

Role of a (new TI during curacy) Training Incumbent

During a period of vacancy the Church Wardens and Area Dean are responsible for the running of the parish/benefice, supported by the Archdeacon (and, of course, any other ministers in the parish/benefice, lay and ordained.) However the Church Wardens are not responsible for the training of the curate. This lies with an appointed Training Incumbent (TI), by agreement with the curate and the Adviser for Curacy. The TI has responsibility for the curate's training, formation, and wellbeing with support from the Adviser for Curacy, Area Dean and other colleagues.

Training Incumbents are usually asked to commit themselves for the length of a curacy. However there are always exceptions, and not every vacancy is planned, so the TI will need to assess where the curate is in the training and formation process, and adapt appropriately. Please contact the Adviser for Curacy if needed for more information or help.

Training Incumbent focus:

- To agree a learning agreement with the curate (forms basis of mutual expectations)
- To meet regularly with the curate for supervision (see below)
- To be available as the first point of contact for advice and support
- To ensure the curate has the protected space to attend the required IME sessions
- To complete the relevant end of year reports
- To take part in any relevant sessions for all TIs
- To alert the Adviser for Curacy of any concerns
- If the curate is applying for their next post, to write the incumbent's reference

Building a relationship with the curate

The curate should show their TI their current learning agreement, and their last curacy end of year report. The Adviser for Curacy will give them a copy of the curate handbook. Only if time and ministry allows it is a good idea for the TI to visit the curate's church(es) or other place of ministry to familiarise themselves with the context in which the curate is ministering.

A vacancy, planned or unplanned can be very stressful for a curate. If they have formed a strong relationship with the leaving incumbent they are likely to experience some grief at the loss of the relationship, and some trepidation at the potential loss of a good training experience. They will need to invest afresh in a new training relationship with the TI and that takes time and emotional energy. They will also be facing the unknown of what will be expected of them in the vacancy and wondering if they will be up to the task. Therefore great sensitivity and confidence may be needed in the initial meetings to reassure the curate that 'all will be well'.

Relationships in the team

One of the major tasks for a curate in a vacancy is to work out what they can and can't do or should and should not do. On the one hand this is an opportunity for a curate to experience what it might be like as an incumbent, having greater responsibility and greater freedom. Most curates tend to rise to the challenge and 'fly' during this period, giving them great confidence in applying for future posts. But on the other hand this is primarily a training experience for the curate and they are not responsible in the way an incumbent is. The IT needs to help the curate navigate and be clear on their own boundaries and capacity, including supporting them in enabling the lay ministry also to flourish.

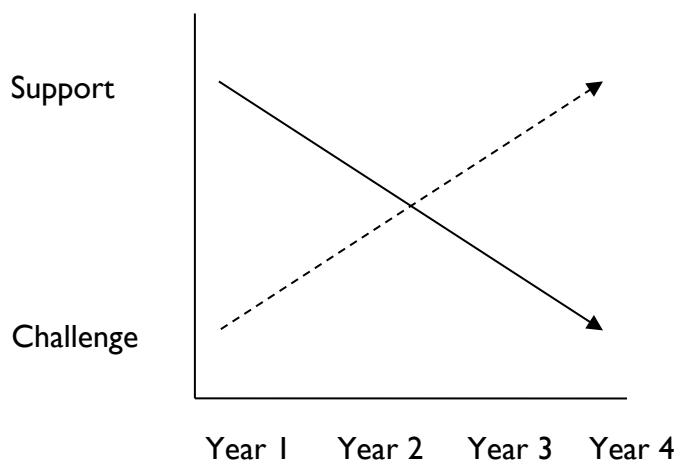
Training and the Formation Criteria

Curates are being assessed against either the Formation Criteria (ordained in 2022 or earlier) or Formation Qualities (for those ordained from 2023). They know these well as they have been part of their curacy process. A copy of these will be given to the IT. It is important early on for the IT to find out whether the curate is training for assistant or incumbent level responsibilities, stipendiary or SSM, and where they are in their development and portfolio, and what their focus is for the next year.

Supervision

Supervision is a core discipline within a curacy to enable a vitally important place where the curate and IT can reflect together on the curate's ministry. The frequency and content of supervision will vary according to the curate's experience, needs and personality and at their particular stage of curacy. After year two, monthly supervision for approximately an hour and a half is recommended but this can be agreed between the curate and IT. The Adviser for Curacy can provide some further resources on what good supervision looks like if that would be helpful.

It is helpful to check out with the curate where they think they are in any area of training in order to judge the right balance of challenge and support to give.



Conclusion

The role of the IT is clearly a rewarding experience, noting that it may also have challenging moments, and one in which the expectation is that the IT will also learn and be blessed in the process. The IT provides important support, guidance and learning during a critical time of the curacy. This is an opportunity to help a curate flourish at a time when they could be overwhelmed by responsibility, expectations and workload. This is a ministry which is greatly valued and appreciated in the diocese.

Further information for TI and Curate is found in the Curacy Handbook.

Adviser for Curacy.