



A guide to ministry with Permission to Officiate

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Thank you for expressing an interest in applying for Permission to Officiate in the Diocese of Salisbury. This guide is intended to explain the procedures that we follow. We do hope that you will wish to apply and look forward to hearing further from you.

Introduction

Salisbury is a largely rural diocese with many multi-parish benefices and team ministries. The ministry of the Church is a shared endeavour between laity and clergy, between those who are stipended and those who are self-supporting. An important element in this matrix is the ministry of clergy holding Permission to Officiate (PtO). We have in the diocese less than 200 licensed clergy but more than 400 clergy with PtO without whose help many benefices would be unable to function as effectively as they do. We are richly blessed by, and very much value, the ministry of those holding PtO.

In July 2018 the House of Bishops published a [Policy on granting Permission to Officiate](#)¹ setting out an agreed structure and framework within which PtO operates. In particular, the Policy contains provisions to ensure that:

- the process for agreeing and reviewing PtO is carried out in accordance with the House of Bishop's [Safer Recruitment: Practice Guidance](#)²;
- PtO clergy receive appropriate pastoral support, and are not asked to do more than they are willing or able to provide;
- appropriate use is made of their talents; and
- their ministry is properly acknowledged and affirmed and supported.

This document outlines some of those provisions.

Application process

Generally, all clergy who wish to exercise public ministry must hold either PtO or the Bishop's licence. A current PtO will give you authority to minister in any parish in the diocese at the invitation of the incumbent or priest in charge, subject to any restrictions in your PtO certificate.

We process applications for PtO through either the Ramsbury Office³ or the Sherborne⁴ Office (depending upon where you propose principally to exercise a ministry) and references to 'the Bishop' in this document are references to the Bishop of Ramsbury or the Bishop of Sherborne, as appropriate. If you would like to apply for PtO, please be in touch with the relevant Office.

In order to process your application in accordance with the *Safer Recruitment* guidance, we will

- ask you to complete an application form and confidential declaration form (both of which may be obtained from the relevant Office),
- apply for references (including a Clergy Current Status Letter from the bishop of the diocese where you last held a licence or PtO, if not held in the diocese of Salisbury),
- ask to see your Letters of Orders (if you do not already hold a post in the diocese),

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/House%20of%20Bishops%20Policy%20on%20PTO%20July%202018.pdf>

² https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/safeguarding%20safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf

³ The Bishop of Ramsbury's Office, The South Canonry, 71 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2ER
(t 01722 438662 | e ramsbury.office@salisbury.anglican.org)

⁴ The Bishop of Sherborne's Office, The Dairy Barn, Ash Farm Courtyard, Stourpaine DT11 8PW
(t 01258 444521 | e sherborne.pa@salisbury.anglican.org)

- check that you have a clear relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate not more than three years old if you have recently held a post within the diocese or if you come from outside the diocese, process a fresh DBS application.
- ask for evidence that you have completed appropriate Church of England safeguarding training (either the Leadership module or the PTO module) within the last three years – if undertaken in this diocese we will already have a record, and
- invite you to meet with the Bishop or someone on their behalf.

The grant and renewal of PtO

The Bishop will not usually grant PtO until a period of at least six months has passed after your retirement and will usually expect you to have become rooted in the life of a benefice within the diocese.

From January 2022, if PtO is granted, it is normally for a period of not more than three years from the date of your clear DBS certificate.

There is no right to PtO, which is held at the Bishop's discretion and may be withdrawn at any time. The Bishop is not expressly required to give a reason for withdrawing PtO although it should not be withdrawn without good reason. There is no right of appeal against a withdrawal or refusal or non-renewal of PtO, but you will be given an opportunity to put the case for why your PtO should be continued, granted or renewed. The reason for the refusal, withdrawal or non-renewal should be recorded on your personal file (commonly known as a 'blue file'). You will have the right to make a subject access request and see your blue file including the reason for the refusal, withdrawal or non-renewal, although this will not include any information about third parties.

PtO is subject to regular review and may be renewed – but see the requirements under Safeguarding below. The Bishop will be particularly concerned to ensure that PtO extends only to clergy whom the Bishop feels are still capable of exercising ministry effectively, and that retired clergy are cared for if there are particular pastoral needs which impinge on ministry in old age. Once you reach the age of 80, in accordance with the recommendation in the Policy, any renewal of PtO may be for only one year at a time.

Some time before your PtO is due for renewal, the Bishop's Office will be in touch with a form to be completed and countersigned by the relevant Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge / Rural Dean ('designated responsible person' – see below) and returned to the Bishop if you wish your PtO to be renewed. It will be usual for them to meet with you to discuss your ongoing ministry. Please note that your PtO will expire unless a formal extension is obtained following an application to renew. It is therefore important to deal with the paperwork expeditiously if PtO is not to lapse inadvertently.

