

Appointment of clergy office holders

A guide to good practice

*Produced in support of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009
Prepared by TSIP in 2013 for final approval by the Standing Committee of the House
of Bishops and updated by RACSC in February 2015*

Foreword

1. The process by which people are chosen for particular roles is one of the most important and sensitive in all institutions. The Church of England has, for many years, invested significantly in well resourced and nationally agreed arrangements for discerning the vocation of those called to ordained ministry. But, for a variety of reasons the Church of England has traditionally found it much more difficult to reflect nationally on the processes which come later, once someone is due to be considered for a parochial clergy appointment.
2. There have been a number of reasons for this reticence. The most obvious is the sheer fragmentation of responsibility for making appointments in a church with some 13,000 parishes. The Church of England is not a legal entity and is made up of many different bodies; in many ways it has more the qualities of an organism than an organization.
3. In addition, the patronage system, though much reformed over the years, has continued to make the practical operation of parochial appointments within the Church of England more complex than in many other institutions. In the appointment of incumbents, it remains the patron who has the right of initiative, though an appointment cannot proceed without the consent both of the bishop and of the two parochial representatives.
4. Finally there has been a tension within the Church of England – as within many other churches - between viewing appointments processes as essentially an exercise in discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and as a selection process which, like selection processes in any other organization, incorporate processes and insights drawn from the world of human resources. There is no intrinsic incompatibility between the two approaches. But, as with all tensions, the margin between creativity and conflict can be a fine one.
5. These are some of the reasons why, both structurally and culturally, it was traditionally thought to be problematic to produce anything authoritative within the Church of England on how parochial appointments should be conducted.
6. Nevertheless, those engaged in the process of appointing people to significant roles within parish ministry are entitled to look to the wider church to provide some help and support as they exercise their responsibilities. This is particularly so given the ever more complex legal environment within which all appointments now have to be approached.

7. There was a time when it was widely thought that the unusual nature of the parochial clergy role and its particular legal status (office holder rather than employee) meant that church appointments could not be thought of in the same way as selection processes within more conventionally structured organizations. That, however, is no longer a reliable assumption. Much anti-discrimination legislation makes no distinction between office holders and employees.
8. There are certain circumstances in which acts – which, in other settings, would be considered unlawful discrimination - are not, in fact, unlawful in relation to church appointments, for example by requiring a priest to be a communicant Anglican. However, the Equality Act is complex and its application requires a good deal of care, particularly where a requirement is to be imposed which, though seemingly lawful, may well be contentious.
9. What makes the dynamics of the process so particular is that someone being considered for a parochial appointment is being considered for a job, yet at the same time is also being asked to take on much more than that. An incumbent or priest in charge is entrusted with the responsibility of leading a worshipping community. He or she is expected to live in and among those whom they serve. They will generally be living in accommodation provided by the Church.
10. In addition, the sort of distinctions that apply routinely in secular appointment between private life and work life do not operate in the same clear-cut way in relation to ordained ministry, whether during the discernment process before ordination or subsequently. A priest is expected by the canons to be ‘diligent to frame and fashion his life and that of his family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make himself and them, as much as in him lies, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ’.
11. It is in an attempt to help tease out some of the responsibilities of each of the parties in the process of parochial appointments - the applicant, parochial representatives, the bishop and others responsible for appointment – that this guidance has been produced. It has also been designed to shed light on some of the particular ways in which good process, clear thinking, honest discussion and questioning and a commitment to fairness can be not simply a means of avoiding difficulties and securing compliance with the law but can serve to liberate all concerned to explore prayerfully and sensitively where the Spirit is leading.

Update in February 2015

12. The guidance, annexes and application form have been updated as follows to reflect amendments to legislation and procedures, along with some presentational changes.
 - They take account of the *ordination of women to the episcopate* (in particular referring to bishops as he or she, and referring to PCC resolutions under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests instead of Section 3 of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993. This mainly affects Annexes A and B.
 - They reflect *changes to training of curates and MDR* (paragraphs 52 and 71 of the main note).
 - Paragraphs 17, 44, 138 and 140 reflect *changes to safeguarding procedures*, in particular the replacement of the CRB by the DBS, the updated safeguarding guidance and the use of the Confidential Declaration Form. Annex D (the shortlisting and interview grid) now includes an additional section on safeguarding.

- The *annexes have been reordered*, with the list of resources at the end (now Annex I) and the model application form now separate from the other annexes. The previous Annexes E (on formal assessment at the end of curacy) and H (on electronic advertising) have been removed.
- Other changes to Annex A include:
 - a. the addition of *the requirement not be married to a person of the same sex* to the exceptions to the Equality Act (see paragraph 2 of the section headed Exceptions that may be applicable to clergy appointments);
 - b. additional information about *safeguarding checks and references to the Church of England's Safer Recruitment guidance*, including the Confidential Declaration Form which should be used at the beginning of the application process;
 - c. changes to the wording of the section headed *Promoting Racial Equality*, where the British National Party and the National Front are specifically mentioned as organisations that the House of Bishops has declared to be incompatible with the teaching of the Church of England on race equality.
- Updates to Annex I on resources including *to the Church of England's Safer Recruitment guidance* and training on fair selection available from the National Church Institutions
- A number of small stylistic and presentational changes.

13. Changes to the application form include:

- The addition of the Confidential Declaration Form as an Annex and amendments to the notes to reflect the use of the Confidential Declaration Form and the *Church of England's Safer Recruitment guidance*;
- Rewording the marital status question at section 7 to read as follows. *Please describe your marital status. You should specify whether you are single, married, or in a civil partnership, separated, divorced, widowed, or formerly in a civil partnership now dissolved. You should also specify whether you are divorced and remarried with a previous spouse who was still living at the time of your marriage, and/or whether you are married to a person who has been previously married whose former spouse was still living at the time of your marriage.*
- Making the marital status categories on the sample monitoring form consistent with those on the application form
- Deletion of the reference to the Register of Ministers form in the notes for applicants, which the House of Bishops has agreed should no longer be used;
- Clarification in the notes for applicants about the appointment of clergy over 70;
- Changes to the ethnic groups on the sample clergy recruitment monitoring form to reflect the latest government changes,
- Not requiring anyone whose ethnic origin comes under the category of *other* to provide further details on the sample monitoring form;
- Making it clear on the sample monitoring form that *prefer not to answer* is an option;
- Deleting the question about pregnancy and maternity leave.

