**Guidelines on deployment to title post and IME Phase 2 for Ordained Pioneer Ministers.**

**1. Introduction**

* These updated guidelines based on the 2009 Guidelines on Deployment have been drawn up by the National Advisor for Pioneer Development with Ministry Division, IME Officers and those working with Pioneers and they give specific advice on IME Phase 2 for candidates who are recommended for training and deployed to their title post as Ordained Pioneer Ministers (OPM).
* These guidelines are not a substitute for a formal diocesan policy on IME Phase 2 for all candidates (including OPMs). Rather they are intended to offer key principles agreed at national level which can be applied in different contexts as a guide for candidates, bishops and directors of training for IME Phase 2 in the complex but vital process of drawing together training proposals.
* Ordained Pioneer Ministry is a distinct focus of the Church’s one ordained ministry. The Guidelines for Title Posts assume that each OPM will be focussing for at least 50% of their time over the curacy as a whole on developing one or more fresh expressions of church. As in IME Phase 1, there will be overlap between the training needs of OPMs and those of all newly ordained deacons and priests. It is assumed that all OPM candidates will be part of IME Phase 2 provision in their diocese in some way. But there are also generic and distinctive requirements for IME Phase 2 for this group of candidates which need to be carefully considered in the planning of training pathways. Dioceses must **not** therefore assume that OPM candidates will simply fit in with existing IME Phase 2 provision.
* The OPM guidelines indicate that by the end of the first post a candidate should be adequately prepared to take on a range of posts within ordained ministry, including that of incumbent. It is therefore important that every candidate gain appropriate experience of general parish ministry and occasional offices in order to be equipped both for their pioneering work and their future roles. Getting the balance right between a focus on pioneer ministry and equipping for wider ministry is fundamental to an effective Pioneer curacy. This balance of time should be a key focus of discussion in planning the title post and in drawing up a working agreement and should be carefully monitored by all those involved in the training programme. It is important that the Pioneer does not either ignore the Parish elements or feels that they are continually being taken away from their pioneering work. It may also shift over time. For example, it would be normal that an increasing amount of time will be spent on developing a fresh expression of church in years 2, 3/ 4 of the curacy.
* As with all curates, pioneers will be subject to the standard diocesan procedures for Assessment at the end of Curacy using the formation criteria at the end of IME Phase 2 for curates and OPMs but it will need to be appropriate to a Pioneer curate who is able to take on a range of posts within ordained ministry.

The Church of England now has a working definition of a Pioneer approved by Ministry Council (2016).

*Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit’s initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish new contextual ecclesial Christian community.*

We have also established two ways of Pioneering in a Church of England context

Fresh start Pioneers. These are classic pioneering types who start new things, love ‘firsts’, and enjoy working from a blank canvas. They may well need to be released from expectations of an Incumbency type Parish role and allowed to pioneer in places where the Church is not present while remaining closely connected with the diocese.

Church based Pioneers. These pioneers want to work from a church/parish base but from there develop fresh expressions of church in a mixed economy way expanding the growth and reach of the local church

**2. Setting up a Pioneer Curacy**

It must be remembered that the essential element in a **title post for an OPM is that the post should include the development of one or more fresh expression of church as the main focus of the candidate’s ministry during their curacy.**

The planning for this should be at a very early stage. Ideally Dioceses are considering Title Posts as soon as Pioneers begin their training at a TEI. The first questions will be about whether the Pioneer stays in their present context and further develops their own initiative for their Title Post or if they go to a new Parish. If it is a new context, will they be inheriting and developing further a fresh expression of church or will they be expected to imagine and initiate something new.

1. Why and how? This will require Diocesan Senior Staff, including Vocation, Training & Mission staff to ask important missional questions about whether a Pioneer curacy is required in a particular context. The main missional question to ask is, ‘What is God’s Spirit doing at the moment outside of our current structures and how can we work with Him in God’s mission?’

2. Considering whether the Training Incumbent (TI) has the disposition to understand the requirements of training a Pioneer. They need to understand Pioneers, pioneering, contextual mission and supervision of Pioneers but they do not need to be a Pioneer themselves. It needs to be clearly understood by the TI that OPMs are usually not called to be a parish vicar in the traditional sense and that gaining experience of running a parish will be of second priority to them. The TI will need to offer both support and accountability for the Pioneer, acting as their champion and friendly critic.

