

## Permission to Officiate in the Diocese of Guildford Conditions under which PTO is granted

### Introduction

Permission to Officiate is an authorisation of ministry granted by the Bishop to clergy who are not in a formal licensed role in the diocese. Clergy with Permission to Officiate are often, but not always, retired stipendiary clergy. Some may have retired from self-supporting ministry or from other walks of life. Others may not be retired at all – eg someone in good standing who has left parochial ministry in order to take employment outside the church, but who wishes to continue to offer help with occasional offices, or a person who requires a period of staged return to stipendiary ministry following past difficulties. If a priest's ministry is centred on one benefice, and he or she is regarded as an integral part of the ministry team, a licence rather than PTO is likely to be the best way of authorising their ministry.

PTO is the Bishop's gift and may be withdrawn at any time. It is granted on condition that required training (for example, a refresher course in safeguarding) is completed. It authorises ministry within the diocese of the Bishop who issues it, but a person can hold PTO in more than one diocese. Permission to Officiate normally needs renewal after three years, the same time that renewal of DBS checks is required. Once clergy with PTO reach the age of 80, they may apply for renewal of PTO but on a twelve-month basis.

A retiring priest will usually be expected to wait at least three to six months after retirement before making an application for PTO. This ensures that they have sufficient time to adapt and to reflect on how their vocation to ordained ministry might begin to take a new shape.

### Role Description

Permission to Officiate enables a priest to officiate when invited by the minister having the cure of souls in any place (or the Churchwardens / Area Dean in a vacancy) in the Diocese of Guildford.

Forms of ministry that usually require Permission to Officiate include:

- a) taking services and occasional offices, including during a vacancy;
- b) covering a period of authorised absence (such as sabbatical, maternity leave or sick leave);
- c) spiritual direction, mentoring or work consultation (eg a retired cleric with experience of church schools can be of considerable help to an incumbent coming new to this specialised area);
- d) conducting retreats or quiet days;
- e) acting as an outside consultant/teacher/facilitator for parishes (eg for PCC away days, stewardship campaigns, Lent groups and house groups);
- f) participating in missions, staffing CMD and ordination courses, assisting with ministerial review;
- g) representing the diocese or the Church of England on various bodies or visits (e.g. an overseas diocese linked with the diocese, a charity, or a secular organisation), and drafting papers.

### Important things to note...

- You must liaise with the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge of the Benefice in question when exercising any kind of ministry (or the Area Dean in a vacancy)
- Arrangements for the review and renewal of PTO:
  - review: you are asked to meet annually with your 'Designated Responsible Person' to discuss your ministry, including any changes to the mutual expectations agreed when PTO was first

issued. You will be required to complete a ministerial return at the time of renewal, which will give the Bishop helpful information about the variety and amount of ministry being supplied by our PTO clergy so the diocese can offer the most appropriate support.

- renewal: PTO lasts for three years (in line with your DBS). Before it expires, a reminder will be sent from the Bishop's Office to ask if you wish to renew your PTO. If you do, then you will need to meet with your 'Designated Responsible Person', who will then make a recommendation to the Bishop. You will also need to renew your DBS check at the same time and ensure you have completed any safeguarding refresher training.
- There is an active Retired Clergy, Widows & Dependents Association, which offer a range of opportunities for fellowship and support. Contact details are available on the Diocese of Guildford website or contact: **The Ven Julian Hubbard**, Bishop's Adviser for Retired Clergy  
[julianrhubbard@gmail.com](mailto:julianrhubbard@gmail.com)

### **Designated responsible person**

The Bishop has designated someone to be responsible for the immediate oversight of your ministry. The designated responsible person will:

- meet you and agree expectations of the work that you will do;
- review these expectations from time to time and whenever your PTO is due for renewal;
- discuss the ministry you have carried out regularly;
- ensure that a written record of the ministry you have undertaken is sent to the Bishop regularly, along with any change in the expectations;
- either recommend, where appropriate, and subject to the relevant safeguarding checks, that the Bishop renews your PTO when the current term is due to expire, or explain to the Bishop why he or she does not consider that your PTO should be renewed;
- ensure that the Bishop is kept informed about any issues or health problems, particularly when you might require additional pastoral support, or it might be necessary to consider withdrawing PTO.

The designated responsible person will usually but not always be the incumbent or priest in charge of the benefice where you live or worship, or, in their absence, the Area Dean.

### **Agreed statement of expectations**

If you are carrying out regular duties in a parish, you should agree what duties you are expected to cover, as it is helpful for both you and those you are helping if there is a common understanding of what you are willing and able to do and for this to be recorded in writing. This agreement is not binding, may be changed at any time, and should be reviewed regularly.