May 2015

Scope

1. This good practice guidance on the appointment of the parochial clergy and curates was prepared by the Terms of Service Implementation Panel and approved by the Standing Committee of the House of Bishops in Feb 2013. It was updated by the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee in February 2015. It is intended as an overview for all parties who may be involved in an appointment. It makes reference to the law governing the appointment of incumbents, but the general principles apply equally to other clergy appointments. It gives advice on:

- the law
- the roles of those with responsibility for appointments
- the process
- tools
- confidentiality
- searching for applicants
- shortlisting
- interviews
- references
- the offer process
- licensing or institution and induction
- settling in
- six month review
- ministerial development review (MDR) and continuing ministerial development (CMD).

2. The guidance refers to detailed supporting material in the annexes.

Introduction

3. Trying to discern the will of God for a person or a place is never easy, and requires prayerfulness and openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes spiritual discernment and secular human resource practice are set up as opposite and incompatible. Creating such a dichotomy implies a way of looking at the universe in which there is thought to be sacred truth and secular truth. For a Christian there is only one Truth with the work of the Holy Spirit, through prayer and a formed Christian instinct, providing the framework within which we use the God-given gifts of intelligence and a willingness to apply the insights of contemporary best practice.

4. The appointments process is distinct from selection for training for the ministry. Selection is about discerning the call to a vocation, to a particular life. Appointment is about discerning whether someone has the calling and gifts to do a particular job in a particular place.

5. The guidance outlines the different methods of selection and offers some tools and a framework designed to help those involved:

- start with clear expectations of the scope and demands of the role and identify the skills and qualities required for the appointment;
- make an objective judgement about whether candidates are likely to meet these; and
- demonstrate that the decision reached was fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

These tools need to be used in the context of prayer and the framework used to test out the insights from the discernment process.

6. Those involved need to remember that making an appointment should be a mutual process of exploration and discernment. Those making the appointment need to come to a view on who might be the best person for the appointment, but the candidate also needs to discern what they may be able to bring to the office and have the opportunity to find out whether the appointment is right for them.

7. The guidance describes the norm but aims to set out a range of alternatives where appropriate. Where it does not precisely match the situation on the ground it is important to think back to the guiding principles and consider how they could be applied to the situation in hand.

8. The appointments process is only the beginning – once in office, the appointee will be supported to develop and grow in their ministry through ministerial development review (MDR) and continuing ministerial development (CMD¹). However, being appointed to the right office is crucial as those processes cannot “put right” a mismatch between the individual and the role they have been asked to do.

¹ Formerly known as CME – continuing ministerial education

9. Annexes to this guidance giving more detail on specific issues and other publications are also referred to in the text. For those wanting more detailed general guidance to good practice in appointment of ministers (not just the Church of England) ‘How to Make Great Appointments in the Church’ by Claire Pedrick and Su Blanch in the SPCK Library of Ministry series is helpful. **Annex I** gives a list of resources together with a glossary of terms. Where these resources were published prior to implementation of common tenure, the spirit of them should still be followed.

Recurrent themes: good practice and discernment; personal information and privacy

10. In drawing up this guidance two related tensions have been a recurrent theme. One concerns the interaction between secular good practice and the exercise of discernment; the other the interplay between the public nature of a ministry and the minister and their family’s entitlement to privacy.

11. Secular good practice advocates clarity at the outset about the skills, qualities and experience required to perform a particular office and the systematic testing of applicants against these. It expects applicants to look at the role and its circumstances and decide whether to apply.

12. Discernment can appear to be at odds with this approach in that it is more exploratory, with all parties trying to find out the will of God for the office – the applicant considering what under God they might bring to the needs of the office and whether it is right for them and their family; those making the appointment whether this is the applicant God is calling to the office. However, the rigour of secular good practice should be used to test out the evidence gained through the discernment process.

13. Secular good practice would also put a lot of emphasis on protecting the privacy of applicants. Their marital status and history, sexual conduct or family circumstances would be of no interest to those making appointments. By contrast, within the Church, the public nature of ministry and the exemplary role expected of the leader of a Christian community holding particular convictions means that how clergy fashion their lives is potentially relevant to their suitability.

14. This is a matter of particular sensitivity partly because of the need to act consistently with the Equality Act and partly because the Church of England acknowledges the validity of a variety of views on certain issues and therefore the requirements that particular parishes might impose (for example on remarriage after divorce, on which the House of Bishops issued a statement in May 2010).

15. The fact that parishes with strongly held convictions on certain issues may need relevant information to satisfy themselves that their lawful requirements are met does not, however, mean that those involved in making appointments have a free hand to see any information or ask any questions that they wish. This guidance seeks to challenge past assumptions and practice about personal information so that the right balance is struck between the legitimate needs of the parish for relevant information and the reasonable expectations of clergy and family members for some privacy.

16. So, for example, the bishop will be concerned for the on-going pastoral care of his or her clergy and will be concerned that applicants have a full understanding of what this appointment would mean for them and their family. Some of this may be best achieved in a one-to-one with the bishop, whilst other aspects may be dealt with by being clear and realistic in the information pack about what the office involves and the parish requires so the applicant can make an informed decision about whether to apply in the first place. There may also be things that the bishop properly needs to know about the conduct or history of an applicant that others involved in the process may not need to know unless it is directly relevant to the needs or requirements of the parish.

The law

17. Ecclesiastical and secular law applies to the appointments process. As explained in more detail in **Annex A**, Part V of the Equality Act 2010 (relating to ‘work’) does not generally apply to parochial appointments although it does apply to incumbents of Crown livings and stipendiary assistant curates. Please also note that in the context of making appointments to curacies, it is possible that Bishops may constitute "qualification bodies" or "employment service providers" under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the ordinands that they sponsor and are therefore subject to secular discrimination law in their dealings with ordinands in respect of matching, ordaining and licensing. Regardless of this, dissatisfied applicants may try to challenge the outcome of appointments processes by reference to the Act; and in any event, as again explained in **Annex A**, the more prudent approach is to proceed in relation to all appointments as if the Act applied.

18. The second piece of relevant legislation is the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This defines what is a ‘regulated activity’ with children and adults who may be vulnerable. All clergy in parochial appointments are engaging in ‘regulated activity’. This carries with it certain legal obligations including

- checking whether someone is barred from such activity (via an enhanced criminal record check (including a check of the barred lists) (See **Annex A** to this Guidance section 2 “Safeguarding checks in relation to children and adults who may be vulnerable”) and
- the duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (the “DBS”) if any doubts arise about an individual’s safety to undertake such activity.

