term ministry might be appropriate. (3 years is a maximum for an initial term, and in many cases, a shorter term might be right.)

3.4 This guidance focuses mainly on situations where an office is designated as interim under Reg 29, but it is important to be aware of other possible options that should be considered as well as making a post interim, such as mediation, training for clergy, churchwardens and PCC members, pastoral reorganisation and other categories of fixed term appointment.

#### **4. When is an interim post appropriate?**

4.1 Making a post interim should be a response to the particular circumstances of the parish. It is important to ask at the very start *why does the ministry need to be interim?* and to be clear how an interim minister will help a parish equip itself more effectively for mission or determine what kind of priest is required in the longer term. Having sent someone in in advance to find out what is going on in the parish and identify the task (see above) can be very helpful.

4.2 In certain circumstances (for example, if someone is needed to chair the PCC and exercise a leadership (as opposed to a listening) role) it may be necessary to appoint someone as an interim minister in order to carry out the preliminary task of finding out what is going on and establishing what needs to be done.

4.3 An interim priest can help a parish to:

- come to terms with the past, lose old fears and find new hopes, and perhaps discover a fresh identity;
- consider its future witness, mission and ministry;
- reassess its resources, needs and priorities;
- see where and how it needs to change, and work through the inevitable transition
- make plans for the future and prepare for the next chapter of its life.

4.3 The five main tasks of an interim minister are likely to be as follows.

1. *Helping a parish to come to terms with its history:* an interim minister can help a parish take an unvarnished look at itself: its past, its strengths, its weaknesses, its shortcomings, its accomplishments. If there has been a crisis resulting in the removal from office (or sudden resignation) of the previous incumbent or priest in charge, there can be a tendency to magnify his or her shortcomings, whilst ignoring other issues that may have helped to precipitate the crisis. Some of these underlying issues may have been there before the incumbent's removal and may persist after the incumbent has gone. It will be difficult to make a securely based new appointment until these unresolved underlying problems have been identified and confronted. An interim minister can help a parish to come to terms with its history, by ferreting out and addressing these problems, while at the same time as learning to recognise and appreciate where the congregation's strengths lie.
2. *Enabling it to explore its identity and future direction:* an interregnum is a unique opportunity to shape a parish's future unconstrained by the leadership style and capabilities of the previous priest. It is all too easy to define a parish's future needs in terms of the parish's history and what the previous post holder brought to the role in the past, for example by taking a previous role description and updating it. Parishes may need an interim minister to help them assess their current and future needs so that they base their person specification and role description, not on their previous priest (or on a reaction against his or her perceived shortcomings), but on the qualities they need in a priest to support and realise the future mission of the parish. An interim minister can be particularly helpful in cases where parishes are having difficulty identifying what they want in a future priest or are unable to agree about it.
3. *Bringing about necessary changes in leadership, roles and structures:* the departure of a priest may highlight other changes that are required in leadership, staffing, or structure. The PCC might need to reduce in size or change the structure of its subcommittees. The roles of volunteers may need to change or be carried out by

different people. Some people may be disruptive and damaging in a particular role. An interim minister can make or encourage necessary changes whilst minimising disruption, so that the parish is then ready for a new priest.

4. *Helping a parish renew links:* over time, volunteers can become disengaged and connections with community organisations and stakeholders can diminish, resulting in falling attendance and commitment. An interim minister can help a parish refocus on its mission, and develop a new message that will enable it to revitalise its existing congregation and recover members who have fallen away.
5. *Committing the parish to looking in a new direction:* having established a healthy perspective on its history and a new sense of purpose and direction under an interim leader, a parish will be much better placed to welcome and support a new priest and respond to new changes and initiatives.

## **5. When is an interim post not appropriate?**

5.1. Cases where it is *not* appropriate to make an interim appointment include the following.

- a) When a parish is no longer viable, pastoral reorganisation should be considered rather than using interim ministry as a way of deferring a difficult decision.
- b) It is not about labelling a parish as failing or in need of being put under special measures, or imply, in any way, that it is somehow undeserving of having a permanent priest.
- c) Interim posts are about the needs of the parish and not the minister. They should not be made in order to provide a temporary appointment for clergy whose appointment has come to an end and who are having difficulty finding another office. These clergy should be given further training in applying for posts and other skills that will make it easier for them to be deployed.
- d) When there is still an incumbent or priest in charge in post, who has not resigned, even if he or she, for whatever reason, is not actually able to carry out the duties of their office, it is not possible to make an interim appointment other than as assistant curate. However, an interim appointment as assistant curate or a different variety of fixed term appointment under regulation 29 (to cover authorised absence as distinct from a vacancy) (Reg 29(1) (a)) may be appropriate in these circumstances.
- e) The primary reason for an interim appointment should always be the particular pastoral circumstances of the parish. For example, it would not be appropriate to

make interim appointments on a blanket basis and give a general reason such as ‘in order to carry out a mission audit’ or ‘until it is possible to start to implement a deanery mission plan’, although there may be circumstances where pastoral reorganisation is planned for all the parishes in a particular deanery, which could result in a number of interim appointments being made in that deanery

