

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

RETIRED CLERGY, WIDOWS' & WIDOWERS' – PASTORAL CARE GUIDELINES

PREAMBLE

The **aim** of these guidelines is to enable the Bishop to employ effective pastoral care for retired clergy, spouses, widows, widowers, and partners of deceased clergy living in the Diocese (referred to collectively as 'retireds'). They were first produced, after wide consultation, to cater for an increasing number of retireds in the Diocese and have been reviewed several times since.

The Bishop has recently appointed a small Retired Clergy Officer (RCO) team to carry out the overall care aimed for in these guidelines. To date there are two members of the team: Revd Christine Sandiford, who has taken on the admin and record keeping role; and Revd Ian Thompson, who has been appointed to more of the pastoral role. The plan is to make two further additions to the team in due course.

The above aim encompasses a desire on the part of the Bishop to keep in touch with all the retireds at an appropriate level, and to ensure that they are valued and included in the Diocesan community.

It needs to be appreciated that any structure of ongoing care must be flexible enough to cater for a wide variety of opinions held by the retired clergy as to the way and level that they wish to exercise their priestly vocation in retirement, and of the views held by the retireds of their need for continuing 'Episcopal' care.

1. FIRST PRINCIPLE

The pastoral care of all clergy rightly belongs to the Bishop, who shares the care of souls with fellow bishops and clergy. The day to day pastoral responsibility for retireds rests primarily with:

- a. The clergy either of the parish in which the retireds live or normally worship
- b. The Area Dean
- c. *The Deanery Visitors in each deanery (*see below)
- d. The Designated Responsible Person (DRP) for clergy who hold the Bishop's Permission to Officiate (PTO)

*The RCO team, in conjunction with the Area Dean, appoints Deanery Visitors in each deanery, who undertake to keep in touch with retireds in their Deanery, and ensure that the RCO team is informed of any changes of circumstances. The RCO team will then ensure that the relevant information is communicated at Diocesan level.

All cases of sickness, bereavement, financial or other need, moments of celebration (e.g. milestone birthdays and/or anniversaries) should, in the first instance, be referred to a member of the RCO team, who will, depending on the level of response needed or pastoral care required and agreed, notify the Bishop, Suffragan Bishop or Archdeacon and suggest appropriate action.

2. PRE-RETIREMENT

It's never too early to start planning for retirement! At least 10 years before retirement, clergy will be encouraged to assess and, where possible, begin to plan and make provision for suitable housing for the future. Those carrying out ministerial reviews will sensitively include enquiries about retirement provision and may suggest that the priest contacts the RCO team for an initial conversation. Clergy should take advantage of the free advice offered by the Church of England Pensions Board, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG), or other similar organisations which offer various schemes for house purchase, equity loans, etc. (See Clergy Retirement Housing booklet and information links.) Appointing a financial advisor may also be advantageous.

It is appreciated that few clergy give long-term advanced notice of retirement, and some may wish to retain confidentiality until closer to retirement. However the RCO team should be informed, in confidence, by Bishops court as soon as possible of impending retirements, or Retirees may independently contact a member of the RCO team in confidence at any time to begin to think about the issues involved.

The Diocese will continue to make Pre-Retirement Courses available on at least an annual basis, arrangements for which will be communicated by e-mail and through cascade messages. Those clergy within two or three years of retirement should be encouraged by CME officers and Bishop's Staff to attend. There is no charge for the course, and spouses/partners will also be invited to attend.

Between 6 to 3 months prior to planned retirement, the RCO team will contact and if agreed, visit the retiree to ensure that adequate provision has been made for the future in terms of pension, housing, scope for future ministry (if desired), continuing pastoral care and leaving arrangements, etc.

3. RETIREMENT

All clergy will, on retiring, receive a personal letter of thanks from a Bishop and, where possible, will be invited to meet with said Bishop to take their leave.

It will be explained to those moving away from the Diocese that future continuing care and pastoral responsibility will be in the hands of the new 'receiving' Diocese, provided that the individual retiree contacts the 'new' Diocese to inform them of his or her residence. Data protection legislation restricts information being passed to the receiving Diocese. Individual retirees will, if required, also need to apply for Permission to Officiate (PTO) to the Bishop of the receiving Diocese.

As a gesture of thanks, all retiring clergy will be offered life membership of the Retired Clergy Association (RCA) with the membership fee paid on their behalf.

On retirement, or when PTO is granted, appropriate Diocesan guidance will be issued to retired clergy on matters such as fees for ministry, occasional offices, pastoral oversight, and appointment of a Designated Responsible Person for those with PTO. The RCO team, on being notified about clergy who are retiring into the Diocese, will send out a letter of welcome. The Diocesan website contains lists of Diocesan staff contacts, as well as much useful information regarding guidelines

and procedures on various matters. Unless specifically rejected, all retired clergy will receive, by post, email or website notification, such items as pastoral letters, policy-synod statements, ember lists, prayer cycles, CME training opportunities, etc.