Designated responsible person

The Bishop will designate someone to be responsible for the immediate oversight of your ministry. The designated responsible person will

- meet you and agree expectations of the work that you will do;
- review these expectations from time to time and whenever your PtO is due for renewal;
- discuss the ministry you have carried out regularly;
- ensure that a written record of the ministry you have undertaken is sent to the Bishop, along with any change in the expectations;
- either recommend, where appropriate, and subject to the relevant safeguarding checks, that the Bishop renews your PtO when the current term is due to expire, or explain to

the Bishop why they consider that your PtO should not be renewed or should be renewed for less than three years; and

- ensure that the Bishop is kept informed about any issues or health problems, particularly when you might require additional pastoral support, or it might be necessary to consider withdrawing PtO.

The designated responsible person will usually, but not always, be the incumbent or priest in charge of the benefice where you live or worship, or the Rural Dean.

Agreed statement of expectations

If you are carrying out regular duties in a parish, you should agree with the incumbent or priest in charge (or Rural Dean in a vacancy) what duties you are expected to cover, as it is helpful for both you and those you are helping if there is a common understanding of what you are willing and able to do and for this to be recorded in writing. Any such agreement is not binding, may be changed at any time, and should be reviewed regularly.

A request to conduct **public worship** should normally be issued by the incumbent or priest in charge. When invited to conduct public worship, you should please bear in mind the following:

- The worship should be consistent with the usual pattern and conduct of worship of that church.
- Care should be taken to respect the ministry of lay people and, where the laity is regularly involved in worship, this practice should be encouraged.
- Care should be taken particularly where Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are concerned. Clergy with PtO should not assume that a request to conduct worship automatically involves preaching. In many churches, LLMs regularly preach and are involved in the ministry of the Word during the Eucharist. They should not be denied this ministry simply because there is a visiting priest. When arranging the worship, it is important to be sensitive in enquiring whether an LLM will be preaching or performing a liturgical role during the service.
- If problems arise over the question of the president's role and the practice of the LLM, the rubrics should be followed.

Expenses and fees

All expenses of formal ministry by clergy with PtO, including pastoral visits for weddings, funerals and other reasons, should be reimbursed in full by the relevant PCC or equivalent. Expenses should be the actual cost or mileage at the current rates of approved mileage allowance payments set by the diocese. Further details can be found in the booklet: [The Parochial Expenses of the Clergy: A Guide to their Reimbursement](#)⁵.

Please do not conduct funerals without the consent of the deceased person's incumbent or priest in charge. Some retired clergy may have a particular ministry to the bereaved. If you do, please arrange to meet the Rural Dean which may result in a wider ministry across the deanery or a number of benefices.

If you do conduct a wedding or a funeral at the request of an incumbent or priest in charge, you may receive two thirds of the fee due to the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). The remainder of the fee should be returned via the benefice to the DBF. If, however, you conduct a wedding at the invitation of the parties or a funeral at the invitation of the family but with the consent of the relevant incumbent or priest in charge, the whole of the fee due to the DBF must be paid to the DBF. Please see [Parochial fees – Bishop's guidelines](#)⁶.

A fee is paid to clergy with PtO for Sunday service cover in the absence of a priest due to illness, holiday or vacancy, should they wish to receive it. You should not, however, normally expect to

⁵ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/Parochial%20Expenses%20Guide%20-%202017.pdf>

⁶ https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/parishes/finance/2021-bishops-guidelines-parochial-fees-2021-dec-2020/at_download/file

receive expenses or a fee for taking a service in your usual place of worship or a church within the same multi church benefice.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to declare income from fees to HMRC.

Sickness Reporting

There is no legal requirement to report sickness.

Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)

There is no specific legal requirement to participate in the diocese's [Continuing Ministerial Development programme](#)⁷ (other than when required to do so by the Bishop – for example, safeguarding training) but you are very welcome to do so. Opportunities for CMD are also advertised on the diocesan website or in *Grapevine*, the diocesan *eBulletin*.

Clergy Discipline Measure

The Clergy Discipline Measure applies to all clergy, regardless of how their ministry is authorised, and continues to apply when they are no longer active in their ministry.

Personal Files ('blue files')

Paragraphs 87 and 89 of The House of Bishops' guidance on [Personal Files relating to Clergy \(June 2021\)](#)⁸, apply to clerics who have PtO.

(87). Where a cleric retires, the personal file should remain in the diocese in which he or she last served unless and until he or she is granted permission to officiate ('PTO') in another diocese.

(89). Where a cleric holds a licence or PTO concurrently in more than one diocese, the personal file should be held in the diocese where the cleric exercises the greater part of his or her ministry. A note should be kept on the file as to which other dioceses have issued a licence or PTO and the expiry date(s); and arrangements put in place for the appropriate staff of those dioceses to have access to the file as necessary. The other dioceses should in turn keep a record of where the personal file is held.