- f) Clergy are entitled to compensation for the loss of office arising as a result of pastoral reorganisation, but not when their office is for a fixed term which comes to an end and is not renewed. Making an appointment interim purely in order to avoid paying compensation in the event of pastoral reorganisation is not acceptable.
- g) A fixed term contract for an employee is normally automatically converted by law into a permanent contract after four years. It is important not to try and get around the protections of employment law by appointing someone to an interim office under common tenure if someone is really employed and exercising ministry under supervision on a non-parochial basis (rather than carrying out the duties of an office with the cure of souls).
- h) If an interim appointment is renewed, or two people are appointed on an interim basis in succession, the next appointment cannot be made on an interim basis. It is, therefore, important to ensure that an interim appointment is not made too soon if there might be a need to make the subsequent appointment on an interim basis, or if not being able to extend or renew the term (other than as permitted under reg 29(7C)) might cause significant problems. PTO can be used as an alternative option here. (See the final bullet at paragraph 8.18.)

## **6. What kind of priest is suitable?**

6.1. Interim ministry will be particularly suitable for someone:

- clear about his or her specific call to an interim role as a means of preparing the way for someone else’s permanent ministry;
- able to honour and affirm the work of others past and present;
- experienced in conflict resolution and skilled at team building and managing change;
- able to be a calm presence in the midst of transition, grief or conflict;
- good at establishing positive and affirming working relationships;
- able to diagnose a situation quickly and develop action plans;
- able to provide honest and accurate feedback and communicate clearly;
- able to confront, challenge and strongly discourage certain forms of behaviour when appropriate.

6.2 Training (particularly in family system theory<sup>1</sup>) will probably be needed to develop some of these skills in order to equip someone for interim ministry.

6.3 Interim ministry might be suitable for some experienced priests approaching retirement who want to use their experience in a different way. It may also be suitable for someone who is about to do their first incumbency, particularly if their previous work experience is helpful.

6.4 No compensation for loss of office is payable when the interim post comes to an end. This needs to be made clear at the very start. Such posts may be more likely to suit someone who would not depend on the office for their housing (see section 8 (vi)). Alternatively, it might be worth providing a degree of additional security by combining the post with employment (see section 8(vii)). However, it should be noted that there are difficulties about providing a house to someone who is employed, as the house will not be eligible for the HLC scheme, and it will be necessary to obtain the agreement of HMRC that the house is provided for the better performance of the duties and is not a benefit in kind that will be taxable.

6.5 There is a sense in which all ministry can be regarded as interim to a greater or lesser extent, as part of it will involve adapting to – and implementing – change, and helping others to do so. It is important, therefore, not to assume that all interim posts demand the same sort of skills. Interim ministries vary in intensity, duration and the specialist skills and particular talents required, and it is vital to bear this in mind when considering what a particular ministry requires, and what the appropriate length of the post might be.

*High intensity* posts are likely to be ones where there has been a high degree of conflict (possibly even pastoral breakdown) and an interim minister is required to resolve the conflict, identify a way forward and shake things up in the short term, in order to enable someone else to minister effectively in the longer term. Alternatively, there may be a need for a massive and radical turn around after severe decline, which might take longer to achieve. Both of these are likely to require a high degree of skill and experience.

*Low intensity* posts are likely to be ones where less radical change is required, with less of a sense of urgency or may be a primarily pastoral response to a short-term crisis or ones where the main purpose may be to find out what is going on in a parish where no clergy stay for long. These may be more suitable for clergy whose skills are primarily pastoral.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this, see <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/small-churches-as-healthy-family-systems/> or [http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/congservices/dynamics\\_systems.pdf](http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/congservices/dynamics_systems.pdf)



<p><b>Higher intensity/ Shorter duration</b></p> <p>Probably requires a very high degree of specialist skill in conflict resolution and change management.</p> <p>At the end of the interim term, it would be very unlikely to reappoint the interim minister on a permanent basis.</p>	<p><b>Higher intensity/ Longer duration</b></p> <p>Massive turn around that will take time.</p> <p>At the end of the interim term, it would be possible to reappoint the interim minister on a permanent basis, but only after a mutual ministry review (See paragraph 11.4).</p>
<p><b>Lower intensity / Shorter duration</b></p> <p>For example, a response to a short-term crisis that gives a parish support to enable it to keep on running or finding out what is going on.</p> <p>The emphasis is likely to be pastoral, and sometimes can be done by someone on PTO.</p> <p>At the end of the interim term, it would be unlikely to reappoint the interim minister on a permanent basis.</p>	<p><b>Lower intensity/Longer duration</b></p> <p>Testing the waters or a gradual turnaround that is expected to take time.</p> <p>At the end of the interim term, it would be possible to reappoint the interim minister on a permanent basis</p>



*Use of lay workers*

6.6 It is important to be aware that licensed lay workers are also able to exercise ministry on an interim basis, and to ask whether the interim role could be appropriately carried out by a lay person.