19. More detail is available on the Church of England safeguarding page of the website. Please see the Safer Recruitment Guidance. The link can be found at **Annex I** of the Guidance on Appointments.

Ecclesiastical law

20. The right of patrons to "present" an appointee to a benefice is an ancient one. The appointment of incumbents and team rectors is currently carried out under the provisions of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.

21. The arrangements for the appointment of a team vicar are set out in the scheme creating the team ministry and will either provide for the appointment to be made by the bishop and team rector jointly or by a patronage board. (Section 34(4) and paragraph 2 of Schedule 3 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.)

22. The appointment of a priest in charge of a parish will be made by the bishop in consultation with the patron and PCC representatives (the House of Bishops has indicated that it expects the process to mirror that for an incumbent appointment, although the bishop has the legal responsibility for nominating, rather than the patron).

23. An assistant curate (who may be referred to as ‘assistant priest’ or by some other description) will be admitted to office by the bishop’s licence, on the nomination of the incumbent.

24. The House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests contains arrangements under which a parish can seek the ministry of a male priest. Where a parish wishes to seek such arrangements the PCC should have passed the resolution provided for in paragraph 20 of the Declaration before the appointments process commences. If it has failed to do so, to restrict appointments to men would run the risk of legal challenge.

Discrimination

25. The application of the Equality Act 2010 to ecclesiastical offices is described in **Annex A**, where it is explained that, in certain circumstances, certain sorts of ‘occupational requirements’ may be imposed in relation to appointments, including religious requirements as to sex, marriage/divorce, civil partnership etc.

26. **Annex A** also contains advice on the circumstances in which the relevant requirements can be imposed. It is important that those concerned in appointments processes in the Church familiarise themselves with the position in those respects and act accordingly – including by ensuring that any requirements that are imposed in relation to a ‘protected characteristic’ under the Equality Act are both justified and properly applied.

27. Apart from asking questions about any such requirement, it is very strongly recommended that lifestyle issues are not raised when candidates are interviewed. This guards against inferences being drawn about the reasons why a particular decision has been reached as well as helping to prevent interview panels straying into inappropriate areas of questioning. It is for the bishop, at the bishop’s interview with the recommended candidate, to probe his or her suitability for office in relation to their ability to comply with the canons, the Ordinal and any generally applicable principles for Church of England clergy. (See separate interview with the bishop 139.)

28. Dioceses may have a policy of advertising certain categories of office, e.g. incumbent offices, within the diocese before throwing them open to candidates from across the country. Provided advertising within the diocese first is a matter of explicit policy driven by good reason e.g. to provide opportunities for development or redeployment and is applied consistently, it is legitimate to do this. The risk would be if a particular group was disadvantaged by this practice. This may occur where, for example, a particular ethnic

group is not represented within the diocese. A selection made from within the diocese therefore precludes the opportunity for someone from that ethnic group to be selected and will not help diversify the workforce.

Decision to fill the office

29. When a vacancy is imminent, the bishop may wish to consider whether that office should be filled. This may depend on deanery or diocesan deployment plans. The bishop may, with the consent of the diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, and after consultation with the patron, the PCC and both chairs of the deanery synod, decide to restrict presentation or suspend presentation to a benefice in accordance with the procedure under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

30. There may be other cases where there will be constraints on filling an office, for example if there is only sufficient funding for a part-time appointment. There may also be situations where an office will be fixed term under one of the categories set out in Regulations 29 and 30 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009. If the right of presentation is not suspended, the machinery in the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 for filling a vacant benefice is engaged automatically.

31. In some dioceses the archdeacon will visit the parish at this point to discuss their expectations and to outline what happens next and the expectations the bishop has about how the office will be filled.

Roles of those with responsibility for appointments

32. Appointments of incumbents and priests in charge are a shared responsibility involving the bishop, the PCC representatives and the patron. In the case of incumbent appointments, the patron is in the lead in making the appointment; in the case of priest in charge appointments, the bishop is required to consult the patron.

33. Team vicar appointments are the responsibility of either (according to the terms of the pastoral scheme establishing the team ministry) the bishop and team rector jointly or the patronage board set up by the scheme. In other parish appointments responsibility will lie with the incumbent.

34. The rights and responsibilities of the three parties to be carried out in connection with the appointments of an incumbent under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 are outlined in **Annex B**. Where the patron is the diocesan bishop (as is the case in nearly half of all benefices) he or she may delegate to a suffragan bishop or the archdeacon significant responsibility for the appointments process. Where the bishop is not the patron, any involvement of the bishop or the bishop's representative will be dependent upon the agreement of the patron.

35. It is essential to agree at the outset on how the appointment is to be conducted and on the role description and person specification as these are fundamental to a successful and safe appointment. A lack of agreement will inevitably result in confused documentation and if that does not put off applicants, then it is likely that the selection made will not

match the requirements of the role and the newly selected candidate is already set up to fail. *Whilst there is no legal obligation to do these things, they are expected in every case.*

36. The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 allows for the bishop, patron or PCC to call a 'section 12' meeting between the PCC, the patron and the bishop (or the bishop's representative, usually the archdeacon) to discuss the statement of needs. Such a meeting can helpfully provide an opportunity to discuss all the issues around the office, any particular requirements the parish may have and the conduct of the appointment.

37. A face-to-face discussion at which all parties express themselves freely and openly, although sometimes difficult, allows a common understanding to emerge and fosters the mutual trust that is needed in the complex process which follows and which has significant long term consequences for all parties. It is important that the person running the process makes it clear at the outset what information others involved may see and when and what remains confidential.

38. It is important to remember that all those involved could be the subject of complaint if things go awry, either through the grievance procedure or an employment tribunal (i.e. in relation to a discrimination claim). This might require those individuals, including patrons and PCC representatives, to appear in the witness box to justify their behaviour, with possible adverse implications from the point of view of cost, loss of time and damage to reputation.

39. This is the position as it has always been and is not a consequence of the Terms of Service legislation. Good process, proper discernment, transparent and fair decisions help to avoid these pitfalls and that does mean all those involved abiding by the same 'rules'.

