



CLERGY HANDBOOK

Version 5
April 2026

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Welcome from the Bishop of St Albans

Dear Colleagues

I am delighted to introduce the Clergy Handbook.

It is a resource which will assist you with the myriad of questions that arise concerning ministerial life and activity in this diocese.

The handbook covers a wide range of subjects such as training, domestic and practical support, and guidance in complex matters, including those of a legal nature.

I would encourage you to browse through it to familiarise yourself with its contents, so when issues arise you will know where you can find guidance.

Although we suggest that you turn to the handbook in the first instance, the staff at Holywell Lodge and in the Bishops' and Archdeacons' offices are always ready to assist with information and advice.

The wellbeing and morale of clergy and laypeople in the Diocese of St Albans is a high priority. We want to resource and free you to be ambassadors for Christ, and to support you and your families.

Please be assured of my prayers as we reach out to offer care, to work for justice, and as we share the good news of Christ with our generation.

+Richard, Acting Bishop of St Albans



The Living God's Love Prayer

Living God, draw us deeper into your love;
Jesus our Lord, send us to care and serve;
Holy Spirit, make us heralds of good news.
Stir us, strengthen us, teach and inspire us to live your love
with generosity and joy, imagination and courage;
for the sake of your world and in the name of Jesus,

Amen

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook contains a number of policies and guidance documents, some of which are explanations of the legal measure and others are local policies. Details of your principle statutory entitlements under UK law are detailed in this document.

Some parts of this document use formal statements and language. Whilst we don't want to appear rigid, sometimes the law dictates that the levels of detail and clarity are essential.

From time to time the Diocese will need to make changes to this Handbook, to meet the needs of the work or to reflect changes in legislation.

The policies in this Handbook apply to all parochial office holders in the Diocese unless stated otherwise. Exceptions may apply in some cases; for example, to clergy who are Self Supporting Ministers, who hold a freehold office, or whose appointment has been extended beyond the age of 70; exceptions will be detailed in your Statement of Particulars. PtO clergy are not parochial office holders. Some clergy in the Diocese do not hold a parochial office, but instead are employed by the St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) or operate in a chaplaincy or advisory capacity under another organisation. For clergy who are employed by the DBF, there is also an Employee Handbook and contract of employment which take precedence over this document.

Please take the time to read this Handbook and if you have any questions about any aspect, please do not hesitate to contact a member of senior staff – typically your Archdeacon or a member of the Diocesan Office senior team with appropriate functional responsibility.

These policies are written from the point of view of parish clergy and therefore make reference to Archdeacons, when read by an Archdeacon or Bishop then Archdeacon should be read as Bishop.



KEY CONTACTS

Archdeacon of Bedford	The Ven. Dave Middlebrook	01727 818 167	archdbed@stalbans.anglican.org
Archdeacon of Hertford	The Ven. Janet Mackenzie	01727 818159	archdhert@stalbans.anglican.org
Archdeacon of St Albans	The Ven. Charles Hudson	01727 818121	archd@stalbans.anglican.org
Diocesan Secretary	David White	01727 818130	dwhite@stalbans.anglican.org
Dean of Women's Ministry	Rev'd Canon Lucy Davis	01234 354234	ldavis@stalbans.anglican.org
Stipend Administrator	Finance Team	01727 818135	clergy.requests@stalbandsdiocese.org
MMDR and Wellbeing Administrator	Carol Chisnall	01727 818163	cechisnall@stalbans.anglican.org
Housing	Property Team	01727 818157	property@stalbandsdiocese.org
CME Grants	Linda Watson	01727 818151	lwatson@stalbans.anglican.org
Clergy Payroll		020789 81618	clergy.payments@churchofengland.org
Clergy Counselling Service - Bedfordshire	Christine Franke	07850 594258	frankecm@btinternet.com
Clergy Counselling Service - Hertfordshire	Carole Simkins	07815 574073	carolesimkins@hotmail.com

You can find a full list of diocesan contacts in the [online directory](#).

DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

The Clergy Terms of Service set out your various duties and obligations.

Your primary obligation is to fulfil the duties of office as stated in various foundational documents. The distinctive nature of office, as defined in the Ordinal, is a reminder that clergy follow a vocation, responding daily to God's call. All clergy are required to fulfill canon law and ad clerums.

At ordination clergy respond through solemn vows including the Declaration of Assent under [Canon C 15](#) affirming loyalty to the inheritance of faith as the Church of England has received it and the oath of Canonical Obedience to the Bishop, which requires clergy lawfully and honestly to be obedient to the Bishop. [Canon C 24](#) 'Of Priests having Cure of Souls', sets out responsibilities for the exercise of ministry shared with the Bishop.

Your license or deed of appointment determines the location of your ministry.

The '[Guidelines for Professional Conduct](#)' set out the standards expected of you in the conduct of public ministry.

Your Statement of Particulars (see next section) describes your rights and obligations in your particular post.

The Benefice Profile often states the needs of the post, you may also have a Role Description which provides further information.



COMMON TENURE

The majority of clergy in the Church of England hold their office under Common Tenure. This means that while clergy are not subject to employment law they are still entitled to certain rights and obligations, such as statutory sick pay.

You can read more here: [Common Tenure - Church of England](#)

STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS

All members of clergy on Common Tenure, other than those who have an employment contract governing their role, are required to receive a Statement of Particulars in line with the Clergy Terms of Service regulations.

The Statement of Particulars describes obligations and rights including your rights to receive a stipend, a house, to holidays and time off, the right to statutory leave such as adoption, maternity and paternity. The Statement will also refer to Discipline, Grievance and Capability procedures.

If you have not received your Statement of Particulars you should contact your Archdeacon.

If there is a significant change to the details set out in your Statement of Particulars, for example a pastoral reorganisation, then you will be issued with a new Statement of Particulars. You should receive this within one month of the change taking effect, if you do not please contact your Archdeacon.

TRADE UNION

You are welcome to join a union of your choosing should you wish to do so.

FINANCE AND HOUSING

STIPEND

Office holders occupying full-time stipendiary posts are entitled to an annual stipend which, including income from other sources related to the office, is not less than the National Minimum Stipend as determined by the Archbishop's Council.

In the Diocese of St Albans our policy is generally to follow the Regional Stipend Benchmark. This is a variation of the National Stipend Benchmark which reflects variations in the cost of living in different parts of the country. The actual amount will be agreed each year by the Diocesan Synod, taking into consideration the overall Diocesan budget, this is normally done in October of each year. The current St Albans [Annual Stipend Letter](#) can be found on the [Finance section](#) of the Diocesan website.

Office holders in part-time roles will have their stipend calculated based on the percentage of an equivalent full-time role, this will be specified in the Statement of Particulars.

Some elements of the stipend may be formed of different elements but in the main the total value is the same.

The Church of England Clergy Payroll Team is responsible for making stipend payments and processing necessary deductions (such as tax and NI) as well as statutory payments such as Statutory Sick Pay. You can find more information from them and access copies of your payslips online.

[Clergy Payroll Team](#)

PENSIONS

The Church of England Pensions Board operates a pension scheme for stipendiary clergy.

You can find out more about making additional voluntary contributions, choosing how your fund is invested and the operation of the scheme at the link below.

[Church of England Pensions Board - Clergy Pension](#)

EXPENSES

Clergy may be able to recover some costs incurred in carrying out their duties. The guide to Parochial Fees below is for incumbents and PCCs and details what should be covered and how it ought to be paid. This is a guide only and it will be for individual PCCs to decide.

[Mileage Rates](#)

PAROCHIAL FEES

There is information on parochial fees in this Diocese available on the [Finance section](#) of the Diocesan website.

[Parochial Expenses of the Clergy - Guide](#)

HOUSING

Your statement of particulars will provide details of the property you are required to occupy for the better performance of your duties. The type of property you live in is usually determined by the post you hold, the Property Department will be pleased to confirm what type of house it is. The house may be owned by the Diocese, PCC or an appropriate property may be rented. A Bishop may, in exceptional circumstances, where it is considered appropriate, permit an incumbent to live in a house other than a parsonage house, in the benefice or outside it.

You have a responsibility to conduct regular maintenance on the property and to report any defects as soon as possible using the maintenance system listed below.

The Clergy Housing Guide gives overall guidance about clergy housing. It is important to understand that this is a guide and does not commit to or promise particular housing features.

The Property Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance is the designated housing provider for the purposes of Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009. The Committee's main purpose is to ensure that appropriate accommodation, in the right location, is provided for the clergy and their families to enable them to serve their parishes. To further this purpose it oversees the budgets to ensure that the houses are properly and economically repaired and improved to preserve the housing stock and to maintain clergy morale. If necessary, and possible, replacement houses are provided, subject to the views of the incumbent or priest in charge.