**7. Supporting Interim ministry**

7.1 Interim ministry can be a very useful option that increases a diocese’s ability to deploy its ministers effectively, intervene early when this will prevent a potentially difficult situation from becoming toxic, and respond to the needs of parishes. However, interim ministry is unlikely to be completely effective unless it is properly resourced and supported, and dioceses who make use of interim ministry have a responsibility to their interim ministers to ensure that they receive the necessary resources and support.

7.2 It is important, therefore, to be aware that effective interim ministry is likely to require an increase in diocesan capacity. This may include the following.

- Appropriate support and back-up needs to be provided for interim ministers. Some of this can be done by having a network of interim ministers in place who are able to support one another. Some interim ministers will be dealing with demanding and stressful situations of conflict. It is important that they have access to appropriate levels of support.
- Appropriate training needs to be provided (particularly in conflict resolution and change management).
- There can be advantages to a diocese appointing interim ministers as employees (see section 8(vii)), as this enables them to be flexibly deployed in a variety of contexts. However, having interim ministers as employees on the diocesan payroll can give the misleading impression that diocesan resources are being directed away from parochial ministry, and this can need to be carefully explained.
- It will be necessary to have mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate interim ministries to measure their effectiveness.
- Dioceses may also find it helpful to have teams of suitably trained lay and clergy staff who are able to support interim ministers and prepare the way for an interim ministry by being available to intervene promptly to support a parish on request or to carry out investigations on behalf of the Bishop where the situation in a parish is giving cause for concern.

#### *List/network of interim ministers*

7.3 There is a national network of interim ministers. Interim ministers wishing to join should contact the National Church Institutions at [hr.clergy@churchofengland.org](mailto:hr.clergy@churchofengland.org) who can provide the appropriate contact name for them to join the network.

### **8. Terms and conditions of interim ministers**

8.1 There are a number of issues to consider about what are the appropriate terms and conditions for interim ministers. These are considered in more detail below and include:

- Would it be more appropriate to use a different category of fixed term appointment?
- What is the appropriate length of the term?
- Should a house be provided?
- Is it desirable to provide the interim minister with a contract of employment?

#### *(i) Other regulation 29 appointments*

8.2 It should not be assumed that an interim post is necessarily the only appropriate means of making an appointment for a fixed or limited term under Regulation 29 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009. Sometimes it might be better to use one of the other categories permitted by Reg 29, even when the appointment is being made fixed term for reasons that would normally lead to an interim appointment.



8.3 If an appointment is not designed as interim, then the legal effects of making the appointment interim (such as only being able to renew it once) will not apply. But it will only be possible for the post to be fixed term, if it meets one of the other relevant conditions in Regulation 29. These include the following: -

- where the priest will be 70 in a few years' time and will have to retire anyway unless the Bishop issues the appropriate direction;
- where the priest is over 70 and can be appointed for a (renewable) fixed term if the Bishop issues the appropriate direction;
- where the post is subject to external funding (that is with some of the cost met by a person or body other than a Diocesan Board of Finance, Diocesan Parsonages Board, Parochial Church Council or the Church Commissioners);
- where the post is designated as probationary;
- where the post is created by a Bishop's Mission Order (which could potentially include a deanery or even an archdeaconry);
- where the parish is meeting all the costs of a curate and the post is designated as a locally supported ministry post;
- to cover authorised absence (as distinct from a vacancy);
- when the post is designated as held in conjunction with another office or employment.

8.4. Further information about the application of regulation 29 and the use of fixed or time limited posts is available from the National Church Institutions on request.

*(ii) What kind of term is appropriate?*

8.5 The three-year period for an interim ministry is a *maximum*, and not a suggestion for how long it should last: a shorter period is often appropriate. It is desirable to avoid unnecessary uncertainty by making the term of the post too short (on the basis that it can be renewed if necessary): ideally the term should be long enough not to need renewal, but it can often be beneficial not to make the post too long, so that a sense of urgency and momentum is maintained.

8.6 There should not be any assumption that the term of the post should be renewed. If it is felt at the outset that three years is likely to be insufficient or that renewal will probably be required, then it may be more appropriate to fill the post on a permanent basis.

8.7 Care is needed to ensure that, if funding for the post is only available for a limited period, the term of the post is not made for a longer period.

8.8 Where funding is not from the Church Commissioners, parish or Diocesan Board of Finance, but an outside source, it is possible to make a limited-term appointment, but this would be done by designating the post as subject to sponsorship funding and providing for termination on cessation of the funding.

*(iii) Shorter interim ministries*

8.9 Cases where a short period might be appropriate include the following.

*To facilitate the next appointment*

- where a parish seems to be having difficulty appointing a minister and there has already been a long interregnum
- where there is conflict or disagreement about the qualities required in the next incumbent
- to prepare the ground for a successor by identifying difficulties and resolving them
- to establish what qualities are required in a longer-term priest (particularly after a long period under a single incumbent or priest in charge) where a parish might need time and help in working out what qualities are required for a successor;
- after the death in service or extended absence of a minister, or after a very short ministry, or where the appointment of the previous incumbent or priest in charge came to an end in difficult or traumatic circumstances, to provide a period for healing and reflection before a permanent appointment is made.