Overview of the process

40. The law relating to incumbent appointments describes the actions to be taken and a number of fixed points and time limits in the process. There is scope within this framework to conduct the appointments process in a wide variety of ways, ranging from patrons running the process in a directive manner to a fully collaborative model.

41. Dioceses will have their own arrangements that supplement this guidance and those involved in appointments will need to check, and where necessary, take advice on these. For example, in some dioceses this may mean that a bishop or bishop's representative will have made a preliminary assessment of the candidates' fitness to minister prior to interview.

42. In other dioceses the bishop will make enquiries about fitness to minister after a preferred candidate has been identified. This can make significant differences to the way the process runs. There are also differing arrangements about how much responsibility a bishops will delegate to their archdeacons or others. Bishops will always want to have confidence in how an appointment process is operated and may request that those involved undertake appropriate training.

43. An overview of the process is at **Annex C**.

44. The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 Code of Practice: The Exercise of the Right of Presentation is an invaluable guide to the process in incumbent appointments. It includes information about special circumstances e.g. multi-parish benefices.

45. Interview panels need to comply with national and diocesan practice for safe recruiting. See the Church of England's safer recruiting guidance. A link to this can be found at **Annex I**.

Tools

Statement of needs

46. Under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, the PCC draws up a statement describing the needs and traditions of the parish (the 'parish profile') when a new appointment is to be made. A benefice with several parishes may have a statement of needs for each parish (if the PCCs have not agreed to produce a single statement), with the possibility of a difference of emphasis between them. There should be discussion about differences. The archdeacon is a suitable person to moderate such a discussion. If requested, the bishop (or bishop's representative) produces a statement describing, in relation to the benefice, the needs of the diocese and the wider interests of the Church.

Role description and person specification

47. Role descriptions have a variety of uses including the following – all of which represent best practice, rather than legal requirements:

- in describing the context in which an office holder will be conducting their ministry, so as to enable those making an appointment to find a candidate who will be able to exercise an effective ministry in that context
- at review after appointment (possibly after 6 months)
- in setting developmental objectives as a basis for ministerial development review (MDR).

48. The purpose of the role description is to give the applicant a picture of the context in which the person appointed will be exercising their ministry. It should not be too detailed but give an adequate picture of the role. It should distil - particularly from the parish profile – matters such as the direction that the parish wishes to take in terms of mission and ministry, including any particular priorities or objectives of significance and a commitment to safeguarding and safe working practices within the parish. More detailed and transient activities are likely to be encapsulated in work and personal development objectives which are agreed from time to time at MDR.

49. The person specification facilitates a fair selection process. It should list the attributes essential and desirable for the office, including details of skills or abilities, knowledge and experience needed in this particular place at this particular time. It may also set out certain practical requirements e.g. that the applicant is willing to live in the house provided.

50. Combined with the person specification, the role description also encourages applicants to ‘self select’- allowing them to decide whether they will be able to exercise an effective ministry and therefore whether they are sure they want to apply for the office advertised.

51. If there are any lawful constraints on whom a parish is prepared to accept, they should be set out in the person specification. For example, if in order to avoid conflicting with the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of parishioners a parish was unable to accept as incumbent a priest who was remarried while a former spouse was still alive, the requirement that the person appointed should not have that characteristic should be spelled out in the person specification. (See **Annex A** on equality and diversity.) Such statements need to be used with great care, and HR advice should be sought before doing so.

52. Care needs to be taken not to include unjustifiable requirements. It is worth checking each one to test whether it is objectively justifiable and expressed in an open way. For example a requirement that candidates are able to drive and hold a current driving licence may exclude applicants who are perfectly well able to carry out the role and may discriminate on the grounds of disability. The justifiable requirement may be for applicants to be able to travel around the benefice (or wherever the role requires) within an appropriate timeframe and/or on short notice. It is for the applicant to determine how they may do so, perhaps by bicycle, by someone driving them or by means of the Access to Work scheme.

53. Applicants should be encouraged during the appointments process to show that they have the attributes set out in the person specification using specific examples where appropriate.

54. Formal assessment of the House of Bishops’ formation criteria at the end of curacy is being introduced and the relevant level of competence required of the applicant should be indicated in the person specification.

55. It is strongly advised that a role description and person specification are produced because they are a foundation on which the ministry of the successful candidate in that office will be built and the basis for future MDR and CMD. It is therefore essential that all of the interested parties are consulted when they are drawn up – the patron (if an incumbent appointment), the PCC and the bishop and/or the archdeacon. It is recommended that the archdeacon is responsible for drawing it up, taking advice from the HR adviser.

56. For further information, see the separate guidance on writing role descriptions and person specifications at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/guidance-clergy-appointments>

57. This guidance includes advice on how the needs of different traditions may be accommodated.

58. A diagram showing the relationship between the parish statement of needs, any statement from the bishop regarding diocesan preferences, House of Bishops learning

outcomes, the role description, MDR and CMD is at **Annex C**. The role description will be reviewed at the 6 month review and at MDR and will continue to evolve.

59. There may be certain circumstances in which the office is fixed term (Regulations 29 and 30 of Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009) or linked to another office and this needs to be made clear in the role description.

Information pack

60. In addition to the statement of needs, role description and person specification, the PCC may wish to assemble an information pack or encourage applicants to look at the parish's website. It is important in selecting material to avoid implying bias in favour of a particular kind of applicant, for example those who are married with children. A copy of the latest set of accounts and AGM reports and minutes may be included. Information about the house would help potential applicants to decide whether to pursue their application.

61. The pack may also include a draft statement of particulars for the office, which would include details of the benefits and conditions of the office as required by the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009. This would be drawn up by the bishop's officer nominated for this purpose. This will refer to the diocesan handbook for clergy and a copy may be included or a web link given.

Application form

62. An application form ensures that applicants supply information on all relevant areas on a consistent basis. This makes the selection process easier and fairer, as all the candidates can be judged in the same way. It gives applicants the opportunity to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the office and prompts them to be systematic about how they do this.

63. The use of electronic applications forms cuts down the volume of administration surrounding the recruitment process and many candidates and selectors find them easier to use. If an electronic application form is used, applicants may be asked to post a signed copy or to sign the application forms at the interview to certify the information contained is true.

64. A sample application form is available. Any information asked for must be strictly relevant to the application, and any personal information given, e.g. marital status, should not be used as part of the selection process unless it is directly relevant to a requirement imposed by the parish on grounds of strongly held religious conviction (for example in relation to civil partnership or remarriage after divorce). Many dioceses require the personal section of the application form to be sent direct to the bishop.