National Register of Clergy

The National Church Institutions (NCIs) will maintain a register of clergy with PtO in order to enable those who wish to use their ministry to know that they are properly authorised. We will keep the NCIs informed of your current status in this diocese.

Safeguarding

We aim to make our churches places where all are welcome, places where all may encounter God and his love for each and every one of us. Hospitality is a sign of a vibrant Church. But, if our churches are to be places of warm hospitality which are open to all, they will be open to those adults and children who have suffered, or are suffering, abuse and they will be open to those who have abused others in the past or who may be abusing still today. Our churches must, therefore, be not only welcoming places for all but safe places for all. Ensuring our churches are safe places is an outworking of the Gospel message and is integral to all that we do.

⁷ <https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/learning/ministry/cmd/?searchterm=CMD>

⁸ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Personal%20Files%20Relating%20to%20Clergy%202018%20Edition.pdf>

The Bishop requires all clergy with PtO to undertake appropriate diocesan safeguarding training. Failure to attend such safeguarding training when requested by the Bishop will result in your PtO being withdrawn.

Please remember that, while holding PtO:

- you must always hold a relevant clear DBS certificate not more than three years old;
- you are accountable to, and must share relevant information with, the designated responsible person or Rural Dean or Archdeacon, on all safeguarding matters;
- you are subject to the same processes as any other ordained person in the event of an allegation of past or current abuse by a child or an adult being made against you;
- you are required by law to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance relating to the safeguarding of children and adults who may be at risk and you must therefore read and familiarise yourself with the [House of Bishops' Safeguarding policies⁹](#) as well as [those of this diocese¹⁰](#), and undertake the relevant training as approved by the Bishop. The policies are available on the diocesan website.

Representation

[The Church Representation Rules¹¹](#) give a limited franchise to those with PtO. Those with PtO have the statutory right to elect one of their number, for every ten or less in a deanery, onto the house of clergy of the deanery synod, which may also co-opt those with PtO. Those so elected or co-opted may vote and stand as candidates in diocesan and General Synod elections.

Those with PtO do not have an automatic right to be members of the deanery clergy chapter, as it is not a synodical body. Practice may vary in different deaneries: some deaneries may have meetings for incumbents only; others may invite retired clergy to some or all of their meetings. Some deaneries have separate chapter meetings for retired clergy.

A cleric who has PtO in a benefice may be authorised by the Bishop to act as chair of the PCC when the incumbent is absent and/or during a vacancy. Application for such authorisation must be made by the incumbent and PCC (or the PCC only if the benefice is vacant). A cleric who is so authorised is automatically a member of the PCC. Otherwise, any cleric, whether or not they have PtO, may be co-opted. Where a cleric with PtO has been elected to the deanery synod, it is appropriate for them to be co-opted onto the PCC.

⁹ <https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/parishes/safeguarding1/national-policies>

¹⁰ <https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/parishes/safeguarding1/local-policies>

¹¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/church-representation-rules>

Support

Retired clergy are supported in their role by their Deanery Retirement Officer and Bishop's Officer. If you have moved to the diocese, when your first PtO is issued to you, you will be invited to an induction.

In the Sherborne area these are:

Bishops Retirement officer

Sherborne area	The Revd Canon John Wood	0 1 3 0 5 john.s.wood@btinternet.com	2 6 8 7 4 9
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Deanery Retirement Officers

Blackmore Vale	Mrs Sara Jacson	01747 853688	sara@thejacsonfamily.org
Dorchester	(Contact John Wood)		
Lyme Bay	The Revd Janis Moore	01308 425644	revjanismoore@gmail.com
Milton Blandford &	The Rev Canon Tina Stirling	01747 811451	tinadstirling@aol.com
Poole & North Bournemouth	The Revd Jonathan Burke	01202 577912	jonathan_burke2003@yahoo.co.uk
Purbeck	The Revd Canon Dr Tony Edmonds	0 1 9 2 9 t.e.edmonds@btconnect.com	4 5 0 0 9 7
Sherborne	The Revd Lesley McCreadie	01963 210548	vicarlesley@outlook.com
Weymouth	Ann Douglas	01305 788310	annidouglas@gmail.com
Wimborne	(Contact John Wood)		

Sherborne area Widows Officers

D o r s e t Archdeaconry	The Revd. Malcolm Hill	01202 666076	adhill40@hotmail.com
S h e r b o r n e Archdeaconry	The Rev Jane Culliford	01305 264360	janeculliford@aol.com

In the Ramsbury area these are:

Bishops Retirement officer

Ramsbury area			
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Deanery Retirement Officers

Alderbury	The Revd Len Lunn	0 1 7 2 5 len.lunn@btopenworld.com	5 1 0 3 2 2
Bradford			
Calne	The Revd Peter Giles	01793 852643	gilesoldvic@talk21.com