*Pastoral breakdown*

- When there has been a breakdown in pastoral relations and a parish needs a period of self-assessment, healing, and reflection
- To help a congregation to resolve conflict and work through difficulties in existing pastoral relationships
- Where there is need to instigate some radical change that may be unpopular in certain quarters.

*Turnaround*

- To establish what potential still exists in a congregation in the long term
- When radical change is required (particularly after a period of conflict)
- To implement a number of changes after a period of dysfunction
- Where there is a need to take stock before deciding whether a subsequent appointment should be made, or whether pastoral reorganisation is needed
- When pastoral reorganisation is contemplated, and parishes need to find out whether they might have a future together
- as a means of establishing what the way ahead might be where there is doubt about whether a parish is still viable as a separate unit,
- giving a parish a final chance to turn around with another priest before pastoral reorganisation is contemplated;

*To find out more*

- where there is an indication that something is wrong (such as a succession of clergy leaving very quickly, rapidly falling numbers, a failure to pay parish share, a history of

poor relationships with clergy, other parishes or the diocese), but it is not clear what the underlying problem is

- Where there is agreement that changes need to be made, but it is not yet clear what exactly they might be.

*Support during a period of uncertainty*

- When it is desirable to avoid a long interregnum and there is need to provide the leadership that would be otherwise missing until a permanent appointment can be made
- When a congregation needs someone to provide support in order to keep going during a period of adjustment following a crisis.

*Temporary additional support for an incumbent or priest in charge*

- where an incumbent or priest in charge is temporarily in need of regular assistance, for example when returning to work as part of a phased recovery, or as means of help and support when there were issues about capability, or as a way of providing cover following a request for special leave or a variation in how duties were carried out in order to look after a dependant.

8.10 Where an appointment is expected to be short, it may be appropriate for the installation to be fairly low-key. Although it should follow all the liturgical requirements, it may not be appropriate to pull out all the stops, for example by inviting all the local dignitaries.

8.11 Where an appointment is going to be less than a year, it may be appropriate for the bishop to waive the statutory notice period of 3 months and for this to be recorded in the statement of particulars, which might say something like:

You are required to give at least three months' notice, but the bishop has agreed to waive this requirement as long as you give at least one month's notice

8.12 When the duration of an appointment is short, it will make sense to carry out the appointment process as rapidly as possible. See section 10.

*(iv) Longer interim ministries*

8.13 In other cases, a rather longer period may be required, for example.

*To facilitate the next appointment*

- where a parish seems to be having difficulty appointing an incumbent or priest in charge, and there has already been a long interregnum
- to prepare the ground for a successor by identifying difficulties and resolving them

*Pastoral breakdown*

- To help a congregation to resolve conflict and work through difficulties in existing pastoral relationships

*Turnaround*

- When a massive turnaround is required which will take a long period of time

*Support during a period of uncertainty*

- when it is clear what kind of successor is required but it may take a while to find a suitable candidate
- when there are plans for pastoral reorganisation in the longer term, but it is not possible to implement them immediately (for example, when waiting for an incumbent in a neighbouring parish or benefice to retire or if representations have been received against a pastoral scheme that nevertheless is supported by the majority of parishioners).

*(v) Where it may be necessary to use the renewal provision*

8.14 In other situations it may be less clear how long the term of the interim appointment should be and there may be a need to make use of the renewal provision.

- where a parish seems to be having difficulty appointing an incumbent or priest in charge and there has already been a long interregnum
- to prepare the ground for a successor by identifying difficulties and resolving them.

*Pastoral breakdown*

- to help a congregation to resolve conflict and work through difficulties in existing pastoral relationships.

*Turnaround*

- when turnaround is required, but it is not easy to determine how long it will take.

*Support during a period of Uncertainty*

- when it is clear what kind of successor is required but it may take a while to find a suitable candidate
- when it is desirable to avoid a long interregnum, and provide the leadership that would be otherwise missing until a permanent appointment can be made
- when there are plans for pastoral reorganisation in the longer term, but it is not possible to implement them immediately (for example, when waiting for an incumbent in a neighbouring parish or benefice to retire or if representations have

been received against a pastoral scheme that nevertheless is supported by the majority of parishioners)

- when a congregation needs someone to provide support in order to keep going during a period of adjustment following a crisis.

*(vi) Providing a house*

8.15 If the interim minister is going to live in accommodation provided for the better performance of his or her ministry, then he or she needs to understand that the house will no longer be available, once their office has come to an end. It is important to ensure that this is done at the time when interim ministers are asked to provide their written consent to being appointed on an interim basis.