65. Clergy of the Church of England are expected to act consistently with the Church's teaching on racial equality (see **Annex A**) and the application form may be used by applicants to confirm this.

66. It is not lawful to ask general health questions at this stage. However it is legitimate to ask whether the applicant has any condition that prevents them from undertaking functions that are intrinsic to the office or if reasonable adjustments need to be made in relation to the interview process. See **Annex A** on equality and diversity for more detailed information in this regard.

67. In completing the application form, applicants will need to address the statement of needs and the role description, considering what under God they might be able to bring to the office. A note for clergy prepared by the Dean of Bradford on completing application forms, with particular reference to senior appointments, is at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Guidance%20Notes%20on%20Completing%20Application%20Forms.pdf>

Shortlisting and interview grids

68. The selection process is about finding evidence of each of the required skills and attributes in the person specification. At the shortlisting and interview stages, it is helpful to use a grid for comparing applicants fairly against the person specification using a scoring system. This helps to test out the discernment the panel is making about the candidate's calling to the office in a systematic way. Different skills and attributes will be evidenced in different ways. For example, it is not possible to assess interpersonal skills from the application form alone, and those involved will need to agree how to assess these from the interview.

69. Before shortlisting and interview, members of the interview panel should also agree a method of assessing the applicants, which may include scoring. It may be that some attributes are more important than others and will need to be weighted accordingly.

70. Assessment is a dynamic exercise and there is likely to be much discussion of the evidence gleaned from the application, interview and other tests and the discernment process. These will all feed into the final assessment. Sometimes after interview doubts will remain about whether any candidate is appointable, even if further training is given. In these circumstances it is better not to make an appointment.

71. Template grids are provided at **Annex D**.

Training in good practice

72. Dioceses sometimes provide training for parish representatives, or written guidance, and parishes should consult their archdeacons to find what material is available to help them. Interview skills training for panel members is also strongly recommended.

73. It is recommended that dioceses should offer the opportunity of training candidates for interview through their IME Phase 2 and CMD provision.

Other information

74. It is entirely reasonable for potential applicants to visit the parish(es) and to gather information about the setting of the office in its context before they make a formal application or after shortlisting. The archdeacon and sometimes the receiving parish, including members of staff (ordained and lay) should be ready to answer enquiries from the candidates. If there is an advertisement it is helpful to indicate where further information may be obtained. However care must be taken to maintain confidentiality, resist making a superficial judgement of the person's suitability and to treat all prospective applicants equally.

75. Sometimes there may be circumstances about the parish that prospective applicants need to know in weighing up whether to apply but which cannot be directly alluded to in the published information – the illness of a previous incumbent for example or where a parish or parishes in a united benefice are divided on the ordination of women but no resolutions have been passed. The archdeacon will have to consider very carefully at what stage to brief applicants – it is a recipe for subsequent difficulty if an applicant discovers such information only after taking up the office.

Monitoring

76. Some dioceses have a policy of monitoring diversity and if so will request all candidates to complete a diversity monitoring form with their application. Monitoring helps a diocese to increase its diversity to reflect the population it serves and also to investigate and defend discrimination claims. A sample monitoring form is attached to the model application form.

Confidentiality

77. Confidentiality both in relation to identities and to information disclosed should be maintained at all times by all participating in the process.

78. It is good practice to presume that candidates will want the fact of their application to be treated in confidence and their identities not disclosed to people who are not part of the decision-making process or to other candidates. If it is proposed to have group activities with other candidates or for candidates to meet those outside the decision-making process, this should be made clear at the outset. Similarly, candidates should be asked to keep confidential the identity of other candidates.

79. When making notes about candidates at any stage during the recruitment process, those involved should avoid recording personal thoughts, which the writer would not wish to be shared. Under the Data Protection Act candidates have the right to request sight of any papers relating to their application, including interview notes, and such comments could conceivably be actionable under other secular legislation and be disclosable in any such proceedings.

Searching for applicants

80. There are a wide variety of ways in which the search for applicants is undertaken. In an incumbent appointment it is the right of the patron to decide how to conduct the process and to nominate and present suitable candidates.

81. Advertising, through the paper or electronic media, is by far the most open process and makes the vacancy known to the greatest number of potential candidates. It is also the best way to demonstrate that the process is fair and transparent.

82. However advertising may not always be the best way to proceed, depending on the circumstances and sometimes a process more akin to 'search' is adopted.

- Some clergy remain reluctant to apply for offices that are advertised but will respond to a personal invitation and explore whether it is God's calling.
- Where a church is of a distinctive church tradition, patrons may already have lists of clergy known to be considering a move and the Clergy Appointments Adviser maintains a similar list which is circulated to all bishops, archdeacons and patronage trusts. If the decision is made not to advertise, it is important to be clear what the reasons for the decision were and to be able to justify it. Where open advertising is not used the bishop or patrons need to be particularly aware of the need to be fair to all candidates and must not use the process as a cover for unlawful discrimination.
- If an office requires particular skills, or is in an area where offices are hard to fill, a more direct 'search' may also prove more effective than open advertising.

83. Even if an office is not advertised in the national Church press, it is now common for vacancies to be advertised electronically on the diocesan website, parish website, patron's website and through the Clergy Appointments Adviser.

84. When appointing an incumbent, a PCC can request that the office be advertised but the final decision rests with the patron. The Crown and Lord Chancellor (where patrons) offer parishes the choice of whether to advertise or not. In many cases the patron will expect the PCC to meet the costs of the advert(s) if they request this. In some dioceses the cost of advertising is shared between the bishop, patron and PCC.

85. Advertising is usually followed by a process of multi-candidate interviews in appointing ordained priests, whilst 'search' is more often followed by candidates being interviewed one at a time. However, there is no reason why this should necessarily be so. Patrons sometimes advertise and still send candidates one at a time and conversely they may search for candidates but invite several for interview on the same day. It is also possible to start with one system and switch if this does not lead to an appointment.

86. Sometimes there is only one applicant and although those appointing may prefer to have a choice, that applicant may be a good fit for the office.

87. However they are found, and whatever process is used, it is essential that from that point on applicants are considered in the same way and a fair process is followed when assessing their suitability for the office.

