



**Guidance for**  
**Self-Supporting/Non-**  
**Stipendiary Ministry**  
**2019**

## **Introduction**

Firstly a word about terminology. Both "SSM" (Self-supporting Ministry) and "NSM" (Non-stipendiary Ministry) are currently in use in our ecumenical county, SSM being the newer term and NSM the older one. Strictly speaking SSM implies fully self-supporting (no stipend and no church house), NSM may mean that but is also used for House for Duty priests (no stipend but do have a church house). For simplicity these guidelines will use the term SSM unless referring to House for Duty priests.

### **1 The nature of the ministry**

1.1 This can take a variety of forms. If the minister is in paid employment then an agreed balance will typically be struck between their parochial ministry and that exercised in the workplace - ideally with each area of ministry informing and stimulating the other. Acting as an interface between church and world can be a major contribution of SSMs. The ministry of those retired from or without paid employment will usually be focussed on the parish or benefice, but may nevertheless take a wide variety of forms and certainly need not be limited to parish ministry.

Traditionally SSMs (unlike House for Duty priests) will not have had oversight for a local church but this is now changing. As part of the new *Diocesan Ministry Strategy* and "God for All" initiative (see elsewhere on the diocesan website), the diocese is seeking to increase significantly the number of SSMs, seeing them as having a vital role in the concept of *Mission Communities* (local ecumenical groupings of congregations). It is envisaged that many SSMs will become leaders of congregations within a Mission Community, while others might have specialist roles and would minister across a whole Mission Community. Their

accountability would be to the stipendiary Mission Community leader(s). This is a developing policy and these guidelines will be kept updated to reflect this.

1.2 SSM ministry does not generally include those in the following categories derived from the regulations: those who are receiving a stipend from the Church Commissioners; those who are paid by the Central or Diocesan Boards of Finance; those who hold stipendiary Chaplaincies in recognised institutions: the Armed Forces, Prisons, Hospitals, Universities, Colleges, Schools; those who teach in Theological Colleges and Courses; those who are members of Religious Communities; those who are receiving a pension from the Church of England Pensions Board; those who have "Permission to Officiate"; those who have held licences as NSMs and have now retired from this ministry.

### **2 Training**

2.1 The same criteria apply to the selection and training of those to be ordained and licensed as SSMs as for those entering Stipendiary Ministry. The Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO), their team of Vocation Advisers and the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer are happy to talk to those considering this form of ministry. SSMs are admitted to the Holy Orders of the Church of God and, if priests, share with the Bishop and their stipendiary colleagues in the ministry of episcopate, in leadership and in calling out and enabling the ministry of the whole people of God. Consideration will be given to SSMs in making appointments such as Rural Deans or Honorary Canons.

2.2 All newly ordained SSMs are required to undertake a curacy, the duration of which may be up to 6 years according to personal circumstances (see '*The Future of Curacy*' Report

agreed by our Bishop's Council in 2017). The qualities required in training ministers are set out in *Report on Good Practice in the Appointment and training of Training incumbents* (Ministry Division, Church of England, 2014).

### **3 Where to work**

3.1 At the start of a candidate's final year in training (i.e. a year before she or he is due to be ordained deacon) the Bishop will consult with the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, the local Mission Community Leader and, if appropriate, the Diocesan SSM/NSM officer over the identification of a title parish for the candidate. A candidate can be licensed to the parish where he or she has been worshipping but it may be advisable for them to move to another parish for pastoral or training reasons. It may be desirable in some cases for a licence to relate to the Rural Dean.

3.2 SSMs, as part of the diocesan clergy strength, are expected to minister in whatever capacity the Bishop decides after consultation with the minister. In considering to what extent an SSM is deployable within the diocese consideration will be given to the requirements of the candidate's paid employment and that of his or her spouse and the education of any children of school age. The SSM may also ask for other factors to be considered. The SSM will also be asked to give views on any prospective deployment and these will be taken into account in making the final decision. Particular consideration will be given to the skills and experiences the Minister has derived from her/his secular life. In any event all SSMs are expected to be available for ministry anywhere within the deanery in which they are licensed. In this case the travel costs from home to the parish of service shall be reimbursed fully as a necessary expense of ministry. Where ministers serve in several parishes in a group, then

appropriate arrangements shall be put in place to reimburse ministers.