3.Thinking ahead about how the Parish will need preparation to understand the different role of a Pioneer from a traditional curate so they have realistic expectations.

4. Taking into account the previous experience of the Pioneer in starting fresh expressions and whether they are more suited to a fresh start or church based role.

However, as a minimum the candidate should be assured of:

* The active support of the incumbent(s), PCC(s), diocese and other ecumenical groups involved for the development of the fresh expression of church
* Some indication of the kind of fresh expression of church which is envisaged and why it is needed. There are a variety of ways in which pioneers might be deployed which reflects what God is doing presently, Diocesan needs and the particular skills of the Pioneer. The candidates may be suitably deployed to develop a single fresh expression of church or to encourage a range of different fresh expressions of church across a group of parishes, deanery or ecumenical partnership or to minister in a fresh expression of church which is already up and running. It may be the Parish has clear ideas about what they want the Pioneer to do or it may be the Pioneer’s responsibility to discern how they go about developing a fresh expression. The resulting decisions will impact the expectations of the outcomes of the Pioneer’s work during their curacy.
* It is essential that thought is given to succession of leadership at, and the ongoing life of, the fresh expression of church following the departure of the OPM. Training successors to lead this fresh expression of church (probably lay) will be a vital part of the closing year of the OPM curacy. If the Pioneer Curate is not an adequate trainer, this gap needs filling by others.
* Clear guidance of the likely time scale of the curacy. This includes resources available for this new work and whether there is a team which will be made available for the task of starting something new and sustaining it into the medium and long term. The length of the Pioneer curacy needs to be guided by the availability of resources and team plus the extent of the pioneering challenge that the particular opportunity identified presents.

**3. Oversight and training during the Pioneer Curacy**

It is important that the TI and Parish understand the need to be adaptable and responsive to what is happening in the mission context for and with the Pioneer. Particular care should be taken by training institutions in handing on responsibility for training for OPM candidates from IME Phase 1 to IME Phase 2 to make recommendations about particular learning pathways through the candidate’s final report.

OPM candidates vary considerably in their learning needs and prior learning and experience. There will therefore be a need, to be prepared to tailor learning pathways to the particular candidate and to develop a culture of appropriate flexibility about the content of training.

**Working Agreements** are vital in ensuring that proper expectations of the TI, Pioneer, Parish and Diocese are properly met. It is important that everyone involved is clear about the expectations of the curacy and their particular role within it. There is a danger of the agreement being either too defined so there is no space for adaption and development or what is being asked of the Pioneer being so wide and nebulous the Pioneer is not clear what is really being asked of them.

A number of areas relating to IME Phase 2 should be raised, agreed and recorded in the OPM candidate’s Working Agreement. These include:

1. The percentage of time to be spent in pioneering activities. These Guidelines assume that each OPM will be focussing for at least 50 % of their time over the curacy on developing one or more fresh expressions of church. The percentage will need to be reviewed annually and may develop as the fresh expression of church develops. The second year may be a 60/40 split and the third year up to 80/20 or even 100% pioneering

2. The arrangements for supervision of the Pioneer including frequency of meetings and reporting arrangements. Experience suggests ideally the Pioneer works best with a TI and a Pioneer consultant. The TI oversees the Pioneer and their training and development and has responsibility for the Pioneer. The Pioneer consultant, who could be some from within or outside the Diocese with specialist Pioneer experience acts as a consultant to the OPM for the specifically pioneering part of their work. They would ideally meet with the Pioneer about every 8 weeks to discuss particular Pioneer issues. (This could be by Skype or similar means.)

3. The anticipated dispensations from the “normal” diocesan programme for IME Phase 2. An OPM candidate in IME Phase 2 needs space to be created for Pioneer study and training. The total time available for study and training for a stipendiary OPM should be the same over the course of a year as for any stipendiary curate. In order to create some space for specialist work therefore there will need to be a corresponding reduction in or dispensation from other parts of the IME Phase 2 programme. Whilst it is difficult to generalise, as an approximate guideline we suggest that ideally 50% of candidates IME Phase 2 programme should be specialising in skills specific to pioneer ministry. The danger is of trying to cram everything required of all curates and the requirements for Pioneers into one programme. It is important to remember that as stated in the criteria, ‘The Formation Criteria are fundamentally aspirational: they are goals to work and develop towards rather than criteria that can be **‘fully met’.** This means that they should be used as a vocational tool ‘ … (p4)

Dioceses struggle sometimes in providing effective training for one or two Pioneers so it may be helpful to consider linking up with other Dioceses for Pioneer training or finding other suitable organisations that could provide appropriate training. The Formation Criteria suggest, ‘It is likely that dioceses will need to draw upon resources from other institutions in order to achieve sufficient sharpness of focus on pioneer ministry in IME Phase 2.’