8.16 There may, however, be advantages in an interim priest not occupying the provided house. This will depend on the particular circumstances. Advantages of not doing so include the following.

- Non-residence underlines to parishes that this is someone coming in to help them, not someone being imposed on them, and avoids confusing an interim post with a permanent appointment.
- If a priest who specialises in this form of ministry remains in his or her house, it makes him or her more easily deployable without the cost and upheaval of having to move each time.
- Encouraging clergy close to retirement to take on interim ministry while living in their future retirement house allows experienced clergy to bring their skills to bear in fresh and interesting ways towards the end of their stipendiary service, refreshing their ministry and providing the opportunity to lay down roots in the community where they will be living in retirement in advance of retirement.
- It makes it easier to have a fast transition between the interim appointment and the new one.

8.17 If a house within the parish is not provided, then it will be necessary to bear in mind that

- arrangements will need to be made to ensure that an office or study within the parish is provided
- travel costs to and from work will not be a legitimate expense, and, if an additional allowance for this is paid, it will be taxable.

8.18 The Statement of Particulars will need to specify whether or not housing is provided and on what basis.

*(vii) Combining interim ministry with employment*

8.19 There are number of clear advantages to making interim ministers employees of the DBF at the same time as being office holders.

- It provides the interim minister with a degree of additional security and permanence and makes it easier to attract candidates who specialise and are trained in this aspect of ministry.
- It provides the bishop with additional flexibility, as the contract of employment can provide for the interim minister to go wherever he or she is sent, including other kinds of fixed term appointments such as covering absence.
- Although it would be difficult to provide an employed interim minister with a house, there can be advantages to not doing so. (See paragraph 8.16.)
- It can be possible to hold more than one interim ministry at once.
- The interim minister can continue to exercise ministry on PTO, even if originally appointed to a self-supporting interim office. This can be helpful as it enables the interim minister to continue to exercise their ministry right up to the arrival of their newly appointed successor, although the move onto PTO marks the point at which their role changes to one of listening and support rather than leadership, and it will not be possible for someone on PTO to chair a PCC.

8.20 There are also a number of other implications that need to be borne in mind before combining interim ministry with employment.

- Unless the minister has no legal role in the parish, a proper process for appointing the interim minister still needs to be followed. This comes with the risk that the parish representatives will not agree the appointment of the interim minister. However, a proper appointments process is, ultimately, likely to be helpful, as the appointment of an interim minister needs to be owned by the parish.
- If there are no suitable roles for the employee to carry out (including providing temporary cover), then the DBF must either keep paying him or her, or to make the employee redundant.
- The employee is not eligible to go on the national payroll or receive HLC.
- Clarity would be required about whether their terms and conditions were those of a diocesan employee (particularly over taking leave and working hours) or a clergy office holder (they would also hold office in many cases see below).

8.21 If a post is employment rather than an office, this needs to be acknowledged, rather than attempting to argue that the post is an office in order to justify having someone on the central payroll. When someone is an employee, instead of paying a stipend equivalent to that of an incumbent and providing housing, it is preferable to pay the rate for the job and for the employee to be responsible for providing their own housing in the way that other DBF employees would.

8.22 There are a number of different ways in which interim ministry can be combined with employment.

1. It is possible to combine employment with a succession of interim posts. This is probably the clearest and most straightforward method. It would probably be best for the interim office to be self-supporting, as there will be no rationale for apportioning the remuneration and hours of work between the employment and the office. As the paid post would be employment, the interim minister would not be eligible to go on the national payroll or to receive HLC. It would also be possible for the employee to exercise an interim ministry on PTO, although this would mean that they would not be able to exercise a leadership role in the parish.

2. It is also possible for a cleric employed on a permanent basis by the DBF as an interim minister, to hold other kinds of time limited offices on a non-stipendiary basis, in particular, those designated as “held in connection or conjunction with another office or employment” (Reg 29(1)(g)), or to cover authorised absence (Reg 29(1)(a)). As the office is not designated as interim, the provisions for interim posts will not apply, resulting in greater flexibility, as the bishop is no longer required to have regard to the provisions in the guidance that the office should be for no longer than 3 years and only renewed once. However, although the initial term would be stated in the SOP, there could be some scope for confusion and uncertainty about how long the cleric might stay in a particular parish, as there would be no constraints about renewing it.

3. Alternatively, the cleric could be employed by the DBF as a mission enabler under a general licence, and be required by the employment contract to go wherever the bishop chose to send him or her. Their ministry would be enabled by the bishop giving them permission to minister in a succession of particular parishes. There would be no parochial office, and the cleric would have no legal role in the parish, other than having been invited by the parish to provide cover and pastoral care. The cleric would not chair the PCC and would have to be co-opted onto it, and would have no legal authority. There would not need to be a formal appointments process, as the cleric was not being appointed to an office. This model may not be appropriate in parishes where there was division or pastoral breakdown had taken place, as the cleric might find the lack of any legal authority made it impossible to exercise any role. However, in other situations, the lack of legal authority might be less threatening and enable people to move from entrenched positions. Much will depend on the ability of the interim cleric to establish trust and effective relationships.