### **Ministerial Return**

Prior to renewal of your PTO, you will be sent a Ministerial Return. This should be completed in discussion with your designated responsible person (Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge or Area Dean) setting out briefly the ministry you have undertaken. The completed Ministerial Return should then be sent to the Clergy DBS & Appointments Administrator either by email [julie.mckeand@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:julie.mckeand@cofeguildford.org.uk) or by post to:

Mrs Julie McKeand, Clergy DBS & Appointments Administrator,  
The Bishop of Guildford's Office, Willow Grange, Woking Road, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7QS

### **Regular review**

You should review your ministry regularly with the designated responsible person. As part of this review, you should

- look at the agreed expectations
- consider if you might wish to expand your role or approach the diocese to see if you can provide further assistance
- consider whether it might be appropriate to find a mutually agreed way to vary or reduce your workload or to discuss a transition to full retirement, for example if you are in poor health.
- explore whether you have any particular training needs.

### **Expenses and fees**

All expenses of formal ministry by retired clergy, including pastoral visits for weddings, funerals and other reasons, should be reimbursed in full by the PCC or equivalent. No fees should be paid directly to individuals by, for example, wedding couples or funeral directors.

You must not carry out the Occasional Offices without the consent of the deceased person's incumbent or priest in charge.

The Diocese of Guildford Parochial Fees Policy can be found here:

<https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/content/pages/documents/parochial-fees-policy-guildford.pdf>

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to declare income from fees to HMRC.

### **Sickness Reporting**

There is no legal requirement to report sickness, although you should inform the designated responsible person and keep the Area Dean informed.

### **Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)**

There is no specific legal requirement to participate in arrangements approved by the Diocesan Bishop. However, failure to participate in CMD matters such as safeguarding when required by the Bishop can be a disciplinary offence and could lead to the Bishop withdrawing your PTO.

### **Circumstances in which PTO may come to an end**

Your Permission to Officiate is held at the Bishop's discretion and may be withdrawn at any time. It is subject to regular review after which it may be renewed.

### **Clergy Discipline Measure**

The Clergy Discipline Measure applies to all clergy, however their ministry is authorised, and continues to apply when they are no longer active in their ministry.

### **Personal Files**

In accordance with The House of Bishops' guidance on Personal Files Relating to Clergy (June 2021), paras 87 and 89 apply to clerics who have PTO.

- (87). Where a cleric retires, the personal file should remain in the diocese in which he or she last served unless and until he or she is granted permission to officiate ('PTO') in another diocese.
- (89). Where a cleric holds a licence or PTO concurrently in more than one diocese, the personal file should be held in the diocese where the cleric exercises the greater part of his or her ministry. A note should be kept on the file as to which other dioceses have issued a licence or PTO and the expiry date(s);

and arrangements put in place for the appropriate staff of those dioceses to have access to the file as necessary. The other dioceses should in turn keep a record of where the personal file is held.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding requirements for licensed and PTO clergy are identical. The Bishop will require all clergy with PTO to undertake appropriate diocesan safeguarding training before granting permission to officiate. It will be a disciplinary offence not to attend safeguarding refresher training in the diocese when requested by the Bishop. As a cleric with PTO you:

- must have a valid DBS check and the period of your PTO must not exceed the period of your DBS check;
- must abide by House of Bishops' and diocesan policies and procedures in safeguarding children and adults, and observe the implementation of procedures in the parishes in which you serve;
- are accountable to and must share information with the designated responsible person or Area Dean or Archdeacon, on all safeguarding matters;
- are subject to the same processes as any other ordained person in the event of an allegation of past or current abuse by a child or an adult being made against you;
- are required by law to have due regard to the House of Bishops guidance relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and must therefore read and familiarise yourself with the House of Bishops' Safeguarding policies as well as those of this diocese, and undertake the relevant training as approved by the Bishop.

Please follow the link for further information on safeguarding in the Diocese of Guildford and to book training courses <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding/safeguarding-training>

The *Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse* training module can be found on the [Safeguarding Training Portal](#).

## **Applying for PTO**

If you wish to apply for permission to officiate (PTO) in the Diocese of Guildford, please contact **Julie McKeand, Clergy DBS & Appointments Administrator** at [julie.mckeand@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:julie.mckeand@cofeguildford.org.uk)

Please do read these documents carefully and return your completed **PTO Application Form** and **Confidential Declaration Form** by email to [julie.mckeand@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:julie.mckeand@cofeguildford.org.uk) or by post to: Julie McKeand, Clergy DBS & Appointments Administrator, The Bishop of Guildford's Office, Willow Grange, Woking Road, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7QS

Such permission is normally for three years (in line with the DBS) and will only be granted once diocesan safeguarding training is up to date. PTO gives you authority to minister in any parish in the diocese at the invitation of the Incumbent or Priest-in Charge, subject to any restrictions on your PTO. If you are new to the Diocese, we will need to ask your previous Bishop for an Episcopal Reference and Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL) and you will also be invited to attend an entry interview.