### **4 Ways of working**

4.1 All SSMs will have a Statement of Particulars and Role Description and should formulate a working agreement as set out in the House of Bishops Regulation 4 and the Diocesan outline (the appendix to this document). For appointments to a first curacy, attention could be given to Appendix C of "Ordained Ministry: the first four years" published by the Board for Ministry and Training). Once an appointment has been agreed, the candidate and the incumbent will work together, assisted by the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer if required, to ensure that a working agreement is in place before the candidate is licensed. Copies of the agreement and subsequent revisions should be sent to the Bishop of Carlisle, the Archdeacon, the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer and, in the case of curates, the IME 2 Officer. The broad terms of the ministry or working agreement shall be reported to the relevant PCC so that the lay leadership of the parish have an awareness of their role in supporting the duties and obligations of its ministers.

4.2 The agreement shall note what secular commitments have been agreed by the SSM in light of their ministerial commitments.

4.3 The working agreement needs to consider carefully the advisability of a post ordination support group for an SSM in the parish. It may be suitable for the training and IME Phase 2 (curacy) years but thereafter may cut across the maintenance of Ministry Team relationships.

4.4 In accordance with the Regulations, the time table for reviewing working agreements is as follows:

- a. 4 to 5 months after ordination as Deacon by the IME 2 Officer.
- b. Towards the end of the candidate's first year in ministry before ordination to the priesthood jointly by the SSM and the incumbent, and assisted by the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer if required
- c. Before the conclusion of the SSM's third year in orders (Regulation 4 note 3)
- d. At the beginning of the SSM's eighth year in orders and every five years thereafter (Regulation 4 note 3).

The review under c or d above will be undertaken in connection with the renewal of the licence and will be the occasion to review the SSM's placement. The timing of these reviews will be coordinated with the Diocesan Scheme for Ministry Review by the Ministry Review Officer to avoid duplication and overload. The working agreements, with agreed objectives, are the basis of the annual ministerial reviews and triennial appraisals.

4.5 If asked to review an SSM's working agreement the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer will consider:

- a. The SSM's role in the parish and how this is developing as the SSM gains experience;
- b. the views of the SSM, the incumbent and the Rural Dean;
- c. the SSM's current ability to be re-deployed

and make recommendations to the Bishop of Carlisle.

4.6 An enhanced DBS check will be required when any clergy person, including SSMs, takes up a post in the Diocese. The check may also take place at other times in accordance with current good practice in this area.

## **5 House for Duty**

5.1 House for Duty clergy are those who accept a house in return for specified duties in a parish. They must have been selected and trained as ministers with the potential to take up the duties of an incumbent. They may also need to be aware that in some parishes they may be the first of this type of appointment and therefore misunderstandings may arise within the parish. The broad terms of appointment will be agreed with the Bishop of Carlisle and Incumbent if the post is to be licensed to an existing officeholder. If the House for Duty minister is to be in effect Priest in Charge, the terms will be agreed directly with the Bishop by the minister.

5.2 All House for Duty clergy are licensed by the Diocesan Bishop. When House for Duty clergy reach the age of 70 years, they may ask the Bishop for permission to continue as an NSM. The house for duty arrangement will be reviewed annually after the priest concerned reaches the age of 75.

5.3 All House for Duty clergy are required to undertake Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) each year. House for Duty clergy are eligible for the same CME financial allocation as their stipendiary and SSM colleagues.

5.4 House for Duty clergy will receive a Statement of Particulars and Role Description which will include working hours, parochial and Sunday duties, holidays and time off, Continuing Ministerial Education and retreats, arrangements for staff meetings and will also detail housing and expenses.

5.5 It is important to avoid overload and thus early in the appointment there needs to be a clear understanding of what can be achieved. This means much of the paperwork and administration will need to be shared with the lay people. Committee involvement in PCC and Deanery life ought to be minimised. School work is best done in assemblies and helping staff not necessarily sitting as a governor. The existing pattern of services may be unsustainable in the available hours.

5.6 House for Duty clergy may receive any of the following:

- a. Resettlement grant;
- b. A house with Council Tax and water rates, insurance and repairs covered by the Diocese;
- c. Parish expenses;
- d. And limited payment, if they are not in other employment, are of limited means and take a considerable number of occasional services.