## **9. Which kinds of office are appropriate for designation as interim posts?**

9..1. The great majority of interim posts (but not necessarily all) are likely to be parochial.

9.2. Interim posts will usually, but not always, be made to the office of priest in charge or assistant curate, and the presentation will normally (but not always) have been suspended before an interim appointment is made.

*(a) Priests in charge*

9.3. It is expected that the majority of interim posts will come into this category, but not all.

*(b) Curacies*

9.4. In the case of curates, a fixed or limited term appointment may be appropriate, but not necessarily in the form of an interim post.

9.5. *Training posts:* Interim posts should not be used for initial training purposes (or short-term extensions of a training post), as there is a specific category for training posts. In any case, interim posts are not suitable for training curacies, as they cannot be extended in the event of sickness absence or parental leave.

9.6. *Other cases:* Cases where it might be appropriate to appoint an assistant curate in an interim post include where an incumbent or priest in charge was temporarily in need of regular assistance, for example when returning to work as part of a phased recovery, or as means of help and support when there were issues about capability, or as a way of providing cover following a request for special leave or a variation in how duties were carried out in order to look after a dependant.

9.7. *Funding of curacies:* It is possible to appoint an assistant curate on an interim basis where the diocese or the Church Commissioners are contributing to the costs. However, in other situations, other regulation 29 categories than interim ministry would generally be more appropriate, for example:

- where a parish is paying all of the costs of a curacy, (designated as Locally Supported Ministry Posts) rather than interim posts;
- where at least part of the funding is external (designated as subject to sponsorship funding).

*(c) Incumbents*

9.8. It would be unusual to appoint an incumbent on an interim basis, but there may be exceptional circumstances when it might be appropriate (for example, if the previous incumbent's ministry had ceased in sudden or traumatic circumstances and it was necessary to provide some direct care for the parish on an interim basis). Appointing an incumbent (whether on an interim basis or not) is a matter for the patron and must be done in accordance with the requirements of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. Should there be a need to make an appointment as quickly as possible, this will probably be more effectively achieved by consulting the patron about suspending the presentation and making an appointment as priest in charge.



9.9. *Cathedrals*: In the case of Cathedrals, the Cathedral's own Statutes generally make provision for arrangements when the office of dean is vacant. They also stipulate a maximum number of residentiary canonries. Any interim post would need to comply with the statutes, and would require the consent of the Bishop, Dean and Chapter as well as the person being appointed.

9.10. *General Licences*: Interim posts - like other posts - cannot be made on a deanery wide basis. If the post is not largely based in a particular parish or BMO, then it would have to be made under a general licence. However, the circumstances in which it is possible to appoint someone on a general licence on an interim basis are likely to be exceptional, and it would probably have to be done on a non-stipendiary basis.

9.11. In particular, it is unlikely that someone on a general licence can be appointed to an interim post, as, if a cleric on a general licence is in receipt of a stipend, he or she is likely, as a matter of law, to be an employee. Under the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, a fixed-term contract is normally automatically converted by law into a contract of indefinite duration (that is a permanent contract) once the employee has completed four years' continuous employment under it or renewals of it.

9.12. It is theoretically possible to continue the use of a fixed term contract after this period, but the employer will need to demonstrate that the continued use of a fixed term contract can be objectively justified. The employer will need to show that there a legitimate and genuine business objective and that it was both necessary and appropriate to achieve that objective by continuing the use of fixed-term contracts, which will rarely be the case.)

9.13. *Stipendiary licensed layworkers*; Non-stipendiary licenced layworkers would not be on common tenure and the bishop may revoke their licence for any reason that appears to him or her good and reasonable (see Canon E8). Stipendiary licensed lay workers would either be on common tenure or, more usually, employed by the parish. When on common tenure, there might be good reasons for making an appointment interim, for example if on a time-limited mission funding grant from the Church Commissioners.

## **10. The Process of making interim appointments**

10.1 If an appointment is to be interim, it will be necessary to have the support and understanding of the parish. Not all parishes will welcome the prospect of interim ministry, although conversations may help them to understand that this is a response to their particular pastoral situation. In some cases, it may be necessary to explain that the future viability of the parish is doubtful, and that the only realistic alternatives to a stipendiary interim minister are appointing someone on a house for duty basis or pastoral reorganisation.

10.2 The usual process for appointments must be followed for all interim posts. A checklist is provided at annex 2 of the actions that would need to be carried out when making an interim appointment.

10.3 An interim post is not about imposing a temporary appointment on a parish against its will or as a punishment. Rather, the option of an interim post should emerge as a result of discussions between the parish and the diocese about the way ahead – and these discussions should take place as part of the process that leads to the drawing up of a person specification.

10.4 There needs to be a two-way conversation between bishop (or possibly the area dean or archdeacon on the bishop's behalf) and parish about the needs of the parish and the resources and mission strategy of the diocese.