The Property Department at the Diocesan office reports to the Property Committee and oversees all matters relating to housing. The Diocese's external surveyors carry out quinquennial inspections and organise major work. All enquiries, though, should be directed to the [Property Department](#). A property maintenance system, Fixflo, is used for clergy to report any issues with their house. You will be supplied with log-in details and instructions.

More information about your obligations, moving into and caring for the property you are occupying and reporting issues can be found in the [Housing Handbook](#).

GRANTS

You can find information about removal, resettlement and first appointment grants in the [Annual Stipend Letter](#). The Diocesan contact for these grants is the stipend administrator, listed on the [Key Contacts Page](#).

Information on grants and support for development can be found on the Diocesan website, please note that these grants will not cover travel expenses, or most retreats, these should be paid by your parish as expenses, see the section on expenses.

[Grants and Support for Development](#)

CAR LOANS

The [Churches Mutual Credit Union](#) can provide loans for clergy for purchasing cars.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There may be times when you require some additional financial support. The Bishops and Archdeacons have some discretionary funds they can make available in cases of hardship or particular pastoral need. There are also various charities and trusts who may offer assistance, the list below is not exhaustive.

The Clergy Support Trust - is an independent charity which provides support to Anglican clergy (serving and retired) and ordinands, and their families, in the UK, Ireland, Diocese of Europe and Diocese of Sodor and Man.

Society for the Relief of Poor Clergy - supports evangelical clergy and evangelical accredited lay workers in the following categories of need:

- bereavement
- illness
- removals
- family support to enable young people to participate in a 'ministry experience' during a gap year before university
- family support to enable children/young people of evangelical ministers to attend Christian camps, for their spiritual benefit and to develop leadership potential
- other special needs (at the Trustees' discretion)

CPAS Ministers in Training Fund - offer grants for ordinands during training who are in need of financial support.

The Henry Smith Charity - assistance is available for clergy in need of financial support, applications must be made through the Bishop of St Albans.

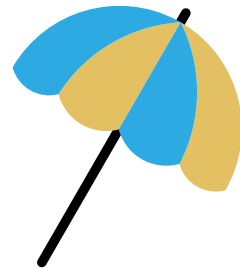
The English Clergy Association - makes holiday grants that are in many cases of a sufficient size to make a significantly helpful contribution to clergy (and their family's) enjoyment of human life.

Frances Ashton Charity - grants are available for many purposes both for clergy and their widow(er)s.

The Jane Cart Trust - provides grants to support Church of England Clergy, their widow(er)s and dependents who are currently or have some time in the past worked or lived in the Diocese of St Albans.

St Etheldreda's Trust - provides modest grants to support and enrich the ministry of female ordained clergy in the Diocese of St Albans or to support work with children done by them.

Jesus College Cambridge - the Rustat Trust makes hardship grants to support the education of children of Church of England clergy who are under the age of 19.



TIME OFF

REST PERIODS

WEEKLY

You are entitled to an uninterrupted rest period of 24 hours in each seven days, practically applied this means you are entitled to one full calendar day in each seven days.

Unless specific permission has been granted by the Bishop of St Albans, your weekly rest period may not be taken on a Sunday or on any of the principal feast days of the Church of England as set out in [Canon B6\(2\)](#) nor on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday or the parish's patronal festival.

ANNUAL

The full-time paid leave entitlement is 36 days per year or as stated in your Statement of Particulars. If you are part-time your leave will be calculated based on the number of days you work; for example if you work 3 days per week your leave entitlement will be 18 days.

In addition to the above you are entitled to the following public holidays if they fall on a day you normally work:

New Years Day	Spring Bank Holiday
Easter Monday	August Bank Holiday
May bank holiday	Boxing Day

You are also entitled to days off in lieu of the Good Friday and Christmas Day bank holidays.

Unless specific permission has been granted by the Bishop of St Albans, your days of annual leave may not be taken on more than six Sundays a year, on any of the principal feast days of the Church of England as set out in [Canon B6\(2\)](#), or Ash Wednesday, Good Friday or the parish's patronal festival.

SPECIAL LEAVE

A Bishop may grant you an additional period of special leave in particular circumstances.

LEAVE CALCULATIONS FOR JOINERS AND LEAVERS

If you join or leave during the year your leave entitlement will be calculated for the part of the year you are in office. This will be calculated as a rate of one twelfth for each completed month.

EXTENDED STUDY LEAVE

Licensed clergy are able to take an Extended Study Leave (ESL) every ten years, provided that:

- they have been ordained for more than ten years
- they have been in their present post for at least three years
- they are not within five years of retirement
- they have the pastoral agreement of their area Bishop and Archdeacon
- their plan for ESL has been approved by the Mission and Ministry Department and the dates agreed with the Rural/Area Dean.

[Extended Study Leave: Guidelines and Policy](#)

PUBLIC DUTIES

You may take reasonable time off for public duties which fall outside of the duties of your office, subject to Regulation 24(2) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 and with the agreement of the Archdeacon. Public duties are defined in the Regulations as:

- Any work done for a public authority, including membership of a court or tribunal or for a charity within the meaning of The Charities Act 2006 or a Registered Friendly Society.
- Any work done in connection with the activities of an independent trade union representing office holders of a description which includes the person in question.

JURY SERVICE

Clergy are eligible for Jury Service and are encouraged to claim their attendance allowance. All office holders, like all other adult citizens, are required to attend Jury Service when called. It is not possible to claim exemption, though it is usually possible to defer it once, provided there is good reason.

All stipendiary clergy called for Jury Service will be granted leave of absence and the loss of earning allowance will be topped up to the level of full stipend. Self-Supporting Ministers should adapt these guidelines appropriately.

On receipt of the notice of Jury Service, you should send a note of the dates to the Archdeacon, churchwardens and any colleagues who may be impacted by your absence.

You should claim the Attendance Allowance and send the Certificate of Loss of Earnings form to the Stipend Administrator. This form will be returned and will need to be submitted to the court. When Jury Service is complete, you will need to inform the Jury Service key contact who will instruct the clergy payroll to make an appropriate adjustment to the stipend.





FAMILY & LOVED ONES

The Diocese of St Albans values all of the loved ones that support clergy in their ministry, whether that be family and or a wider community. We provide the following policies to enable clergy to support their families and loved ones.

MATERNITY

Definitions

The following terms are used in this section:

- **EWC:** Expected Week of Childbirth, this is the week, commencing on the Sunday, during which birth is expected.
- **Qualifying Week:** This is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

NOTE FOR CURATES AND ORDINANDS

If you are an ordinand or curate please also familiarise yourself with the Diocesan Family Leave and Training Policy.

ANTENATAL CARE

When pregnant you are entitled to paid time off for antenatal care. This can include attendance at medical appointments and where they have been recommended by a medical practitioner or midwife, other appointments, for example, antenatal and parent-craft classes.

The partners of pregnant people and surrogate parents are entitled to attend up to 2 antenatal appointments during working time, where additional appointments are required these may be granted at the discretion of the Archdeacon.

Curates - If any of these appointments fall at times when you would usually be in formal study or retreat, you should inform your training team as soon as reasonably possible so they can support you to attend appointments.

HEALTH AND SAFETY - RISK ASSESSMENT

The Diocese of St Albans takes the health and safety of all clergy and their unborn children seriously. It is recommended that you inform your Archdeacon of your pregnancy as soon as reasonably possible so that together you can risk assess your role and environment.

You should make yourself aware of risks and take responsibility to protect yourself.

Further guidance can be obtained from the HSE – [A guide for New and Expectant Mothers who work](#)

NOTIFICATION

You should notify the Archdeacon and the Stipend Administrator of your pregnancy no later than the 15th week before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), or as soon as possible if you find out you are pregnant after this date.

You are required to provide the following information:

- the fact that you are pregnant and a form MAT B1,
- the expected week of childbirth (EWC),
- written notification of the date you intend to start your leave.

Any change to the date given must be provided at least 28 days before the new date.

Once you have notified the Stipends Administrator of the above, they will confirm in writing the expected date your additional maternity leave will finish. If you wish to return before the end of additional maternity leave you must give at least eight weeks' notice of your intention.

Maternity leave may be triggered automatically before your planned date if:

- you give birth early. You should inform the Stipends Administrator of the date you gave birth as soon as reasonably practical to do so. Your maternity leave will automatically begin the day after you gave birth. The Stipends Administrator will notify you of your new expected return date.
- you are absent from work, wholly or partly due to your pregnancy any time after the beginning of the 4th week before the EWC. You are required to inform the Stipends Administrator by email as soon as reasonably practical of this change, your maternity leave will begin from the first day of your absence. The Stipends Administrator will notify you of your new expected return date.

HOLIDAYS

Holiday leave entitlement will be accrued throughout your maternity leave at your normal rate.

If you return to work after maternity leave, your holiday entitlement will continue to accrue as normal.

Annual leave can be taken either before maternity leave starts, at the end of maternity leave or within the annual leave year once you have returned to work.