Shortlisting

88. Application forms encourage applicants to show how they satisfy the person specification by using specific examples. This ensures all candidates are considered against the same benchmarks (recorded in the person specification). This approach ensures that the best candidate for the job is selected in a transparent way and can help to protect against allegations of discrimination. It also demonstrates as far as possible at this stage that the candidate is capable of exercising effective ministry in the office. Those who it is considered may be capable of exercising effective ministry may be called to interview.

89. Even if there is only one candidate, it is important to go through this process. If there are any doubts that they meet the minimum benchmark, even with further support and training, they should not be appointed.

90. The responsibility for shortlisting rests with patrons for incumbents, bishops (or their representative) for priests in charge and incumbents for assistant curates. However, in both situations they may choose to involve others and will have to decide which course to follow based on the circumstances. It is useful to ask others who will be involved in interviewing to shortlist as this helps with continuity and consistency and means that feedback to candidates can be given by the bishop's representative.

91. If a one-at-a-time process is to be followed then the patron or whoever is responsible for the appointment will draw up a list in order of preference and will only contact one candidate at a time. If a competitive interview is to be arranged then agreement will have to be reached before shortlisting as to how many candidates can be comfortably included in the day.

92. It is recommended that an episcopal reference and Clergy Current Status Letter are taken up on all shortlisted candidates before interview.

Interviewing

93. There are broadly two ways in which interviews are conducted, either 'one by one' or through multi-candidate interview. There used to be a view that interviewing several candidates at once precludes the use of discernment and is somehow inappropriate in a Church context. This is not so: multi-candidate interviews use a structured approach to help to assess the process of discernment. They also provide diverse range of candidates and which can help the PCC to make the best possible match between the post and the candidate. The Crown Nominations Commission now routinely interviews three candidates when considering vacancies for diocesan bishops.

94. Whatever type of interview is used, it is essential to avoid discriminatory questions. Interview training for panel members is strongly recommended.

One-by-one interviews

95. The one-by-one approach is more usually associated with patrons who look for candidates by 'search', but this is not necessarily the case. The patron will have shortlisted the candidates and arranged their names in order. They then approach the candidates one by one and the PCC representatives interview the candidates one by one.

96. The focus of the method is that all concerned should be seeking to discover whether this person is God's choice for this office. This process means that the interview can be more informal. However, the discussion is still about whether the candidate meets the requirements of the office and whether it is the right office for them and care must be taken not to ask questions which are unjustified.

97. The disadvantage of this approach is that it places those conducting the interview in a difficult situation because they don't know how the candidate might compare with others who would be interested in being considered. It can be difficult in this situation to demonstrate that the best person has been chosen for the office, particularly if there is no consistent evidence as to why candidates have been approached in the first place. However, by asking candidates to complete application forms rather than CVs it can help to ensure that candidates are assessed in a consistent way.

Competitive interviews

98. The practical arrangements for the interview day should be planned carefully, as the candidates will gain an unfavourable impression of the office and potential colleagues if the arrangements are handled badly. Some candidates may be disadvantaged if the arrangements are not handled fairly and with equal consideration to all. Arrangements will need to take account of the expressed wishes of candidates about the confidentiality of their application.

99. It is good practice for the composition of the panel to be balanced so far as possible in terms of age, gender and race, although it is recognised that this cannot always be achieved.

100. The invitation to interview should indicate the time and place of the interview, the names of interviewers and their roles, the format of the day, including any special instructions e.g. that a presentation is to be given and any details, any arrangements for visiting the parish with travel arrangements.

101. If this is an incumbent appointment the patron will need to make clear how they expect the decision process to work as legally they have the right to choose the candidate – the bishop and PCC representatives only have the right to accept or decline the nomination.

Meeting other people in the parish(es)

102. If the candidates are to meet other groups on the day, the guiding principles should be that

- it is clear to candidates when they are being assessed and when discussions are set up to inform them;
- each candidate has the same opportunity to meet the same people and to discuss the same issues; and
- if the purpose is to provide information about the role and the context, each candidate meets the group prior to the formal interview.

103. It is helpful for candidates to meet other members of the ministry team and, in the case of incumbent level offices, the Area Dean and/or Lay Chair.

104. There are risks as well as advantages in using social gatherings at which a group of candidates are expected to ‘work a room’. It is worth considering whether there are other ways of testing the applicant’s facility in interacting with others in a constructive way. Those making the appointment will need to think carefully about how this can be objectively measured.

105. It is important that decisions are only taken on the basis of evidence about how any candidate met the person specification. Care must be taken with information obtained from candidates during briefing meetings; and the chair of the interview panel may ask for disclosure of any such information prior to the formal interview, so that any issues raised may either be dealt with or set to one side. Also, parish representatives have been chosen to take a decision on behalf of the parish which means that they are tasked to do just that – the parish is not entitled to expect to make a collective decision based on their impressions of the candidates.

106. All information about candidates can properly be taken into account so long as it has been carefully assessed both for accuracy and relevance. This assessment process is particularly important in using information gleaned about candidates from other sources, for example information put into the public domain by candidates themselves on social networking sites or blogs.

Visit by members of the applicant’s household

107. Candidates may well wish their spouse and/or other members of their household to have a chance to visit the parish and perhaps meet some of the parish officers. This is a request that should be accommodated. Those designing selection processes need, however, to be very careful about inviting spouses and others to a formal visit to the

parish. If it is the local custom to invite spouses etc. with candidates so they may jointly decide about the suitability of the office there should be a separate (but parallel) programme. It is the candidate who is being interviewed with a view to appointment not the couple (or their children).

Interview structure, questions and assessment form

108. It is not good practice to have large interview panels. The panel needs to be representative, but too large a panel can be inhibiting for candidates and make it difficult for everyone to participate fully and ask questions. On the other hand, particularly in a multi-parish benefice it is difficult to accommodate all of the parish representatives let alone others who may be key such as the lay Chair. In the circumstances it may be possible to have a series of panels interviewing on different areas who then meet to compare notes. This needs careful handling and requires a large time commitment of panels and candidates.

109. If there is more than one candidate, normal good practice is that all interviews should be held on the same day, although there may be circumstances where candidates are interviewed one by one until an appointment is made.

110. Interviews should be structured and appropriate for the type of office. Preparing and structuring the interview will help improve its ability to predict how a candidate will undertake the role and also assist in the comparison of candidates. In a good interview the candidate will do most of the talking. Interviewing techniques and tips are at **Annex E**.

