Communion by Extension – brief outline of diocesan policy

‘Communion by Extension’ is any service of public worship including the distribution of communion using preconsecrated elements. It can thus be distinguished from home communions in that these are not public worship. A service in an old people’s home may well not be public worship, and if it is not public worship should be treated as a home communion. (However if the service were advertised more widely in the parish it might be that it should be seen as public worship.)

A service of Communion by Extension must use the authorised liturgy for such services and follow the notes and House of Bishops’ guidelines for this. These are available at http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/extension.aspx.

Any service of Communion by Extension must be authorised by the area bishop, either as a one-off or as part of some standing permission. Bishops are likely to limit the terms of their permission in order to ensure the service is not over-used, since Communion by Extension should not be seen as an equal alternative to a normal Holy Communion service.

Further, the person leading such a service must be authorised by the area bishop to do so. This includes deacons and LLMs, because their licences do not allow them to take these services without further permission. There is a diocesan policy concerning the authorisation and training of others who are to have ongoing authorisation to do this (see http://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/training-for-ministry/diocesan-authorised-ministries/). However doubtless if there is an occasional emergency the bishop will wish to give a one-off permission to the person who is to lead the service.

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1 The only exception is if this is part of the Good Friday liturgy.