Holiday accrued in the year your maternity leave ends should be requested as usual.

If you chose to leave the Diocese at the end of your maternity leave your holiday may be paid in lieu.

PENSIONS

Your pension will continue to be earned as normal whilst you are on maternity leave.

If you make Additional Voluntary Contributions to your pension scheme you may choose to decrease these whilst you are on maternity leave, if you want to do this please contact the Stipends Administrator.

MATERNITY LEAVE

You are entitled to take up to 52 weeks maternity leave, the first 26 weeks being referred to as Ordinary Maternity Leave and the second 26 weeks as Additional Maternity Leave. It is compulsory that you take two weeks of maternity leave immediately after giving birth.

You can choose to begin maternity leave any time from 11 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

Self supporting clergy and self supporting curates are entitled to the same leave as stipendiary clergy but will not receive maternity pay.

ENHANCED MATERNITY PAY

The Diocese of St Albans offers enhanced maternity pay if you meet the following criteria:

- you are still pregnant at the 11th week before EWC or have already given birth by that time,
- you have notified us as per the above process.

Enhanced maternity pay provides your full stipend for 39 weeks from the commencement of maternity leave. If you are eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) then enhanced maternity pay 'tops-up' your statutory pay to the rate of your full stipend.

There is no Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or enhanced maternity pay, payable for the final 13 weeks of additional maternity leave.

Enhanced maternity pay is taxable and attracts National Insurance deductions.

STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY

If you are in post during the 15th week (the Qualifying Week) before the expected week of childbirth and have been continuously in post for at least 26 weeks you will be entitled to receive Statutory Maternity Pay, provided that your total earnings inclusive of stipend and any other taxable income are more than the lower earnings limit for payment of National Insurance Contributions.

Statutory Maternity Pay is paid for up to 39 weeks and the below rates:

- 90% of your average weekly stipend (before tax) for the first 6 weeks,
- followed by statutory maternity pay or 90% of your average stipend (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks.

Please note your rate of pay for the full 39 weeks will be your normal stipend but you may see this broken down as above on your payslip.

Where you are eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (below) your pay is partly reclaimed by the Clergy Payments Department from the Government at the rate of 92% of the clergy equivalent of the lower rate of SMP.

KEEPING IN TOUCH (KIT) DAYS

KIT days are not legally applicable to stipendiary clergy. However, you may feel that there is a benefit in working occasional days when you are on maternity leave and we recommend that capping this at a maximum of 10 days is good practice.

We encourage you to agree any working (KIT) days in advance with the relevant Archdeacon and to only use these days for attending events or training which support your development and keeping up to date with emails and administrative tasks.

We recommend that you do not use working (KIT) days for conducting services unless in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement of the relevant Archdeacon.

You may also wish to consider not worshiping in your own parish during your maternity leave.

RETURN TO WORK

Your expected return date will be communicated to you in writing when you inform us of your pregnancy. If you wish to return before the end of your maternity leave you must give at least eight weeks' notice of your intention.

You remain in your office for the duration of your maternity leave and therefore will return to it at the end of your maternity leave.

If you choose not to return after your maternity leave you must give the Bishop of St Albans notice of termination as detailed in your Statement of Particulars.

If you resign either before, during or after maternity leave, but later change your mind, you have no absolute right to return, although every effort will be made to find a suitable post.

BABY DEATH AND MISCARRIAGE

In the sad case that your baby dies after 24 weeks of pregnancy your entitlement to maternity leave, SMP and enhanced maternity pay will be unaffected, and you will still be able to take leave and be paid as planned. This also applies if your baby is born alive before 24 weeks but then dies after being born. You will also be eligible for parental bereavement leave.

If you experience a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy you will not be entitled to maternity leave or SMP. We would encourage you to take time off, this can be sick leave and/or compassionate leave.

You may also want to speak to someone from the Clergy Counselling Service.

PATERNITY

Definitions

The following terms are used in this section:

EWC: Expected Week of Childbirth, this is the week, commencing on the Sunday, during which birth is expected.

Qualifying Week: This is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

Self supporting clergy and curates are entitled to the same leave as stipendiary clergy but will not receive statutory pay.

If you are an ordinand or curate please also familiarise yourself with the Diocesan Family Leave and Training Policy.

PATERNITY LEAVE

If you are the father of the child or the husband, civil partner or partner of the mother, child's adopter or intended parent, you may be entitled to take paternity leave to look after the child / children or care for the mother. This can be taken as two non consecutive weeks or two consecutive weeks. A person who is not a parent of the child can only claim if they are expected to have the main responsibility (except for the mother) for the upbringing of the child.

The leave, of either one week or two weeks, can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth, and must be completed within a period of 52 weeks from the child's birth or the first day of the EWC, whichever is the later.

In the case of adoption, the leave, can start on any day of the week on or after the date of placement (UK adoptions), the child's arrival in the UK (overseas adoptions) or the date of birth (for surrogate parents). Leave must be completed 52 weeks from the date of placement (UK adoptions), the child's arrival in the UK (overseas adoptions) or birth.

STATUTORY PATERNITY PAY

If you are in post during the 15th week (the Qualifying Week) before the expected week of childbirth/ expected placement date and have been continuously in post for at least 26 weeks you will be entitled to receive Statutory Paternity Pay, provided that your earnings are more than the lower earnings limit for payment of National Insurance Contributions.

Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) is paid at the weekly Statutory Paternity Rate or 90% of your average earnings (whichever is lower).

The Diocese will top up Statutory Paternity Pay to the rate of your full stipend. If you are not eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay you will still receive your stipend at your normal rate for the period of your paternity leave.

ANTENATAL CARE

Partners are entitled to attend up to 2 antenatal appointments during working time, where additional appointments are required these may be granted at the discretion of the Archdeacon.

NOTIFICATION

You must give notice to your Archdeacon and the Stipend Administrator of your intention to take paternity leave in or before the 15th week before the EWC or for adoption within seven days of being notified of matching. If you are unable to give notice in those timescales, you must as soon as is reasonably practical to do so.

You must provide a self-certificate stating the EWC, the date upon which paternity leave is anticipated to begin and whether you intend to take one or two weeks' leave.

As part of the above certificate, you must sign a declaration that the conditions of entitlement to statutory paternity leave and statutory paternity pay are fulfilled as detailed above.

Note: If, after providing this notice, you have a change of mind as to the commencement date or the amount of leave to be taken, further notice of at least 28 days must be provided (or, in cases where this is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable).

BABY DEATH AND MISCARRIAGE

In the sad case that your baby dies after 24 weeks of pregnancy your entitlement to paternity leave and SPP is unaffected, and you will still be able to take leave and be paid as planned. This also applies if your baby is born alive before 24 weeks but then dies after being born. You will also be eligible for parental bereavement leave.

If your partner experiences a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy you will no longer be entitled to paternity leave or pay. We would encourage you to take time off, this can be sick leave and/or compassionate leave.

You may also want to speak to someone from the Clergy Counselling Service.

BEREAVED PARTNER'S PATERNITY LEAVE

In the sad case event that the mother or primary adopter dies within the first year of the child's life, as a bereaved father or partner you are entitled to take up to 52 weeks' paternity leave. This entitlement applies from day one of employment.

Statutory pay will apply in accordance with the relevant eligibility requirements in force at the time.

ADOPTION AND SURROGACY

Adoption leave and pay allows an adoptive parent to take paid time off work when their new child starts to live with them, this policy also applies to surrogacy arrangements.

Self supporting clergy and curates are entitled to the same leave as stipendiary clergy but will not receive pay.

If you are an ordinand or curate please also familiarise yourself with the Diocesan Family Leave and Training Policy.

LEAVE

If you are matched with a child for adoption, you may be entitled to either adoption leave or paternity leave. You may also be entitled to adoption pay, in line with the statutory provisions in place. One parent cannot take both periods of leave, and it is up to you and your partner to decide who is the main adopter who will take adoption leave. The other partner may be able to take paternity leave instead. You may also be able to apply for shared parental leave as detailed below.

If eligible you are entitled to 26 weeks' Ordinary Adoption Leave and a further 26 weeks' Additional Adoption leave.

Adoption leave can start:

- Up to 14 days before the date the child starts living with you (UK adoptions)
- When the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date (overseas adoptions)
- The day the child is born, or the day after if you are having a child through surrogacy

You will be eligible for adoption leave if

- you are in post at the time of placement,
- you provide notice as detailed below,
- and if you are adopting from overseas with a partner you also sign a form [SC6](#).

If you are fostering with the view to adopting you can receive adoption leave and pay from when the child comes to live with you.

ADOPTION APPOINTMENTS

If you are eligible for adoption leave, as per above, then you will also be entitled to 5 paid days' leave to attend adoption appointments after you have been matched with a child.

HOLIDAYS

Holiday leave entitlement will be accrued throughout your adoption leave at your normal rate.

If you return to work after adoption leave, your holiday entitlement will continue to accrue as normal.