10.5 Clergy are required to provide consent in writing that they are willing to undertake the appointment on an interim basis. This will need to make it clear that there is no presumption that the post will be renewed after three years or made permanent. The post holder will need to find a new post (and housing) before their post comes to an end, and will need to work on this in good time.

## **11. What happens when the term expires?**

### *Renewing a term*

11.1 When an interim appointment has come to an end, it can be renewed for up to another three years if necessary. Even if it is clear that an interim ministry is still required, it is likely that, after the initial period of interim ministry, the nature of the task will have changed. For example,

- problems and possible solutions may have been identified;
- there may be agreement about what kind of permanent appointment is needed, but it is still thought necessary to retain an interim minister to provide leadership until the vacancy is filled.

11.2 It will be necessary to determine whether there is still a task for an interim minister to carry out before their initial term comes to an end, and, if so, whether the nature of the task has changed, before considering whether the current interim minister is the right person to carry on with it. Discussions need to be held with the office holder, the patron, PCC, churchwardens, and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee in reasonable time about: -

- whether the term will be renewed;
- if so, for how long; and
- whether the existing post holder will be reappointed.

11.3 If the post is renewed, then further discussions will need to take place in good time before the renewed term expires, in the awareness that it will not be possible to renew the post on an interim basis.

11.3 The Statement of Particulars needs to make it clear that, while the post can be renewed, it does not *have* to be, and that this is a decision for the bishop, in consultation with the parish and office holder, whether to reappoint the existing post holder.

11.4 It can be helpful to hold a mutual ministry review (MMR) and to write into the objectives of the interim minister that a MMR be held during the final stages of the term. (For further details, see <http://www.diocesewnc.org/What%20We%20Do/mutual-ministry-review.html>). This can be particularly useful if there is a desire to renew the interim ministry or to appoint the interim minister on a permanent basis.

#### *After the term has been renewed*

11.5 Even if it is decided, after the expiry of the first term, to keep the post on an interim basis, there should not necessarily be an expectation that the existing post holder will be reappointed. Even if the existing post holder has not already obtained another appointment or resigned, it is possible to appoint a different office holder on an interim basis, although it will not be possible to renew this latter interim post, or subsequently appoint another person on an interim basis.

11.6 After a renewal, or two interim posts in succession, the next appointment cannot be made on an interim basis. At this point, there would be a need either to consider proposals for pastoral reorganisation, or to make an appointment on a permanent basis. In exceptional circumstances (for example, if the office holder were over 70 or held the post in conjunction with another office or employment) it might be appropriate to appoint again on a fixed or limited term basis, although the post would need to come into one of the other categories mentioned in regulation 29.

#### *Appointing the interim post holder on a permanent basis*

11.7 If the existing post holder's appointment has been renewed once and has come to an end, the existing post holder can be reappointed, but only on a permanent basis. See the table at below paragraph 6.5 for when this might be appropriate

11.8 It is possible for the existing interim post holder to be appointed to the permanent office, but before doing this, it will be necessary to carry out a proper appointments procedure (including asking the PCC to provide a statement of needs and providing an up to date role description and person specification and consulting the patron).

11.9 There is a natural tendency for a congregation to focus on the personality of the interim minister rather than on goals for the future and the particular skills, strengths and abilities needed to achieve these. Working on the assumption that the interim priest might

be the appropriate person to be appointed on a permanent basis confuses his or her role and is unfair to other potential candidates as the interim priest would have an unfair advantage.

11.10 There should therefore be no assumption that, if the interim cleric has done his or her job properly, he or she has an automatic entitlement to the permanent post. The skills required of someone in the permanent post are likely to be different from those needed in the interim appointment. For this reason, it will be better to work on the assumption that the subsequent minister will usually be different from the interim one and to advertise any subsequent permanent post and open it to application from a number of candidates. In some cases, it may be appropriate to advertise the permanent post before the term of the interim ministry has come to an end.

*No rights of appeal against a non-renewal of an interim appointment*

11.11 Before the appointment is made, the interim minister and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees are required to give consent in writing to the interim appointment. The interim nature of the appointment will also be recorded in the Statement of Particulars. Clergy in interim posts will be aware therefore that the appointment is not permanent and might not be renewed, and that there will be no compensation payable when it comes to an end, and that they will have to vacate any housing provided for the better performance of the duties of the office. But it is worthwhile emphasising this before the appointment is made and in good time before it comes to an end.

*No compensation*

11.12 There is no statutory right to compensation. Clergy in interim posts will need to start looking for a new post well before their interim post comes to an end, and bishops need to remind and encourage them to do this.