111. The interview will look at the role description and person specification and the specific challenges of the role and consider the skills, experience and strengths of the candidates against these areas. Sample questions are at **Annex F**. It may also include an exploration of vocational issues relating to the candidates' individual ministries and how their calling and experience will enable them to fulfil the needs of this particular role.

112. It is for the candidate to show how they could exercise effective ministry in office and could cope with the stresses of the office. The interview will take place in the context of prayer, and the systematic testing of each candidate against the role description and person specification will include exploring the insights gained through the process of discernment.

113. All panel members may take notes of the interview but at least one member of the panel will need to record an evaluation of candidates against the role description and person specification. This should be completed on all candidates as it will assist in any subsequent one-to-one meeting with the candidate and with feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

114. It should be made clear at the outset how the decision will be reached, both in terms of who will make the decision and how the candidates will be assessed.

115. Panel members should prepare questions before the interview, and agree who will be asking which questions. There should be a set list of question areas, based on the person specification, which the panel will use to determine these questions. Some questions will be used to probe further the answers given on the application form. It is not necessary to

ask all of the candidates exactly the same questions, but it is important to ensure that all of the ground is covered with each candidate. Gaps in a candidate's history should be probed at interview.

116. It is strongly recommended that all panel members have undertaken interview skills training. As well as learning about questioning techniques this helps panel members to be aware of cultural stereotyping and how to avoid making cultural assumptions – it is vital to avoid asking any questions that may be discriminatory, as this may result in claims being made to an employment tribunal eg. “As you are 62, do you think you’ll have the energy to take on these parishes? We were really looking for someone younger”. See further Annex A on Equality and Diversity Issues.

117. The interview is also an opportunity for the candidate to discover whether the office is suitable for them – the process is one of mutual discernment. It is helpful to tell them as much as possible about the parish and any specific requirements of the office in order to better inform their decision, and they should be encouraged to ask questions of the interview panel and PCC representatives.

118. If discussion about the terms of appointment are needed (e.g. for SSMs where it will be important to establish when and to what extent the candidate will be available in the parish), the parish's expectations should be made clear at the outset, for example the essentials of time to be worked and any residence requirements. However the opportunity could be taken at interview to explore any flexibility about the basis on which the office could be offered and accepted. Care would need to be taken in any refusal to be flexible on the part of the diocese. It may be justified on the basis of the essential elements of the role description.

119. Some candidates may need assistance at interviews - for example access arrangements, signing interpreter and/or T loop induction. Candidates with disabilities should be assessed against the same criteria as other candidates, and consideration given to where a reasonable adjustment can be made to the relevant aspects of the office.

120. It is important that candidates are clear about the process and timescale for reaching a decision. Decisions (which may include provisional decisions) should be conveyed promptly.

Additional selection methods

121. The interview is an important part of the selection process, but it is also useful to build up an understanding of a candidate's strengths and gaps against the profile via other means, which might include the following:

122. *Presentations* - These are usually prepared in advance on a topic specified by the panel. They demonstrate ability to present knowledge and lateral thinking and to communicate vision and ideas about areas of work relevant to the role.

123. *Exposition of a biblical text* - Candidates would be requested to prepare a brief talk on a particular biblical text. This would give insights into someone's teaching style and their ability to communicate theological ideas and to engage people.

124. *Tests* - There are different schools of thought on the value of testing as part of a selection process. They can be useful as a way of identifying areas that it would be useful to explore further with candidates but it is important that they are used carefully. It is advisable to get professional advice if the use of tests is being considered and the diocesan HR adviser may be able to offer advice on this. Tests have a variety of costs and must be used consistently to ensure fairness.

Feedback after the interview

125. It is good practice for feedback to be offered to candidates who have been interviewed, successful and unsuccessful. The arrangements in each case should be set out at each stage i.e. in the application pack and the letter inviting shortlisted candidates to interview. This should be given by the bishop or bishop's representative (panel chair or member) after the decision is conveyed and should be based on the interview notes. It should help the candidate to understand how far they met the person specification. It should be borne in mind that interview notes and any other notes or communications relating to the individual could be requested by the interviewee by way of a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act or be disclosable in subsequent legal proceedings.

126. Care for unsuccessful candidates should be both pastoral and developmental. Action may need to be taken post-interview to prepare the candidate for other offices and this is best done in the home diocese, perhaps as part of the MDR/CMD process. Good post-interview feedback is needed if this is to be effective.

127. Guidance on feedback is at **Annex G**.

References

128. The purpose of references is to verify the identity of the applicant and to acquire some indication of the candidate's suitability for the office. It can be unwise to put too much weight on what is said in a reference, as it will relate to performance in a different role in a different context, and can sometimes be out of date or incomplete. Nevertheless a reference must be honest and fair and not 'pull any punches' if there are things that need to be said

129. Obtaining references should not be seen as a substitute for having good selection mechanisms or using the process to demonstrate whether a candidate is suitable for a particular appointment. They perform a very different function from the bishop's Clergy Current Status Letter ('CCSL'). See paragraphs 140-141.

130. References should be sought from a range of people (usually three) with a direct and up-to-date knowledge of the candidate and should include the person who has oversight of them in their current role. One of the references should be from a senior lay person such as a current churchwarden or head teacher of the local school. These three references will be in addition to the reference from the bishop which will always be sought.

131. It is helpful to include a copy of the role description and person specification with the request. This encourages the referee to comment on the candidate's aptitudes in relation to the specific skills or abilities needed to exercise effective ministry in the office. Broader 'character references' of the more traditional kind are now of limited value. The law requires references to be balanced and fair. This means that, if there has been a problem in a previous post, it should be alluded to in a reference. Equally, good points should also be included. Advice from the diocesan HR adviser about references may be sought.

132. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, the subject of a reference may ask the person to whom the reference is given for sight of the reference. Although any expectation of confidence is a factor to be taken into account, it will not necessarily be sufficient to prevent the need for disclosure by the receiving party (although the receiving party is entitled (though not obliged) to take steps to protect the identity of any individuals referred to in the reference, including the author of the reference, for example by redacting their names). In the event of any legal proceedings in relation to the reference, that reference would of course have to be disclosed. Those writing references should bear this in mind, and, ideally should give a copy of the reference to the candidate. If there are issues which need to be addressed in a reference about problems, these should have been addressed in the current office so that anything said is not a surprise to the candidate. It is not sufficient to gloss over them because they haven't been. In these circumstances, say, where a problem has only just arisen, it is for the referee to tell the candidate that s/he will be mentioning this in the reference.