Annual leave can be taken either before adoption leave starts, at the end of adoption leave or within the annual leave year once you have returned to work.

Holiday accrued in the year your adoption leave ends should be requested as usual.

PENSIONS

Your pension will continue to be earned as normal whilst you are on adoption leave.

If you make Additional Voluntary Contributions to your pension scheme you may choose to decrease these whilst you are on leave, if you want to do this please contact the Stipends Administrator.

NOTIFICATION

You must give notice to your Archdeacon and the Stipend Administrator, of your intention to take adoption leave no more than seven days after being matched with a child and provide the following:

- Written confirmation when the child is to be placed, arrive in the UK or expected week of childbirth.
- When you want the adoption leave to start.
- The matching certificate as evidence, overseas equivalent or proof of surrogacy.

ENHANCED ADOPTION LEAVE PAY

The Diocese of St Albans offers enhanced adoption pay if you meet the following criteria:

- give notice as per the above instructions.

Where two or more children are being placed for adoption the entitlement to enhanced adoption pay remains the same as if there was one child.

Enhanced adoption pay provides your full stipend for 39 weeks from the commencement of adoption leave. If you are eligible for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) then enhanced adoption pay 'tops-up' your statutory pay to the rate of your full stipend.

There is no Statutory Adoption Pay or enhanced adoption pay, payable for the final 13 weeks of additional adoption leave.

Enhanced adoption pay is taxable and attracts National Insurance deductions.

STATUTORY ADOPTION PAY

You will be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) if:

UK Adoptions:

- you have been continuously in post for 26 weeks by the week you are matched with a child,
- give notice as stated above,
- your earnings are more than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance Contributions.

Overseas Adoptions

- you have been continuously in post for 26 weeks when adoption leave begins, give notice as stated below,
- your earnings are more than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance Contributions,
- you sign form SC6.

Surrogacy

- you have been continuously in post for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due, give notice as stated below,
- your earnings are more than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance Contributions,
- you intend to apply for a parental order.

SAP will be paid for up to 39 weeks, commencing at the start of adoption leave.

The first six weeks will be paid at the higher rate, which is 90% of your weekly earnings. Your weekly earnings are calculated by taking an average of your pay from the eight weeks preceding the Qualifying Week.

The remaining 33 weeks will be paid at the lower rate of SAP which in line with the statutory rates, or 90% of your average earnings, whichever is the lower.

Please note your rate of pay for the full 39 weeks will be your normal stipend but you may see this broken down as above on your payslip.

Where you are eligible for Statutory Adoption Pay enhanced adoption pay is partly reclaimed by the Clergy Payments Department from the Government at the rate of 92% of the clergy equivalent of the lower rate of SAP.

INTERRUPTED ADOPTION

Enhanced adoption leave will come to an end eight weeks after the placement ends if the adoption agency informs you that the adoption cannot go ahead, the child or children return to the adoption agency or the child dies.

You may want to speak to someone from the Clergy Counselling Service.

KEEPING IN TOUCH (KIT) DAYS

KIT days are not legally applicable to stipendiary clergy. However, you may feel that there is a benefit in working occasional days when you are on adoption leave and we recommend that capping this at a maximum of 10 days is good practice.

We encourage you to agree any working (KIT) days in advance with the relevant Archdeacon and to only use these days for attending events or training which support your development and keeping up to date with emails and administrative tasks.

We recommend that you do not use working (KIT) days for conducting services unless in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement of the relevant Archdeacon.

You may also wish to consider not worshiping in your own parish during your adoption leave.

RETURN TO WORK

Your expected return date will be communicated to you in writing when you inform us of your adoption. If you wish to return before the end of your adoption leave you must give at least eight weeks' notice of your intention.

You remain in your office for the duration of your adoption leave and therefore will return to it at the end of your adoption leave.

If you choose not to return after your adoption leave you must give the Bishop notice of termination as detailed in your Statement of Particulars.

If you resign either before, during or after adoption leave, but later change your mind, you have no absolute right to return, although every effort will be made to find a suitable post.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE AND PAY

If you or your spouse or partner are taking maternity or adoption leave you may be entitled to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) subject to eligibility. Self-supporting clergy and curates are unlikely to be eligible for Statutory Shared Parental Leave or Pay from the Diocese as the conditions require both parents to meet the earnings test.

SPL starts when you or your partner ends their maternity or adoption leave or pay early. The remaining leave will be available as SPL. The remaining pay may be available as ShPP.

LEAVE

In order to take SPL both you and your partner need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- be the parent of the child or the partner of the parent.
- have 26 weeks' service at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) or for adoption at the week in which the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (relevant week).
- meet the employment and earnings test.
- share responsibility for the child.
- have made the required notifications and provided the required declarations and evidence.
- be in office or employment when the leave starts.

If you are eligible and you or your partner end maternity or adoption leave early, you can:

- take up to 50 weeks of shared of leave – the total amount of leave which can be taken is 52 weeks including maternity and adoption leave, paternity leave is standalone and can be used at the same time as maternity or adoption leave.
- Take blocks of 1 week leave in up to 3 separate blocks, at the same time or separately to your partner up to a total of 50 weeks.

SPL can commence for the partner while the mother or adopter is still on maternity or adoption leave if they have given binding notice to end their leave.

You must give your Archdeacon at least 8 weeks' notice before a block of leave begins. You may request to split blocks of leave into shorter periods of at least a week, however this is subject to agreement by the Archdeacon.

HOLIDAYS

Holiday leave entitlement will be accrued throughout your shared parental leave at your normal rate.

If you return to work after shared parental leave, your holiday entitlement will continue to accrue as normal.

Annual leave can be taken either before shared parental leave starts, at the end of shared parental leave or within the annual leave year once you have returned to work.

Holiday accrued in the year your shared parental leave ends should be requested as usual.

NOTIFICATION

You are required to give at least 8 weeks' notice of your intention to take SPL and/or ShPP. You must provide written notice to the Stipend Administrator including:

- your partner's name.
- the start and end dates of maternity or adoption leave (or pay if you or your partner was not eligible for leave).
- the total amount of shared parental leave available.
- the expected or actual week of childbirth or placement.
- an indication of how you and your partner expect to split and take shared parental leave.

You will also need to provide the following signed declarations:

- A declaration from you confirming that you meet the eligibility criteria for taking leave and that you and your partner share childcare responsibility.
- A declaration from your partner stating:
 - their name, address and National Insurance number.
 - that they meet the eligibility requirements.
 - that they consent to you taking off the amount of leave you have notified.
 - that they consent to the DBF processing their information.
 - that they will inform the DBF immediately if any of the eligibility criteria cease to be met.
 - that they share childcare responsibility with you.

Your partner will need to do the same for their employer.

For Shared Parental Leave (SPL) to start, the mother or adopter must do one of the following:

- end their maternity or adoption leave by returning to work.
- give 'binding notice' (a decision that can't normally be changed) of the date when they will end their maternity or adoption leave.
- end maternity pay or Maternity Allowance (if they are not entitled to maternity leave, e.g. they are a worker or self-employed).

Within 14 days of receiving notice we may ask you to provide the following additional information:

- a copy of the child's birth certificate.
- the name and address of your partner's employer.

You must give at least 8 weeks' notice of any leave you wish to take. If the child is born more than 8 weeks early, this notice period can be shorter.

The mother or adopter may be able to change their decision to end maternity or adoption leave early if both:

- the planned end date hasn't passed.
- they haven't already returned to work.

One of the following must also apply:

- it is discovered during the 8-week notice period that either partner is eligible for either SPL or ShPP.
- their partner has died.
- it is less than 6 weeks after the birth (and the mother gave notice before the birth).

STATUTORY SHARED PARENTAL PAY

ShPP is paid for a maximum of 39 weeks total split across both parents. This includes any weeks in which maternity or adoption pay was received.

To be eligible for ShPP, you must:

- have been in post for at least 26 weeks' at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) or for adoption at the week in which the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (relevant week).
- have earnings that are more than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance contributions,
- provide notification as stated above.

ShPP is paid at the current statutory weekly rate or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

ENHANCED SHARED PARENTAL PAY

The Diocese of St Albans offers enhanced shared parental pay if you meet the following criteria:

- have at least one year of service at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) or for adoption at the week in which the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (relevant week).
- have earnings that are more than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance contributions,
- provide notification as stated above.

Enhanced Shared Parental Pay 'tops up' ShPP to 50% of your stipend for up to 39 weeks total, this total includes any weeks pay your partner takes and any maternity or adoption pay.

There is no ShPP or enhanced maternity pay, payable for the final 13 weeks of additional leave.

Enhanced ShPP is taxable and attracts National Insurance deductions; it is partly reclaimed by the Clergy Payments Department from the Government at the rate of 92% of the clergy equivalent of the lower rate of SMP.