5.7 The above matters are to be agreed before taking office with the Archdeacon and the PCC and set out in the Terms of Appointment. House for Duty clergy are not eligible for pension contributions either from the Church Commissioners or from the Diocese. Helpful guidance is available in House for Duty Guidance Published in 2011 by the Archbishops' Council, a copy of which may be found on the Carlisle Diocesan website and at <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1228158/2011%204%2011%20hfd%20booklet.pdf>

## **6 Never too late to learn**

6.1 All newly ordained SSMs are required to undertake Initial Ministerial Education Phase 2 (the curacy programme); and Working Agreements must make provision for this. Those SSMs who are able to make the required

commitment can follow the normal scheme. Exceptionally, with the agreement of the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer and the IME Phase 2 Officer, an SSM may be allowed to undertake some other form of post ordination training.

6.2 Continuing Ministerial Development is expected of all ministers and the Diocesan CMD Officer will assist in meeting identified training needs. SSM clergy are eligible for the same CMD financial allocation as their stipendiary colleagues.

6.3 Sabbatical leave is part of continuing ministerial education, the rules of which apply equally to paid and unpaid ministers. However in the present time the church's finances cannot afford living expenses beyond those included in the stipends budget. Consideration will be given to paying a grant towards the costs of sabbatical leave for SSMs on the same basis as paid ministers though financial assistance cannot be given towards loss of earnings.

6.4 Regular diocesan meetings for SSMs will be arranged to allow updating and discussion of matters of interest and concern as well as quiet days for reflection. Incumbents and Team Leaders shall inform their SSMs of matters discussed at Chapter or Synodical meetings which affect their ministry.

6.5 Annual retreats - "It is expected that clergy will take at least an annual retreat. The form and pattern of the retreat will vary but during a year full-time clergy should set aside the best part of a week for this activity. This will not be considered as leave. In accordance with the Parochial Expenses of the Clergy 2006 guide, PCCs should be prepared to meet the cost of any bona fide fees and expenses" (Carlisle Diocese Clergy Terms of Service Handbook, 2011). For SSMs the CMD Officer advises that the expected duration of the retreat is more flexible than for full-timers. While all clergy (including SSMs) should seek PCC funding for

retreats in the first instance the CME Officer will allow clergy to ask for support from their CME allowance if need be. Reduced fees are available via the Retreat Association at [www.retreats.org.uk](http://www.retreats.org.uk)

## **7 Moving on?**

7.1 The Diocese wishes to celebrate the ministry given by its SSMs and so after the initial three-year title period post ordination an SSM's licence may be re-issued as Assistant Priest as an Office Holder under common tenure. An SSM may remain in the parish of initial licensing for a number of years but his/her role will be expected to develop with experience. Increasingly, as part of Ministry Strategy, SSMs will be taking on the oversight of parishes. At no time should the SSM be regarded as primarily a reserve to fill gaps or meet emergencies. The initial issue of a licence as an Assistant Priest or subsequent renewals to other ministerial units will be celebrated in a service of public worship in such manner as the Bishop shall direct.

7.2 Where to worship after retirement. Current diocesan policy is that SSMs are not expected to move away on retirement, as they would generally be living in their own home in the area anyway.

In contrast, Stipendiary and House for Duty clergy are normally living in the vicarage or church-provided accommodation, so would be moving out at retirement. They would be expected to move to live outside the parish/benefice/team within which they had been ministering and disconnect themselves from active involvement in the life of the church where they were serving. Apart from the practical logic, part of the rationale for this difference is that Stipendiary and House for Duty clergy would normally have

oversight, and so it would be more awkward for their successor to have them around still.

## **8 Money matters**

8.1 A first appointment grant towards the cost of robes, books and other requisites of ministry is available to those ordained into SSM ministry. If an SSM changes to a House for Duty ministry they will receive a resettlement grant to equip the minister's house and study. A first appointment or resettlement grant is about £2500 in 2019.

8.2 While SSMs normally receive no remuneration for the duties they undertake, equally they should not be out of pocket. Full expenses, at the clergy rates, should be met. This includes not only the cost of travel but also any other expenses. Good advice is available in "The Parochial Expenses of the Clergy" published annually and available from incumbents or the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council 020 7898 1792. The Inland Revenue have introduced a system of tax-free payments called Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs). Currently there is a flat rate mileage allowance of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles.