133. References can be taken up before interview. However if a candidate does not want their referees to be approached prior to interview, no inferences should be drawn – for example clergy in certain types of employment e.g. clergy with express contracts of employment may be at risk of losing their job if it is known they are considering leaving. It is recommended that an Episcopal reference is taken up prior to interview, along with the CCSL.

134. References should be kept confidential by the person administering the process. It is good practice not to disclose them to panel members until after a provisional decision has been made and even at this point they should be summarised by the chair rather than passed round. This ensures that the views of interviewers are not influenced by what they have read but enables views formed during the interview to be affirmed.

135. If the person administering the process has concerns about issues raised in the references these should be shared with the chair of the interview panel before interview and questions devised to test these areas, which would then be asked of all candidates. Alternatively, and depending on the concerns, these may be addressed in the interview with the bishop but this may mean it is not possible to make a provisional decision and result in delay and difficult handling issues.

136. It is recognised that references are widely used at an earlier stage and the issues are discussed and further guidance offered at **Annex H**.

The offer process

137. In the case of incumbent appointments both the PCC representatives and bishop need to accept the patron's nomination. If they do not, the patron has a right of appeal to the archbishop.

138. The bishop will have two concerns:

- to satisfy himself or herself that the candidate is suitable for the role; and
- to satisfy himself or herself that certain canonical and other measures of suitability have been met.

139. The bishop's office, in particular when he or she is the patron, is therefore likely to want to co-ordinate the process once a provisional decision has been made. There may also be further discussions about the terms on which the appointment is to be made which will involve the bishop or the diocesan office, for example about the house.

140. In the case of assistant clergy offices, it is likely to be the incumbent who makes the offer. However, this needs to be co-ordinated with the bishop's office as the bishop will need to licence the candidate and consequently may wish to interview them personally before a provisional offer is made. The offer must be subject to clearance by the DBS (i.e. via an enhanced criminal records check (including a check of the barred lists)).

Separate interview with the bishop

141. If the bishop has not been part of the selection panel, he or she is likely to want to (and should) interview the preferred candidate before agreeing to accept the patron's nomination or to licence him or her. The bishop will also want to satisfy himself or herself on the candidate's suitability for office in relation to their ability to comply with the canons, the Ordinal and any agreed Church of England protocols for priests. However, care should be taken not to ask questions that may be construed as being discriminatory.

Offer

142. If, after interview, the bishop is content and, in the case of incumbent appointments the PCC representatives and the bishop have formally accepted the patron's nomination, a provisional offer of the office may be made. This would be subject to:

- receipt of satisfactory references (if not previously obtained);
- a satisfactory outcome to the "clergy current status letter" procedure (see below);
- DBS clearance (see **Annex A**);
- occupational health clearance or whatever arrangements a diocese may have in place for further medical assessment. This may include checking whether any

reasonable adjustments are required for the candidate to carry out the functions of the office.

143. A “clergy current status letter” will be used by the bishop to carry out the bishop’s canonical obligation to enquire into the status of the appointee in relation to disciplinary, civil or criminal court proceedings or investigations or serious pecuniary difficulties (this process replaces the ‘safe to receive’ enquiries). In many dioceses these enquiries are made prior to interview.

Co-ordinating the announcement

144. Once these clearances have been received, the appointee has formally accepted the offer and, in the case of incumbent appointments, the patron has given notice of presentation to the bishop, a public announcement may be made. It is good practice to announce this in both the ‘old’ and ‘new’ parishes at the same time.

Date of move

145. The appointee is normally expected to give not less than three months’ notice of leaving their old office. This can be varied by agreement not least when a benefice has been vacant for some time and it is important for the new incumbent to take up office as quickly as possible. It will not normally be helpful for the period of notice to be extended and so delay appointment.

146. Generally the appointee will move into their new parish some weeks before the licensing or institution. The annual leave to which the appointee will be entitled in their old and new offices will be calculated. Removal and resettlement leave and grants may be payable depending on diocesan policy.

147. It is recommended that the statement of particulars of office is issued before the appointee moves into the house (although technically this may be issued no later than 28 days after taking up the appointment).

Licensing or institution and induction

148. For an incumbent appointment, the bishop serves notice on various parties and the registrar must give notice to the PCC secretary who is required to post a church door notice for two weeks before the institution can take place. The bishop then institutes the appointee (or collates where the bishop is the patron) and the archdeacon inducts him or her into the property. In a priest in charge or curate appointment, the bishop licenses the appointee.

Settling in

149. The office holder will take responsibility for settling in and drawing up a programme for this but the parish, patron and the bishop's representative do have a particular responsibility in supporting the successful candidate during their settling in period (and beyond) - time invested at this stage can be immensely productive. Care expended in making the appointment can be wasted if the investment in the candidate stops at that point - the initial period of familiarisation and training is critical.

150. The bishop or archdeacon will introduce the idea of a six month review as a way of discussing any potential adjustments to the role specification.

151. Agreement should be reached about what is expected, what will be achieved and the time frame for this. It is recommended that an induction programme is drawn up giving a picture of the context in which the person appointed will be exercising their ministry, as detailed in the role description - support and training should be offered in line with this. It may be useful to involve the rural or area dean in this.

152. It is helpful for new office holders to receive feedback regarding their progress- this could form part of a series of informal meetings to discuss the office holder's achievements during the induction period. In this way, areas where training may be required can be identified.

Six month review

153. It is also recommended, since the introduction of common tenure, that a formal meeting be held between the bishop or archdeacon, or the incumbent if it is an assistant curate post, and the office holder after six months to review the role description and to discuss work priorities and development objectives. Further guidance about the six month meeting can be found in the MDR Principles and the Archbishops' Council's guidance on writing role descriptions.

MDR and CMD

154. The cycle of MDR will begin after the six month review. The arrangements for this vary from diocese to diocese but are within the framework set out in the MDR principles issued by the Archbishops' Council:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/ministry_development_review_guidance.pdf

This provides a regular opportunity for the office holder to look at work priorities and identify development objectives which are then met through appropriate CMD. The role description and person specification are foundational documents for successful MDR and CMD. MDR also gives the opportunity to check whether the role description is still up-to-date.

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