HOLIDAYS

Holiday leave entitlement will be accrued throughout your shared parental leave at your normal rate.

If you return to work after shared parental leave, your holiday entitlement will continue to accrue as normal.

Annual leave can be taken either before shared parental leave starts, at the end of shared parental leave or within the annual leave year once you have returned to work.

Holiday accrued in the year your shared parental leave ends should be requested as usual.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE IN TOUCH DAYS (SPLIT DAYS)

SPLIT days are not legally applicable to stipendiary clergy. However, you may feel that there is a benefit in working occasional days when you are on adoption leave and we recommend that capping this at a maximum of 10 days is good practice.

We encourage you to agree any working days in advance with the relevant Archdeacon and to only use these days for attending events or training which support your development and keeping up to date with emails and administrative tasks.

We recommend that you do not use working days for conducting services unless in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement of the relevant Archdeacon.

You may also wish to consider not worshiping in your own parish during your parental leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE

ENTITLEMENT

If you have responsibility for caring for a child you are entitled to Parental Leave.

The objective of Parental Leave is to enable those with parental responsibility to have time off to spend time with and to look after a child or to make arrangements for the child's welfare.

You can take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave per child in total up to their 18th birthday. Parental leave is unpaid and can be taken by both parents. Leave taken with a previous employer counts towards the maximum entitlement.

WHEN LEAVE MAY BE TAKEN

You must normally take leave in blocks of one week or more, up to a maximum of four weeks in a year for each child. However, parents of disabled children may take leave in blocks or multiples of one day.

You may choose to take Parental Leave at any time up until the child's 18th birthday.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

You must give 21 days' notice of your request for Parental Leave to the relevant Archdeacon.

If you wish to take Parental Leave immediately after the birth or adoption of the child, you must give 21 days' notice before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth. In the case of adoption, you must give 21 days' notice of the expected week of placement, wherever possible.

POSTPONEMENT OF LEAVE

The Bishop of St Albans may postpone any leave you request for up to six months from the date requested where it is considered that your absence would be unduly disruptive. Examples of such situations are:

- Seasonal peak work requirements
- Where a significant proportion of the workforce applies for Parental Leave at the same time
- Where the absence at a particular time would unduly harm the parish

The Bishop will not postpone leave where it is immediately after the birth or adoption of a child but you should give notice as detailed above.

If, because of postponement, the period of Parental Leave falls after the child's 18th birthday then you would be entitled to take leave after that date.

EVIDENCE

You may be asked to provide evidence of your entitlement, this may be in the form of a birth certificate, adoption papers or details of disability living allowance or similar.

NEONATAL CARE LEAVE

We understand that having a child in neonatal care will be a difficult time and we are committed to supporting you and doing what we can to help ensure that you are able to be by your child's side. This policy details the statutory entitlement to Neonatal care leave and pay though the Diocese, at its discretion will be as compassionate as possible and you are encouraged to speak to your Archdeacon.

ELIGIBILITY

Neonatal care leave is a statutory right from the first day of service if the following conditions are met:

- Your child was born on or after 6 April 2025.
- Your child started receiving neonatal care within 28 days after the date on which they were born.
- The neonatal care has lasted seven continuous days or longer.
- You are taking the leave to care for your child.
- You have complied with the relevant notice and declaration requirements set out in this policy.

ENTITLEMENT

You can take up to 12 weeks of neonatal care which is in addition to maternity, paternity, and shared parental leave entitlements. The leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby's birth and can be taken either in blocks or consecutively, depending on your needs.

PAY

To qualify for statutory Neonatal Care Pay (NCP), you must have been in continuous service with the Diocese of St Albans for at least 26 weeks prior to requesting the leave and earn an average weekly salary of at least £123. NCP will be paid at the statutory rate set by the government or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

The Diocese at its discretion may top up your NCP to the level of your full stipend for the period of neonatal leave.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria for NCP, the Diocese may at its discretion pay your full stipend for the duration of neonatal leave.

PROCESS

If you wish to take NCL, you must notify your Archdeacon as soon as possible. You will need to provide supporting evidence, such as a hospital letter or discharge summary, confirming your baby's admission and the duration of their stay.

You are required to confirm your return to work date at least two weeks in advance of your planned return. If you wish to extend your leave or combine it with other entitlements, such as parental leave, please discuss this with your Archdeacon at the earliest opportunity.

Please also review [page 34 – Compassionate Leave](#)

[You may find it useful to speak to a member of the clergy counselling service.](#)



ORDINAND FAMILY POLICY

It is important to the Diocese that Ordinands who become parents are supported and feel able to complete their training and commence ministry successfully.

This policy details the provisions in place in the Diocese of St Albans for Ordinands who become parents during their training period.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Diocese of St Albans takes the health and safety of all ordinands and their unborn children seriously. It is recommended that you inform your training institution of your pregnancy as soon as reasonably possible so that they can support your health and safety needs while you are studying.

FUNDED ORDINANDS

As Ordinands are not classed as office holders, they are not entitled to many of the statutory benefits available to office holding clergy. This includes benefits related to becoming parents such as Maternity Leave and Pay, Paternity Leave and Pay, Shared Parental Leave and Pay and Adoption Leave and Pay.

The Diocese of St Albans offers a discretionary policy which provides the following benefits:

ANTENATAL CARE

If you are pregnant, you may take time off from your studies to attend appointments for the purpose of ante-natal care. This includes medical appointments and other appointments such as parent classes. When these appointments fall at times when you would usually be in formal study or on retreat you should inform your training institution as soon as reasonably possible.

Attendance at antenatal appointments will not affect any payments you receive.

LEAVE

As an Ordinand you may choose to have a period of leave of either three months/one academic term or one year when you give birth, have a baby via surrogacy or adopt a child. Anyone who gives birth must take at least 2 weeks leave.

If you choose to have three months/one academic term of leave this will not affect the length of your training period.

If you choose to have a year off as leave, then your training period will be extended by one year and you will join the following cohort.

If you are the spouse or civil partner of a person who is expecting a child, whether by birth, adoption or surrogacy, you will be able to have up to two weeks leave from all studies and duties without any impact on your studies.

PAY

The Diocese at its discretion will provide your normal grant for the whole period of the family leave.

HOUSING

If you are provided housing during your training this will be unaffected by your leave regardless of whether you choose to take three months or a year.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

If your spouse or civil partner is employed or is an office holding member of clergy, you will not be able to make use of Shared Parental Leave and Pay. This is because the eligibility criteria set by the government for this states that both parents must be employed for at least 26 weeks before the arrival of the child. As ordinands are not considered to be office holders this criterion cannot be met.

However, if your spouse or civil partner is a fellow Ordinand within the Diocese of St Albans, then you will be able to share your leave. If one of you has given birth, then that person must take at least 2 weeks of leave immediately after the birth. After which you may each take leave in blocks of 3 months, as per the leave section above up to a combined total of one year.

If you are both in receipt of funding, then your grants will be paid as per the above section on pay.

SELF SUPPORTING ORDINANDS

ANTENATAL CARE

If you are pregnant, you are encouraged to take time off from your studies to attend appointments for the purpose of antenatal care. This includes medical appointments and other appointments such as parent classes. When these appointments fall at times when you would usually be in formal study or on retreat you should inform your training institution as soon as reasonably possible.

LEAVE

As an Ordinand you may choose to have a period of leave of either three months/one academic term or one year when you give birth, have a baby via surrogacy or adopt a child. Any person who gives birth must take at least 2 weeks leave.

If you choose to have three months/one academic term of leave this will not affect the length of your training period.

If you choose to have a year off as leave, then your training period will be extended by one year and you will join the following cohort.

If you are the spouse or civil partner of a person who is expecting a child, whether by birth, adoption or surrogacy, you will be able to have up to two weeks leave from all studies and duties without any impact on your studies.



CURATE FAMILY POLICY

It is important to the Diocese that Curates who become parents are supported and feel able to complete their training and commence ministry successfully.

This policy details the provisions in place in the Diocese of St Albans for Curates who become parents during their training period.

Stipendiary curates should also read the Family and Loved ones section of this handbook.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Diocese takes the health and safety of all Curates and their unborn children seriously. It is recommended that you inform your training incumbent of your pregnancy as soon as reasonably possible so that together you can risk assess your role and environment.

Further guidance can be obtained from the HSE – A guide for New and Expectant Mothers who work.

STIPENDIARY CURATES

As a Stipendiary Curate you may choose to have a period of leave of up to one year when have a baby either by birth, via surrogacy or when you adopt a child as per the Family and Loved ones section of this handbook. This section explains the effect of leave on your curacy.

You may choose to take up to three months of leave without this affecting the length of your curacy, if you chose to take longer your curacy will be extended by the corresponding amount.

All curacies should be completed within five years unless otherwise agreed with the Archdeacon.

You should inform your training incumbent of your pregnancy, surrogacy or adoption as soon as practical to do so, they will inform the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon and your training incumbent will meet with you to discuss you leave period and how you will be supported prior, during and after.