8.3 In considering the deployment of an SSM in a parish or team, the PCCs involved shall give a written acceptance of their ability fully to reimburse ministerial expenses before the SSM is licensed. The travel costs from home to the parish of service shall be reimbursed fully as a necessary expense of ministry.

8.4 Because SSMs do not normally receive fees (which are paid to the diocese to supplement stipends) for the conduct of occasional offices they should only undertake them voluntarily, except when accepting a House for Duty

Appointment which involves normal parochial duties. Nevertheless it is important that SSMs should be competent in all areas of ministry and it is much to be desired that they will feel able to conduct a sufficient number of occasional offices on a voluntary basis to ensure this. Agreed involvement in occasional offices should be shown in the job description.

Where an SSM incurs loss of earnings in order to conduct a wedding or a funeral he/she may claim additional expenses, not exceeding the fee set out in Table of Fees provided that such arrangements are first agreed, in writing, with the Parochial Church Council concerned and the Archdeacon.

8.5 There are two exceptions to the general rule that SSMs do not normally receive fees. First, SSMs who are retired may choose to receive payments for weddings and funerals in the same way as retired clergy. For this purpose, SSMs are considered to be retired when they have reached the age of 65 and are not in either paid employment or a House for Duty post. Second, in exceptional circumstances an SSM under normal retirement age who is not in paid employment and is on a low income, may receive fees in the same way as retired clergy. The relevant Archdeacon must give agreement to this in writing, following consultation with the Diocesan Secretary.

In other exceptional situations should it be felt that an SSM should be allowed to receive payment or fees the matter should be referred to the Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer in the first instance. Such an instance may be that the SSM is on a low income and is undertaking substantial work in a parish during a vacancy, in which case they may be paid a part-stipend for a period of time. SSMs should be aware of their personal tax position in respect of any payments. There is nothing to prevent any SSM making gift-aided donations to their parish.

## **9 Problems?**

9.1 SSMs are subject to the same expectations in their conduct as full-time paid clergy and attention should be paid to the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy and the evolving procedures of the Clergy Discipline Measure.

9.2 The Diocesan SSM/NSM Officer is available to give advice and support to both incumbents and SSMs on questions arising from an SSM's ministry. They are also a point of reference if relationships become strained or break down.

*Revd Nick Hallam, Carlisle Diocese SSM/NSM Officer*  
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Ref - See House of Bishops Regulations for Non-Stipendiary Ministry (ABM Policy Paper No 5, 1996, available from Church House Bookshop, (<http://www.chbookshop.co.uk/index2.asp>)

**Appendix\* to Role Description for an SSM Assistant Priest's**

**Working Agreement**

**A – The People**

The agreement is made between:

..... (SSM) and  
.....(PiC/Incumbent)  
.....(Employment Rep [if appropriate])

**B – The Licence**

The SSM is licensed as .....

**C - The SSM**

*A brief statement of the SSM's situation including residence, family and social commitments, employment, availability, gifts, and experience.*

**D - The Parish**

*A brief description of the Benefice / Parish including information about the ministry team, the regular services, significant places of ministry such as school, leisure facilities, workplace.*

**E – Employment**

*A brief description of the employment environment of the SSM including the identification of any potential ministry in the workplace*

**F – The Ministry**

*An explanation of how the ministry will be offered both in the parish and in the workplace including weekly hours of ministry, arrangements for holiday and time off, specific pastoral and liturgical responsibilities, meetings/services/groups, availability of support (such as travel, office and secretarial facilities), reimbursement of expenses, method of mutual accountability.*

**Signed**

..... (SSM)  
.....(PiC/Incumbent)  
.....(Employment Rep [if appropriate])  
.....(Date)

*The PiC/Incumbent, Employment Rep. and SSM each keep a copy. Ideally this Working Agreement should be shared with the PCC(s) and, if relevant, work colleagues.*

*It should be reviewed annually and when there is a change in circumstances affecting the agreement.*

*\*Where the Role Description indicates the general commitment required of any minister in a particular office, the Working Agreement addresses the specific manner in which the particular SSM in association with colleagues, will fulfil the requirements of the ministerial role.*