

## Diocese of Oxford

### Ministerial Working Agreement for Self-Supporting Ministers

#### Guidance Notes

1. All clergy holding a licence in the diocese are required to have a Ministerial Working Agreement (Agreement). This is supplementary to the Statement of Particulars (SOP) in respect of the post to which they are licensed. For Self Supporting Ministers (SSM), as defined below, the Agreement will be negotiated with their incumbent and formally approved by their PCC. Thereafter, it should be reviewed jointly by the SSM and incumbent regularly. This should be done at least every three years or when significant changes take place in the SSM's ministry (and see paragraph 3 below). Because Agreements provide Area Bishops and Archdeacons with important information about the way in which the SSM resource is being deployed. Final Agreements and any subsequent amendments to them must be copied to the Area Bishop (who will retain a file copy) and Archdeacon. For the purposes of these Guidance Notes SSM are defined as ordained ministers who hold a licence from the Bishop in respect of a role other than incumbent or equivalent. Sector ministers and curates in training are not included.
2. Agreements will set out:
  - a) the amount of time SSM is willing to give to their parochial ministry <sup>1</sup>;
  - b) how SSM will share ministry with their incumbents and other members of the local ministry team;
  - c) how accountability is exercised within the local ministry team;
  - d) how SSM may exercise particular ministerial skills;
  - e) any wider deanery, diocesan or chaplaincy focus, and any workplace involvement, which SSM's ministry might include, using their particular experience or expertise.
3. Agreements should provide a basis for the working out of ongoing relationships in a shared ministry rather than being seen as a set of rigid set of rules. Although review of the Agreement should take place at least every three years, it is good practice for there to be an annual review meeting between SSM and incumbent. The main purpose of the review is to enable the SSM to exercise a valuable and fulfilling ministry within the framework for mission and ministry which the local church is engaged in. Any wider focus may need to come under separate arrangements for review.
4. On first appointment SSM will often be away from their 'home' churches. Thereafter, with their agreement, they can be deployed within reasonable travelling distance from their homes. Agreements should reflect the sensitivities involved especially where SSM are separated from the worshipping lives of their families.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that it is for the SSM to decide what time they are willing to give. However, once agreed, the SSM must adhere to that, or renegotiate

5. SSM who have specific ministries in secular employment (MSE) will normally be licensed to a parish and will therefore require a parochial Agreement as described in these Guidance Notes. Such an Agreement will recognise their individual circumstances and may include appropriate documentation from their secular employment.
6. SSMs who have a deanery or diocesan focus to their work will normally be licensed to a parish and will require a parochial Agreement. The Agreement will outline the expectations of time spent on each part of the SSM's ministry, and should include a separate description of the wider focus. If it was found useful to have a separate agreement for each part of ministry that may be considered too.

## **MINISTRY AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE DRAFTED UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS:**

### **1. Introduction**

This explains the purpose and overall scope of the agreement, e.g.

This Agreement supplements the Statement of Particulars for the Rev'd X in his/her role as Y. Its purpose is to set out the extent to which X will share with their incumbent and other members of the ministry team the worship and work of the parish. It includes details of the time that X is willing to offer the parish and what he/she may expect in terms of training, encouragement and support. X has a wide experience of / particular skills in..... and this agreement explains how that experience /skill will be utilised in his/her ongoing ministry.

### **2. Focus of Ministry**

The Agreement will describe the focus of the ministry of SSM. For most SSM this will be the parish.

If SSM have other responsibilities in which they act in an official capacity (e.g. a chaplaincy, membership of a Diocesan Council or school governor), they should be recorded under this heading.

Also under this heading should be recorded any wider ministry which the SSM exercises within the deanery or diocese.

For SSM in full or part-time secular employment (Ministers in Secular Employment – MSE) this section should contain full details of the interaction between their roles in the workplace and the parish or elsewhere. In particular they should record the extent to which:

- a) they expect to be able to express their vocation and their status as ordained and representative Christians in their place of work;
- b) they hope to reflect their secular working experience in their parish ministry;
- c) they may benefit from engagement with this ministry by their incumbent and other members of the parish ministry team. Where MSE have a ministerial role in their

workplace which is recognised by their employer, this may be reflected in their Contract of Employment or equivalent. Where they receive any provision for support and review of their ministerial role this should be included in this Contract.

### **3. Working Arrangements**

The Agreement should specify:

- a) the time the SSM is willing to give to parochial work. This may be expressed in hours or days a week and should be as specific as possible. It should reflect family circumstances, secular employment, any wider ministerial focus and other commitments).
- b) the SSM's day off - at least one day each week worked.
- c) that SSM may expect to have one Sunday free of duties each calendar month, agreed in advance with the incumbent.
- d) that SSM may take up to 6 weeks holiday each year (which may include time off after Christmas and Easter).
- e) the extent to which the SSM may be expected to provide cover when the incumbent is away from the parish.
- f) that, if a vacancy occurs, the extent of the SSM's involvement in ministry will be discussed with the churchwardens and the Area Dean and formalised in a new Working Agreement. (The SSM has no legal responsibility to provide cover in a vacancy. The conduct of the church's affairs and the maintenance of services, including the occasional offices, are the responsibility of the churchwardens and Area Dean.)

### **4. Worship**

- a) The Agreement will set out the extent to which the SSM will share with the incumbent and the ministry team the conduct of public worship.
- b) It will set out the frequency with which the SSM will preside at the Eucharist.
- c) It will set out the frequency with which the SSM will preach.
- d) It will set out the extent to which the SSM will share in the conduct of the occasional offices, assessing baptisms, weddings and funerals separately and taking account of associated preparation and visiting.

### **5. Supervision, Support and On-going Development or Education**

The Agreement should specify the arrangements for:

- a) the incumbent and the SSM to meet and pray together;
- b) regular meetings with other members of the ministry team to plan the work programme;
- c) an annual review with the incumbent;
- d) SSM to make a retreat each year;
- e) SSM to take part in Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD);
- f) SSM to belong to and attend Chapter meetings.

## 6. General Pastoral and Teaching Ministry

The Agreement should acknowledge any particular ministry skills which the SSM already possesses (or expects to develop) and say how those skills will be exercised. It should also indicate the degree of delegated authority the SSM will have in exercising those skills.

## 7. Parochial Support

SSM who live a significant distance from the parish of their appointment should be provided with a base from which to operate within the parish when they are on duty. It should include privacy, space and somewhere warm, with w.c., and coffee/tea making facilities, and wherever practically possible, a telephone or provision of a mobile phone. It is not advisable for SSM to use facilities at the Vicarage or Rectory.

The agreement should include how expenses are to be claimed.

The Agreement will describe the extent to which parishes will encourage SSM and their families by prayer and other support.

## 8. Revision and Termination of Agreement

The agreement will be for a period of three years.

The agreement will be reviewed and updated at the end of that time or if there are significant earlier changes in the SSM's responsibilities or personal circumstances. In particular it will be revised before a Vacancy starts and on the arrival of a new incumbent. Responsibility for review and revision lies with the SSM and the incumbent.

The SSM Officer for the archdeaconry is available to provide advice and guidance if needed.

The agreement will terminate if the SSM is deployed elsewhere.

## 9. Signatures

.....  
Self-Supporting Minister

Date: .....

.....  
Incumbent

Date: .....