HOUSING

If you are provided housing by the Diocese, then your housing will be unaffected by any period of leave you take.

If your housing is provided by the PCC then the decision on whether you can remain in your house while on leave has to be made by the PCC. We strongly encourage all PCCs to allow curates to remain in their houses during any family leave. You are advised to inform your training incumbent about your pregnancy, surrogacy or adoption as soon as reasonably practical so that the PCC can make a decision on housing well in advance of your leave.

SELF SUPPORTING CURATES

ANTENATAL CARE

If you are pregnant, you are encouraged to take time off to attend appointments for the purpose of antenatal care, including medical appointments and other appointments such as parent classes. It is recommended that you inform your training incumbent of any appointments so that they can support you in taking this time off.

If any of these appointments fall at times when you would usually be in formal study or retreat, you should inform your training institution as soon as reasonably possible so they can support you to attend appointments.

LEAVE

As a Self-Supporting Curate you may choose to have as much leave as you wish. If you have given birth, then the minimum leave you can take is two weeks. You may take up to three months of leave without this affecting the length of your curacy, if you chose to take longer your curacy will be extended by the corresponding amount. All curacies should be completed within five years unless otherwise agreed with the to the Archdeacon.

We ask that you inform your training incumbent as soon you feel comfortable to do so to allow them to plan for your leave. They will inform the to the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon and your training incumbent will meet with you discuss your leave period and how you can be supported prior, during and after.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

You are unlikely to be able to make use of Shared Parental Leave and Pay. This is because the eligibility criteria for this states that both parents must be employed for at least 26 weeks before the arrival of the child, as you are not employed you do not meet these criteria.

CARERS LEAVE

Clergy who are also unpaid carers are entitled to take unpaid leave to care for a dependant who:

- has a physical or mental illness or injury which requires care and which is expected to last for at least 3 months,
- has a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, or
- requires care because of their old age.

A dependant is classed as someone who relies on you for their care or may reasonably expect to rely on you for their care when required, for example, your partner, your child, a parent.

You may take one week of carers leave every 12 months, this may be taken as individual days, half days or a single week.

If you wish to take carers leave you must inform the your Archdeacon in advance:

- for periods of half a day or a day you must provide at least 2 days notice.
- for periods longer than a day you must provide notice at least twice as long as the requested leave, for example if the leave is for 2 days then you must provide 4 days notice.

You do not need to provide any evidence of your dependant's care needs.

In rare occasions the Archdeacon may refuse carers leave for the time you requested it, in these cases they will agree an alternative leave date with you that is within one month of the requested date. The new date and the reason for the delay will be put in writing to you.

BEREAVEMENT

The Diocese recognises that when someone dies it can have a profound effect on loved ones for some time afterwards.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

When a dependent dies you have the right to reasonable unpaid time off, the government defines a dependent as:

- Your spouse or civil partner
- Your parent
- Your child
- A person who lives in your household
- A person who would rely on you in the event of an emergency
- A person who relied on you to make care arrangements for them

In addition the Diocese allows stipendiary clergy to have up to 5 paid days off in the case of the death of any or the above for someone for whom you have the responsibility for organising their funeral and estate.

Should you find that there are elements of your role you are struggling to fulfil for a period after a bereavement, such as funerals, you are encouraged to speak to the relevant Archdeacon for support and guidance. Where possible the Archdeacon will try and find another office holder to cover those services for a set duration.

You may also find it useful to speak to a member of the [clergy counselling service](#).

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

The Diocese provides up to 5 days paid off for compassionate reasons, these may be used if a close family member is seriously injured or ill. A close family member may be a partner, child, or another person who is close to you at the discretion of the relevant Archdeacon. If you need to take compassionate leave you should request this via your Archdeacon.

If you are struggling emotionally, physically, or in any other way please contact your Suffragan Bishop or Archdeacon to discuss whether further time off is needed and what support can be provided. Any additional leave is at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND PAY

Bereaved parents are entitled to a statutory period of two weeks' leave should they lose a child under the age of 18 years, or if a baby is stillborn from 24 weeks of pregnancy or born alive before 24 weeks and then dies.

You can take this leave as either a single block of two weeks, or as separate blocks of one week. The leave can begin any time after the death of the child up until 56 weeks after the death. This means if you are taking another type of leave, such as maternity leave you can take bereavement leave at the end of your maternity leave.

If you have been employed by the Board for 26 weeks or more at the time of the death then you will be paid full pay during parental bereavement leave, this will include your entitlement to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay.

There is no need to provide proof of death or provide notification in writing. If you are taking Parental Bereavement leave you should inform your Archdeacon by whatever means you feel most comfortable that you will be taking leave and when.

You may find it useful to speak to a member of the [clergy counselling service](#).



CLERGY COUPLES

The Diocese recognises that when both members of a couple are clergy in paid ministry, there are a range of possible working patterns. It is important that each partner thrives within their own vocation, whether the couple ministers jointly in the same context or in separately in different contexts.

HOUSING

Where both are in parochial ministry, the Bishop of St Albans has given permission for the Diocese to provide a single house for Clergy couples, allowing for one partner to live outside of their benefice. The couple may choose which parsonage they wish to reside in and are encouraged to consider the length and method of the commute in their decision making.

We aim to provide an office in the parish of the partner who does not reside in their parish. Where possible this will be within an existing parish building. Where an alternative building has to be secured, we will aim for there to be a commute of no longer than 30 minutes from the parsonage in which the couple reside. Expenses will be paid for their travel to and from their parish once per working day.

No housing allowance will be paid to the partner who is not provided with a house.

Where there is a marriage or partnership between ordinands and curates this needs to be discussed at an early stage with the Director of Ordinands. The Diocese will do its best to find curacies close by one another. This will not always be possible and in such cases two houses will be provided with the expectation that each curate spends reasonable time in their 'home' parish. The time spent within the parish should be agreed with your training incumbent.

JOB SHARE

The Diocese will consider any requests from clergy couples to job share an incumbency. A job share is an arrangement where two people carryout one full time role and both are remunerated according to the percentage of time the each to the role.

The Diocese will consider the following divisions within a job share:

Partner 1		Partner 2	
3 days	50% Stipend	3 days	50% Stipend
3.5 days	58% Stipend	2.5 days	42% Stipend
4 days	66% Stipend	2 days	34% Stipend

When working in a job share you may both take the same rest days if you choose, the same rules for Sundays and principle feast days apply for both members of the couple.

At the time of writing this policy the appropriate language for an equal job share does not yet exist within the Church of England. Therefore, one partner will be the incumbent, and the other partner will be officially titled as Assistant Curate but known locally as vicar or other title appropriate for an incumbent in that parish. It is down to the couple to decide who holds which role.

EXTENDED STUDY LEAVE (ESL)

The Diocese will allow some flexibility to the normal requirements for ESL to allow clergy couples to take ESL at the same time if they choose to. Clergy who have met the following conditions will be invited to take ESL:

- They have been ordained for more than ten years,
- They have been in their present post for at least three years,
- They are not within five years of retirement.

When you receive an invitation to take ESL you will be provided with a timescale within which to take it, you may request to extend this by up to two years to allow your partner to qualify for ESL.

Where they will not qualify within those two years you may also make use of the following flexibility:

- Your partner may take ESL eight years after ordination instead of waiting for 10 years but they will not then be able to take it at 10 years.
- You or your partner may take ESL within 5 years of retirement as long as you still have at least 3 years left upon your return.

You may only use this flexibility if it allows both you and your partner to qualify to take ESL at the same time.

If you want to make use of this flexibility you should reply to the invitation you receive stating the flexibility you require. You should also send a copy of this to the relevant Archdeacon.



SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Diocese recognises that there will be times when you are unable to perform the duties of your office due to illness. This policy details how you will be supported in these periods.

SICKNESS NOTIFICATION

You are required report any sickness absence to the relevant Archdeacon as soon as it is reasonably practical to do so, the Archdeacon will then inform the Church Commissioners.

Sickness should be reported to the appropriate following email address:

bedfordsickness@stalbans.anglican.org

hertfordsickness@stalbans.anglican.org

stalbanssickness@stalbans.anglican.org

Where possible you should provide an indication in your email how long you expect to be off for and how best to contact you while you are off sick.

Stipendiary clergy are entitled to payment of statutory sick pay (SSP) and so should complete a self-certification form for any period of sickness absence of less than 7 days.

If your absence is longer than 7 days, then you will need to obtain a 'fit note' from your doctor or medical professional. This should be submitted electronically to the email address above. If you are still absent when the fit note expires you will need to provide another. There must be no gaps in the dates between sick notes, this may mean that you have to ask your doctor to backdate notes.

PAY

The diocese provides a sick pay scheme that provides a higher level of pay than is provided by statutory sick pay (SSP).

