

# Diocese of Lichfield – Formation and Assessment in Curacy: Appeals Procedure

## Overview

Integral to the introduction of *Common Tenure* for Ordained Ministers in the Church of England has been the establishment of time-limited training posts for Curates. As a designated training post, the Curacy prepares each Curate for the responsibilities of leadership in public representative ministry in accordance with the *Church of England Formation Criteria for Assistant Ministry/Primary Responsibility/Pioneer Ministry*, informed by *The Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* and paying due regard to all Safeguarding legislation and procedures.

In order to progress to a *Common Tenure* appointment, the capability of each Curate is formally assessed in the light of the *Formation Criteria* so that the Diocesan Bishop can, with reasonable confidence, place them in appropriate permanent *Common Tenure* posts and/or recommend them as suitable to other Diocesan Bishops in the Church of England.

Thus, all Curates are required to evidence that they satisfy national Church of England standards of ministry for *Common Tenure*, in such a way that their Diocesan Bishop is confident to commend them. Suitability of any Curate for *Common Tenure* Primary Responsibility/Assistant Ministry/Pioneer Ministry is the decision of the Diocesan Bishop. In the Diocese of Lichfield, the Area Bishop, advised by the Director of Ministry, will assess whether a Curate has met the required standards. Where appropriate, the Area Bishop may consult with the Bishop with responsibility for extended pastoral and sacramental oversight. The formation and assessment process is designed to evidence and advise Bishops of the Curate's suitability. The final decision on *Common Tenure* suitability rests in all cases with the Diocesan Bishop.

## Pattern of Formation and Assessment

In line with national good practice, the Diocese of Lichfield aims to ensure the following:

- to set out the programme of learning and ministerial development with the programme and approach to assessment at the very beginning of the Curacy;
- conduct a formal interim assessment 18-24 months into the Curacy, with a view to celebrating achievement, clarifying goals for the second part of the curacy and highlighting any areas of concern which need to be addressed;
- conduct a final assessment before the end of the Curacy.

- assess against The House of Bishops' *Formation Criteria* which set out the C of E's expectations for ministerial character, understanding and skill for ordained ministers in *Common Tenure* posts.

## Equipping Participants for the Assessment Process

Training Incumbents, Curates and Bishop's Reviewers are fully briefed about the value and significance of the assessment process, its procedures, and their particular role within it, offering clarity about formal expectations and how these are to be fulfilled.

**1. The Handbook for Curates and Training Incumbents** provides written outlines of national C of E standards of public ministry required for *Common Tenure* posts, details of the Diocese of Lichfield's assessment process, and information for moving onto First Posts of Responsibility.

**2. Training programmes** for Training Incumbents and Curates, led by the Bishop's Officers, set out the formation and assessment process in clear terms:

- all **Training Incumbents**, in advance of each curacy, are trained for their role in supervising Curates preparing for Primary Responsibility/Assistant Ministry/Pioneer Ministry. They are also provided with regular on-going support for their role during the Curacy.
- all **Curates** are briefed about the expectations and timescales of the formation and assessment process as part of their Induction in week 1 of Curacy; participation in the assessment process is supported at regular intervals throughout Curacy.

**3. The Formation and Assessment Process** is designed to support the Curate in taking responsibility for their own ministry development as a public representative minister, in partnership with Training Incumbent, Bishop's Officers and the Diocesan formation programme.

Across the duration of the Curacy, each Curate has the opportunity to engage in ministerial practice and learning which will satisfy the relevant *Formation Criteria* for *Common Tenure*, and to evidence this capability for *Common Tenure* in such a way that the Area Bishop (advised by the Director of Ministry) can commend them with confidence for a first post of responsibility.

At the end of the training period, the Area Bishop will gather together all the evidence relating to each Curate, including (but not limited to) a Curate's self-assessments and the views of his/her Training Incumbent, Diocesan Reviewer and IME2 officers, and decide as to whether or not these demonstrate that each curate has satisfied the agreed national standard for Primary Responsibility, Assistant Ministry or a Pioneer Ministry.

## Curates not recommended for *Common Tenure*

For those Curates who do not satisfy criteria for *Common Tenure*, training posts will come to an end because of the time-limited nature of the posts they are in. While the responsibility for the next step for such Curates will be with the person themselves, the Area Bishop, supported by Bishop's Officers, will want to give the Curate appropriate support as they look for other types of employment or training and/or other avenues for service.

A Curate for whom the Area Bishop is not willing to write a recommendation for *Common Tenure* has the option to request the Diocesan Bishop to reconsider the decision through an appeal process.

## Appeals Procedure

To make an appeal to the Diocesan Bishop asking him/her to reconsider a decision not to recommend suitability for *Common Tenure*, the following process must be followed:

- The Curate should write to the Diocesan Bishop asking him/her to reconsider the decision made by the Area Bishop.
- The Curate's request should reach the Diocesan Bishop's office within 21 days of receipt of the Area Bishop's non-recommendation letter.
- The Diocesan Bishop at his/her sole discretion may extend the time period in which the request for an appeal must be lodged by the Curate – e.g. when the Curate is signed-off work due to illness.
- The Curate must set out clearly in writing the reasons why she/he believes the original decision not to recommend for *Common Tenure* should be reviewed.
- These reasons must show in writing, with evidence, how the Curate has satisfied the relevant *Formation Criteria* for *Common Tenure* Assistant Ministry/Primary Responsibility/Pioneer Ministry (as applicable).
- The curate may attach relevant supporting evidence in writing from their Training Incumbent.
- In the case of extenuating circumstances, the written evidence of a qualified medical professional and/or psychotherapist/counsellor may be supplied.
- On receipt of the written request from the Curate, the Diocesan Bishop will consider the request and respond to the Curate in writing within 21 days.
- The Diocesan Bishop may decide that there are no reasonable grounds for non-recommendation to be reconsidered, and the Bishop will write to the Curate confirming the decision not to recommend for *Common Tenure*.
- Where the Diocesan Bishop accepts that there are reasonable grounds to reconsider the decision not to recommend for *Common Tenure*, the Bishop will remit the matter to a Senior Presbyter of his/her choosing (ordinarily, but not restricted to) outside the Diocese of Lichfield, asking him/her to review the evidence.
- The Reviewer will consider the matter carefully and prayerfully – undertaking where relevant a

review of any evidence supplied by the Curate, TI, IME2 officers and the advice of any assessment panels, including evidence from IME1 and the discernment process.

- The Reviewer will aim to respond to the Diocesan Bishop in writing within 21 days, advising the Bishop that:
  - *either*, the evidence of ministerial practice submitted in the assessment process does not support suitability for *Common Tenure*, and the Area Bishop's non-recommendation decision should stand;
  - *or*, demonstrating that there is sufficient evidence for the Diocesan Bishop to reconsider.
- Having received the advice of the Reviewer, the Diocesan Bishop will consider the matter and inform the Curate of his/her final decision in writing within 7 days.
- The decision of the Diocesan Bishop in this matter is final and there is no further appeal.