11.13 If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact [clergyhr@churchofengland.org](mailto:clergyhr@churchofengland.org)

Archbishops' Council  
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### Illustrative scenarios

1. An incumbent has left parish A after a breakdown in relationships, with conflict and division in the congregation, and it is undesirable to leave the parish with a long interregnum. A curate in nearby parish B with little experience of working life before ordination is coming to the end of his training curacy. He has had an uncomfortable relationship with his training incumbent (who left during the curacy leaving him unsupported for a substantial period of time) and is having difficulty obtaining a first incumbency, although a new training incumbent has been appointed and will be arriving soon. It is clear that it is wrong to try and put the curate in the vacancy in parish A on an interim basis. A recently retired cleric has just moved into the diocese where she is looking to find her retirement home. She agrees to act as an interim priest for parish A.
2. There had been a painful pastoral breakdown in a troubled parish, and it was helpful for the bishop to send in someone on an interim post to repair matters, without any implication of making a future appointment. The appointment was successful, and resulted in improved relationships and an increase in numbers. The parish – which had been a possible candidate for pastoral reorganisation - was starting to thrive and was clearly viable on its own. It was agreed to appoint a priest in charge on a permanent basis. The PCC was initially quite keen for the interim priest to take the permanent appointment, but, as the priest and the parish did more work on the qualities that were required for the permanent post, the PCC was able to see, with the support of the archdeacon, that a different set of skills was required from the permanent post holder, and that it would be better to advertise the post with a view to finding someone else.
3. Pastoral reorganisation is being contemplated for a couple of parishes whose long-term future as separate units is uncertain and which are reaching the point of needing pastoral reorganisation. The parishes have reservations about working together and feel somewhat threatened by the possibility. It is decided to appoint someone on an interim basis so that he or she can help them work together and sensitively show them what it might feel like, with a view to discovering that it could be beneficial and not threatening. It is hoped that this will lead to the parishes agreeing to a permanent appointment when a way forward for pastoral reorganisation that has the support of a majority in both parishes has been agreed.
4. A large urban area loses its three clergy all at the same time. There are plans to create a Team Ministry, and make new appointments to it, but, in the interim, there is need for a priest to cover services, funerals, and provide a degree of leadership. Someone is prepared to give a couple of years to this as he or she works towards retirement, and is appointed as priest in charge separately in all three parishes. However, in order to provide maximum flexibility, it is decided to do this, not as an interim post, but under regulation 29

(1) (g) where each post is designated as 'held in connection or conjunction with another office or employment'.

5. A much beloved incumbent retires from a parish after a long and successful ministry. This has resulted in the parish wanting someone just like their last incumbent. To help the parish develop a better understanding of its future needs and identify what is required of a new incumbent, the archdeacon and the PCC agree to appoint an interim minister to help it to acquire insight into and experience of new ways of working and worship, to think again about objectives, to identify priorities for work in church and community and to give it a clearer purpose that was shared by the whole congregation. This would then give the parish with a planned structure and process to help it to establish what it might need in the next permanent appointment.

6. A parish needs a period of healing (whether after a period of conflict or as a result of feeling manipulated or let down by their priest). A long interregnum could be damaging and result in further damage and stagnation, as the parish needs help and guidance in becoming whole and learning to trust its leaders. It is agreed to appoint a priest on an interim basis to lead the parish through the period of transition between where it is now and where it wants to be – as it will need help on this journey as they explore new possibilities.

7. A Cathedral is awaiting the arrival of a new dean and the precentor has just left to take on a new role. It is agreed to appoint a new precentor on an interim basis so that, when the new dean arrives, he or she can be involved in appointing a precentor on a permanent basis.

### Checklist of required action when making an interim appointment

A proper appointments process should be followed even when there is a particular candidate in mind, although it may sometimes be appropriate to do this in such a way that the appointment is done as quickly as possible.

This checklist assumes that the presentation has been suspended and an appointment will be made as priest in charge, as this will be the case with the great majority of interim appointments. The appointment of an incumbent on an interim basis requires formal meetings of the PCC in accordance with the Patronage Benefices Measure 1986 and will be made by the patron. However, the patron should be consulted even when a priest in charge is appointed:

- ✓ Vacancy arises
- ✓ Archdeacon meets PCC and patron and discusses the next appointment including the possibility of an interim appointment
- ✓ PCC decides on method of appointment
- ✓ Parish profile produced
- ✓ Person specification and role description and draft aims and objectives produced
- ✓ DMPC asked to approve interim nature of appointment
- ✓ Appointment process including any shortlisting and interviews<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Interview with bishop
- ✓ References, DBS clearance and Clergy Current Status Letter sought if not taken up earlier
- ✓ Formal offer and acceptance of office made
- ✓ Cleric provides written consent to interim nature of office
- ✓ Statement of particulars is issued
- ✓ Six-month review of progress against aims and objectives and whether these need to be reassessed
- ✓ Discussion about whether to renew the interim post for up to three more years with parish, patron and post holder
- ✓ Bishop renews/appointment comes to an end
- ✓ Discussion about plans for post and office holder's plans for obtaining a new post
- ✓ Interim post ends
- ✓ Either proposals for pastoral reorganisation or permanent appointment

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<sup>2</sup> There is no requirement or expectation that there will always be advertising, shortlisting or competitive interviews (just as there isn't with other appointments).