You will be paid your full stipend for up to 28 weeks of absence. This payment will be inclusive of any SSP you are entitled to.

After 28 weeks of absence (or linked absences*) your pay will reduce to 50% of full stipend for up to 12 weeks. You will no longer be eligible for SSP after 28 weeks of absence but may be able to apply for Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance.

Continued payment after 12 weeks at 50% will be at the discretion of a Bishop and will depend on the medical evidence available and expected length of absence.

*Periods of absence may be considered to be linked if they are for the same reason and occur less than 8 weeks apart.

You will be notified by the Church Commissioners when your SSP ends and when your stipend will be reduced or stopped.

SICKNESS AND HOLIDAY

If you are unwell prior to a booked holiday or while you are on holiday you may request for the period to be treated as sick leave instead of holiday, allowing you to rebook the holiday at another time of the year. The above sickness notification procedure must be followed and a 'fit note' or other appropriate medical evidence (if outside of the UK) must be provided for the whole period.

If you are on long term sick leave, which is defined as more than 28 days, then you may use your holiday entitlement while you are off sick if you wish to. You may also carry over any leave that has not been used into the next holiday year.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

If you are off for more than 28 calendar days in one absence or a series of linked absences this will be considered to be long-term absence. You should continue to update the Archdeacon of your circumstances and submit fit notes as required.

In these situations, the Archdeacon will arrange to meet you at your home, another mutually agreed location or via video call at least once every four weeks. You will be notified of the date of the meeting at least 5 days before and you may be accompanied by a member of your family, a friend or trade union representative. The purpose of these meetings will be to find out how you are, understand how long you are likely to be off and to explore all options available to help you to return.

An Archdeacon or Bishop may refer you to an occupational health provider, ask for your permission to receive a medical report from your doctor or health care provider or ask you to undergo a medical examination by a medical practitioner chosen by the Diocese. You are encouraged to give your permission for this as failure to do so may prevent us from providing you adequate support or mean that decisions are made without a full understanding of your health.

PHASED RETURN

If you have been absent long term, it may be appropriate have a phased return, this may mean working fewer days per week, working shorter days or some other way of reducing your duties for a short period of time. Any phased return must be agreed with your Archdeacon or Bishop and will have a set review date. You will receive your full stipend for any period of phased return as long as it does not continue for more than 6 weeks.

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

There may be times when the level of absence you have begins to affect your ability to fulfil the requirements of your office. This may be that you are having lots of short-term unlinked absences or that you have been absent long-term. In these cases, the following process will be used.

The below procedures are in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

INFORMAL STAGE

If your level of absence is affecting your ability to fulfil the requirements of your office then a member of staff senior to you will be appointed to manage this process and review the issues concerned.

You will be invited to attend a meeting with the appointed person to review your absence. This meeting can occur at your home, a suitable meeting room or another agreed location. There is no automatic right to have someone accompany you at this meeting but if you feel you require additional support, for example if you have a disability, you may make a request to the appointed person to be accompanied.

At this meeting your absence and the reasons for it will be discussed and ways to support you to reduce your absence or to return to work will be explored. A period of review will be agreed. The outcomes and actions from the meeting will be provided to you in writing no more than 7 days after the date of the meeting.

Prior to or as an outcome of an informal meeting the appointed person may refer you to an occupational health provider, ask for your permission to receive a medical report from your doctor or health care provider or ask you to undergo a medical examination by a medical practitioner chosen by the Diocese. You are encouraged to give your permission for this as failure to do so may prevent us from providing you adequate support or mean that decisions are made without a full understanding of your health.

A follow up meeting will be arranged with you after the agreed period and if there has been no improvement to your absence levels then the formal process may be invoked. At all stages support will be offered.

FORMAL STAGE

If absence levels do not improve or you are unable to return to work, then this formal process may be used.

Stage 1

You will be informed in writing of the intention to begin the formal process and will be invited to a capability meeting. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The letter will also detail the names of the other attendees and the capability panel.

The capability panel will be formed in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

The panel will consider all information and medical advice given and make a decision. This decision may include a sanction up to and including issuing a first formal warning. They will also determine the period for the next review and whether additional or different support may be made available. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing by the appointed person and you will have the right to appeal.

Your appeal must be submitted to the appointed person within 7 days and must state the reasons for appeal. Appeals may be made on the grounds of new information or that procedures were not correctly followed.

Stage 2

The appointed person will continue to maintain contact with you throughout the period between the first and second stages. They will meet with you informally towards the end of the set period to confirm whether there has been sufficient improvement in your absence levels to end the process or whether it will not continue to stage 2.

If the decision is made by the appointed person to continue to stage 2, you will be informed in writing and will be invited to a second capability meeting. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The letter will also detail the names of the other attendees and the capability panel.

The capability panel will be formed in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

The panel will consider all information and medical advice given and make a decision. This decision may include a sanction up to and including issuing a final formal warning. They will also determine the period for the next review and whether additional or different support may be made available. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing by the appointed person and you will have the right to appeal.

Your appeal must be submitted to the appointed person within 7 days and must state the reasons for appeal. Appeals may be made on the grounds of new information or that procedures were not correctly followed.

Stage 3

The appointed person will continue to maintain contact with you throughout the period between the first and second stages. They will meet with you informally towards the end of the set period to confirm whether there has been sufficient improvement in your absence levels to end the process or whether it will not continue to stage 3.

If the decision is made by the appointed person to continue to stage 3, you will be informed in writing and will be invited to a final capability meeting. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The letter will also detail the names of the other attendees and the capability panel which in this stage will include the Bishop of St Albans.

The capability panel will be formed in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

The panel will consider all information and medical advice given and make a decision. This decision may include a sanction up to and including removal from office.

If the decision is made to remove you from office then the Bishop of St Albans will write to you confirming the following:

- the reasons for removal from office
- the date on which the removal from office will take effect,
- the period of notice,
- any practical issues, or details of how these will be managed,
- the appeals process.

Your appeal must be submitted to the appointed person within 7 days and must state the reasons for appeal. Appeals may be made on the grounds of new information or that procedures were not correctly followed.

Appeals

Appeals will be heard as soon as reasonably practical after receipt.

A appeals panel will be established which is different from the capability panel but is in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

You will be invited to attend the appeal hearing in writing. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The appeal hearing will not repeat the original hearing but will review the process undertaken, all evidence put to the original panel or new evidence that has come to light and the decision made.

The chair of the appeals panel will confirm the outcome, potential outcomes will include upholding the original sanction or rejecting it. The outcome will be confirmed in writing. There are no further levels of appeal.

Ill Health Retirement

If at any stage throughout this process the medical evidence makes it clear that despite support and all reasonable adjustments being made you are unlikely to be able to return to your office, then the process will be paused while the Church of England Pensions Board assesses your case and eligibility for ill health retirement.

Other help

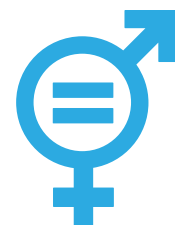
You may find it useful to speak to a member of the [clergy counselling service](#).

The Church of England provide information on clergy health and wellbeing.

[Clergy Health and Wellbeing](#)

St Luke's Healthcare is an independent charity which provides services for Clergy.

[St Luke's Healthcare for the Clergy](#).



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Diocese is committed to providing equal opportunities. This means following practices that are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination and a commitment that no one will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 except where exceptions apply:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy or Paternity
- Race, ethnic origin or country of origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Nor will they be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance or requirements of the role.

You are encouraged to support us in this inclusivity by:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions are recognised and valued.
- Creating an environment that promotes dignity and respect.
- Tackling intimidation, bullying or harassment quickly and effectively.
- Undertaking relevant training and development opportunities.
- Sharing the knowledge that equality is key to our values.
- Zero tolerance for victimisation or retaliation against those who raise concerns of discrimination or harassment.

If you have concerns about any type of discrimination, either to yourself or others, you are encouraged to speak to your Archdeacon.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

It is core to our values that we treat others with dignity and respect. The Diocese does not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour that causes others to feel vulnerable or disrespected, whether or not it was intentional.

All allegations of bullying or harassment will be fully investigated in line with the appropriate policy. The [grievance procedure](#) can be found later in this document.

If you have concerns about any type of bullying or harassment, either to yourself or others, you are encouraged to speak first to your Archdeacon or Suffragan Bishop.

Our [Preventing Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) and [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) can be found on the Diocesan website.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All members of clergy are expected to read and comply with the diocese sexual harassment policy which can be found on our website and on Breathe.

The information below complements the full policy.

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 requires all employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. If a claim is successfully brought and the employer cannot demonstrate that reasonable preventative actions were taken, then the compensation can be uplifted by as much as 25%.

It should be noted that preventative action includes third parties that your employees may come into contact with which could include, volunteers and congregation.

