

Clergy Sickness Policy

1. When a minister becomes ill and is unable to perform their duties they should notify the Area Dean (or their Team Rector, or their incumbent if a curate), and churchwardens. The Area Dean (or Team Rector or incumbent) then accepts responsibility for covering the relevant duties.
2. If a minister is ill for more than three working days, a self-certificated sick leave form should be completed ([click here to open](#)) and sent to the diocesan office who will inform the Church Commissioners on their behalf.
3. If the period of sickness extends for more than seven days then a medical certificate must be obtained from a doctor and submitted to the diocesan office (human.resources@durham.anglican.org) for onward submission to the Church Commissioners.
4. The Area Dean (or Team Rector or incumbent) will notify the Bishop of Durham's office, the Bishop of Jarrow and the relevant Archdeacon of any clergy sickness extending for more than seven days.
5. Once notified the Archdeacon will make contact with the minister to determine the nature of the illness, any further support required and visit as necessary.
6. When a minister is deemed unfit for work by their doctor they should have no engagement with work or any work-related activities in order to aid the best chance of recovery. Failure to do so may have implications for insurance at work and compromise statutory sick pay entitlement.
7. For any period of extended sickness the Archdeacon will keep in touch with the minister to assess progress and to see if an occupational health referral should be made. An occupational health referral will be automatic at 26 weeks of absence.
8. After the 23rd week of absence the Church Commissioners issue form SSP 1 which gives details of the actions needed when statutory sick pay ends after the 28th week, concerning claiming other state benefits and invalidity allowances.
9. Full stipend will be paid until the 28th week of absence, after which the Bishop has the following discretion.
 - To reduce the stipend by up to 50%
 - To reduce the stipend by the amount of Incapacity Benefit received and any other allowances 1 month's notice should be given.
 - Current diocesan practice will be to reduce stipend by the amount of benefit received in order to maintain the equivalent of a full stipend.
10. After any period of extended sickness and once a minister has been deemed fit for work by their doctor, they should notify their Archdeacon that they are ready to return to work. The Archdeacon will discuss with the minister any issues around resuming their duties.

11. If after an extended period of sickness a minister is being advised by their doctor, or as an outcome of an occupational health referral, to consider early retirement, advice and support regarding the process will be available from the Archdeacon and Diocesan Secretary.

12. A parish can seek financial support from the diocese for additional costs incurred in providing the normal pattern of services after a minister has been absent for 4 weeks.

If you have any queries regarding this policy please address them to your Archdeacon or the Diocesan Secretary.

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