The RCO team will contact newly retired clergy, soon after their actual retirement, to welcome them to the ranks of the retireds in the Diocese and to explain the various networks, contacts, available grants, CME training opportunities, synodical representation, etc.

4. CONTINUING SERVICE

If agreed with the retiree, the RCO team will inform the Deanery Visitor and Area Dean, who in turn will notify the local parish clergy (or Church Warden in a vacancy) with respect to where the retiree will be living, so that a suitable local welcome can be made and invitations extended to planned Parish/Chapter/Deanery events.

Permission to Officiate (PTO), when requested and granted, is notified to the RCO team and the appropriate Area Dean. Sensitivity is needed to respect the wishes of retired clergy regarding further ministry or involvement in church related activities.

Retired clergy, some more than others, may wish to serve in a variety of ways, and care needs to be taken about over-involvement of those keen to remain active, and understanding towards those who 'cannot let go'. The attitude and feeling of spouses/partners also need to be considered by those wishing to make use of retired clergy. Those not wishing to be involved, straightaway or long-term, should be protected from calls for duty.

It should be more visibly recognised that retired clergy constitute a rich resource for the Diocese, in deaneries, institutions and parishes, and are not just convenient 'stop gaps' for services. Their wisdom, experience and expertise gained over many years may continue to be used in such areas as appraisal, mentoring and supporting younger clergy, spiritual direction, study groups and other forms of ministry. Senior staff and CME officers will, from time to time, call upon and make use of retired clergy with the appropriate skills and expertise for particular and suitable purposes.

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) shall, each year, determine and make known to retired clergy and the parishes the level of fees payable to them for occasional services and casual duties, along with the recommended nationally agreed mileage rate for travel expenses, which should be paid on all occasions. This information can be found on the Diocesan website via the 'Payment of parochial and casual duty fees to retired clergy' link at: [Diocese of Manchester | Retired clergy](#) or by hard copy on request from the Diocesan Office.

Retired clergy will be encouraged to make use of their deanery synodical representation and the Diocesan Bishop may, if he deems it appropriate, give representation to the retired clergy on Diocesan Synod.

5. CONTINUING VOCATION

All retired clergy, unless they have indicated otherwise, will be invited to the annual Renewal of Vows service at the Cathedral during Holy Week.

In addition all retireds will, bi-annually, be invited to Bishopscourt, or the home of a Suffragan Bishop, for hospitality. A Cathedral Eucharist service for retired clergy will also be arranged in alternate years with a buffet lunch to follow, kindly financed by the Diocesan Board of Finance. Such hospitality helps to reaffirm the value of both past and present service given by retired clergy.

The Manchester Retired Clergy Association (RCA) will continue to provide other occasions for fellowship and learning and will encourage the ongoing spiritual development of retired clergy.

6. HARDSHIP

It is recognised that, from time to time, retireds encounter financial difficulties and hardships, especially when faced with unexpected and unbudgeted expense items. In such cases, help is available from various charities, including several small Diocesan charitable funds, that can offer grant assistance. These funds are managed by the Diocesan Retired Clergy Widows and Widowers Committee (RCWWC). The Committee consists of the Bishop, who delegates responsibility as Chairperson to the Bishop's Chaplain, members of the RCO team, the Archdeacons, the Bishop's Visitor (for separated clergy spouses), a representative of the Manchester branch of the Retired Clergy Association, the Diocesan Secretary, and the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The Committee acts as trustees for the Miss I L Bothamley Bequest fund, the Clergy Widows' and Dependents' Fund, the Thelma Turner Fund, and the Bishop K V Ramsey Fund. The Committee receives reports and requests for grant assistance and discuss any emergency grants made at the Chairperson's and Secretary's discretion. (NB Some charitable funds have restricted distribution.)

The RCO team should also be conversant with national and other 'clergy' charities that may be able to offer additional grants or assistance.

IN CONCLUSION

Pastoral care of retireds is evident in many places throughout the Diocese, and grateful thanks are expressed to all those who exercise the important ministry of caring for retired clergy, clergy widows and widowers, and partners of deceased clergy living in the Diocese. We hope and pray that these pastoral guidelines will help clarify and improve the efficiency of pastoral care and overall responsibility for retireds in the Diocese.

These guidelines have been approved and adopted by the Bishop, in consultation with his senior staff. This latest revision is dated October 2021.

Revd Ian Thompson & Revd Christine Sandiford
Retired Clergy Officer Team