4. The learning network provision required for the OPM.

All OPM candidates will need to be part of an effective learning network. It should be more than a support group but should provide opportunity for rigorous reflection on experience. A facilitated learning network should provide a key component in the OPM specialist part of IME Phase 2. It could operate within the Diocese or link up Pioneers across a region. It might be a Diocesan Pioneer Hub, or could be formed or by linking up with specialist Pioneer groups through organisations such as CMS, Centre for Pioneer Learning & Church Army. Pioneer curates should be encouraged to join the National Community of Pioneers.

**4. Learning Outcomes and Assessment specific to Ordained Pioneer Ministers**

*The Formation Criteria for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England* (Dec 2014) comments on OPMs that ‘those who are serving a curacy for ordained pioneer ministry will do so through pathways that enable them to embed their learning in fresh expressions praxis through sustained and systematic action reflection. Although the formation criteria described will be used to discern a minister’s readiness to take up a pioneer ministerial post (and, where appropriate, a pioneer post of responsibility) at the completion of initial ministerial education, progress towards the criteria will have been achieved through a bespoke IME Phase 2 pathway for pioneer ministry. It is likely that dioceses will need to draw upon resources from other institutions in order to achieve sufficient sharpness of focus on pioneer ministry in IME Phase 2. Ordained pioneer ministers will work towards the formation criteria with continual reference to the formation of new ecclesial communities through contextual mission. The mix of skills, gifts, knowledge and expertise that they bring to their training, formation and ministry, will differentiate them.’

The Formation criteria states that at the end of IME Phase 2 ‘Ordained pioneer ministers are particularly flexible, resourceful, innovative and entrepreneurial in their approach to ministry and mission beyond the existing church, thriving in unfamiliar cultures and contexts.

1. They are able to plant, lead and mature a fresh expression of church.

2. They are able to inspire and nurture the risk-taking of others

3. They enable others to develop the capacity to learn from failure and success.

4. They are proficient in contextualising the Church of England’s tradition and practices for a variety of models of fresh expressions of church.

5. They are proficient in clearly articulating the faith to those outside the church in a variety of ways and contexts.

6. They are able to identify, train, develop and use leaders within fresh expressions of church and release them to develop ecclesial communities in other contexts.

7. They are able and willing to develop sustainable, personal and communal support in a fresh expression context within a mixed economy, including belonging to a peer learning network.

**5. Post curacy considerations.**

It is highly likely that the fresh expression(s) of church formed through the Pioneer curacy will need further and ongoing help and support to develop to fully functioning congregations. Often something has only just started got going over a three year curacy period. The importance of this needs to be recognised and worked upon right from outset of the planning for the curacy and not just towards the end of the curacy. It vital that leaders (probably lay) are identified, trained and released to continue to develop the fresh expression as it matures. This has to be a high priority for the Incumbent, the parish and the Pioneer curate. It is essential that succession and sustainability of the emerging fresh expression of church does not become also-ran factors in the consideration of the Pioneer curacy.

During the curacy it is vital to consider if ……………….

* The Pioneer will stay on post curacy to further develop the fresh expression to maturity.
* The Pioneer moves to a different post that rigorous succession plans have been put into place.
* The Pioneer curate has from the beginning of the new project established as one of their priorities developing local lay leaders to take over the leadership of the fresh expression so it is not dependent on the curate.

**6. Appendix**

Essential downloadable reading

Church of England Formation criteria

<https://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/initial-ministerial-education.aspx>

Good practice in deploying and working with Pioneer Curates <http://www.churcharmy.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=154975>

The Appointment and Training of Training Incumbents. Guidance on Good Practice. <http://www.ministrydevelopment.org.uk/appointment-and-training-of-training-incumbents>

David Male, Pioneering Leadership, Disturbing the Status Quo? Grove booklets <https://grovebooks.co.uk/collections/leadership/products/l-14-pioneering-leadership-disturbing-the-status-quo>