What is considered reasonable steps will depend on

- the size of your organisation
- the kind of work your employees do - areas of particular risk may include being alone with third parties, visiting people in their home and the presence of alcohol
- who your employees might come into contact with as part of their work
- your organisation's resources

Types of reasonable steps you might take could include:

- Training for employees
- Implementation of a sexual harassment policy
- Codes of conduct for third parties
- Staff handbook/policies which explain how staff can raise sexual harassment
- Signs asking visitors to respect staff
- Sexual harassment risk assessment

There are tools available to support you on the diocese website.



MENOPAUSE

The Diocese of St Albans seeks to create a culture where people feel safe to discuss their symptoms of menopause and get the help they require. The Diocese recognises that for someone experiencing symptoms, it can be a difficult and stressful time and that it is a very sensitive and personal matter which can greatly impact an individual's vocational and personal life. Research has shown that many people leave their jobs because they feel unable to cope with the symptoms of menopause at work and the Diocese wants to reduce the risk of anyone feeling this way.

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, although it can happen earlier naturally or after some medical treatments.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when your hormone levels begin to drop and may last several years.

EFFECTS OF MENOPAUSE

The symptoms of perimenopause and menopause differ between individuals, some of the commonly noted symptoms are listed below:

Physical symptoms

- Hot flushes, sometimes combined with dizziness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue
- Noticeable heartbeats
- Headaches
- Muscle ache and joint pain
- Skin irritation
- Urinary problems

Mental health symptoms

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating and remembering things
- Low self-esteem

Some people may be prescribed Hormone Replacement Therapy to help with the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, this can also have side effects which may impact your work such as nausea, cramps and headaches.

If you are unwell due to the symptoms of menopause you are not expected to work. You should follow the normal sickness reporting procedure detailed in the [Sickness section](#) to report any sickness absence.

ADJUSTMENTS

Flexibility is already available to you and you are encouraged to make use of this to help alleviate the symptoms of menopause. These may include, for example:

- Allowing more time between appointments or services, to allow you time to change, recuperate or to go home in between
- Booking time into your day for exercise or other personal care activities you find helpful
- Factoring in time to recuperate after busy periods or late meetings

We would encourage you to have open conversations with your PCC and Churchwardens about adjustments which would make you feel more comfortable. You may also wish to consider the robes you wear, where permissible you may choose not to wear the heavy traditional garments. Where this is not possible in your church tradition you may wish to consider purchasing lightweight robes. In line with the Church's Parochial Expense of the Clergy Policy we encourage PCCs to be generous in supporting this expenditure. There are also a number of Trusts listed in the Financial Matters section who are able to help with one-off purchases for clergy and who may be able to support funding for lightweight robes.

GETTING HELP

If you feel that you need support to allow you to make changes or to fulfil the duties of your office due to the symptoms of perimenopause or menopause, then you are encouraged to talk an Archdeacon or the Dean of Women's Ministry.

The Archdeacon or Dean of Women's Ministry can support you to:

- Discuss the problems with the PCC or senior staff member if you haven't felt confident to do so
- Temporarily alter your working pattern or working hours
- Change your physical working conditions, such as getting you help to move your desk, or increase ventilation in your office.

Any agreed adjustments will be reviewed regularly (at least every 6 months) to assess if they are still required and that they are still meeting your needs.

You may find it useful to speak to a member of the [clergy counselling service](#).

You are also encouraged to make use of the external support available:

[Menopause matters](#), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.

The [Daisy Network](#) charity, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.

The [Menopause Café](#), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

The [Menopause Exchange](#), provides its members access to their information service, 'Ask the Experts' panel and a quarterly newsletter of advice and discussion around menopause. Membership is free.



CONFIDENTIALITY

PERSONAL DATA

There is a requirement for the Diocese to hold your personal information in order to manage practical elements of your office such as your pay and housing, to provide pastoral care and to facilitate your continuing ministerial development. The [Diocesan Privacy Notice](#) can be found on our website.

The Diocese is aware of its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and domestic data protection legislation, and is committed to processing your data securely and transparently.

In relation to your personal data, we will:

- process it fairly, lawfully and in a clear, transparent way
- only use it in the ways described in our Privacy Notice or in such other ways as the law may allow
- ensure it is correct and up to date
- keep your data for only as long as we need it
- process it in a way that ensures it will not be used for any unauthorised purpose, lost or destroyed

We hold many types of data about you, including:

- your personal details including your name, address, date of birth, email address, phone numbers
- your photograph
- gender
- marital status
- dependents, next of kin and their contact numbers
- medical or health information including whether or not you have a disability
- information used for equal opportunities monitoring about your sexual orientation, religion or belief and ethnic origin
- information included on your CV including references, education history and employment history
- documentation relating to your right to work in the UK
- bank details
- tax codes
- National Insurance number
- letters of concern, formal warnings and other documentation with regard to any disciplinary proceedings or, in the case of workers, confirmation of other discussions about your conduct
- leave records including annual leave, family leave, sickness absence etc
- training details
- CCTV footage
- building entry card records

We collect this data so that we can carry out activities which are in the legitimate interests of the Diocese. We have set these out below:

- making decisions about who to offer engagement to
- maintaining comprehensive up to date personnel records about you to ensure, amongst other things, effective correspondence can be achieved and appropriate contact points in the event of an emergency are maintained
- assessing training needs
- providing ministerial and pastoral support
- implementing an effective sickness absence management system including monitoring the amount of leave and subsequent actions to be taken including the making of reasonable adjustments
- gaining expert medical opinion when making decisions about your fitness for office
- managing statutory leave and pay systems such as maternity leave and pay etc
- dealing with legal claims made against us
- preventing fraud

Some of the information we hold on you is considered as special categories of data, this includes information on your health, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, religion, and trade union membership. We will use special category data for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring and in sickness absence management including making reasonable adjustments.

Your data will be shared with people engaged by the Diocese in the fulfilment of their role, for example, Archdeacons and their PA's for the management of sickness absence and provision of pastoral care and the Mission and Ministry team for processing of grant, ESL and continued ministerial development.

There are also occasions where we will be required to share your information with a third party, these will include the Church of England (pensions, payroll etc), our legal or professional advisors and individuals and companies who provide training or development review support.

If you have any concerns about how the Diocese is handling your data please raise this with your Archdeacon.

The supervisory authority in the UK for data protection matters is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). If you think your data protection rights have been breached in any way by us, you are able to make a complaint to the ICO.

As an office holder you will hold personal data that might relate to individuals within your parish, for example databases of PCCs, correspondence regarding funerals, weddings, baptisms etc.

You should make yourself familiar with your obligations as a Data Controller. As a minimum you should take all reasonable steps to:

- Be familiar with all devices and their security features so that the safety of the information held can be ensured
- Maintain devices
- Ensure that devices are not used for any purpose that would be at odds with Church of England policies
- Prevent theft and loss of data; keep devices in a secure place when not in use, do not leave devices on display in a car, ensure device screens automatically lock when not in use, etc
- Keep information confidential where appropriate
- Be careful of what software and apps are installed on any device
- Set up passwords, passcodes, passkeys or biometric equivalents of sufficient length and complexity for the particular type of device
- Set up remote wipe facilities if available and implement a remote wipe for a lost device
- Use cloud based storage for files and emails
- Not hold any more information than is necessary and in line with current Church of England Record Management Guides for parishes and be especially aware of sensitive, personal or confidential information
- Carry out regular "housekeeping" and delete any information as soon as possible once it is no longer required, including information contained within emails, unless required for audit trail purposes
- Report the loss of any device containing Diocese or PCC data (including email) or security breach to the Archdeacon (there is a legal requirement to report data loss under the General Data Protection Regulations)
- Ensure all data is erased completely if a device is disposed of, or sold/transferred to a third party

CONFIDENTIALITY

In your role you will become aware of confidential information which may relate to individuals or to the Diocese or the Church of England. Information that should be considered confidential includes information that:

- Is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your role, or has otherwise been acquired by you, in confidence.
- Relates particularly to the Diocese's activities, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort.
- Has not been made public by, or with our authority.

You must not at any time (save in the course of our business or as required by law or safeguarding guidance), whether before or after the termination of your role, disclose such information to any person without prior written consent from the Archdeacon.

You must, if requested, delete all Confidential Information from any re-useable storage and destroy all other documents and tangible items which contain or refer to any Confidential Information and which are in your possession or under your control. Your Archdeacon will be able to provide advice in this regard.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND CONTENT

All communications or enquiries from the media should be referred to the Diocesan Director of Communications, or Diocesan Secretary in the absence of the Director of Communications.

You should not write letters or make statements to the press or media on any matter within the concern of the Diocesan Synod or its subordinate bodies. In the event of a response being required, letters or statements should only be made by, or with the approval of, the Diocesan Secretary.

SOCIAL MEDIA

While the Diocese does not wish to restrict your activities outside of work you are reminded that information you put online, on social media, personal blogs and on video sharing sites is publicly available. You should therefore make yourself aware of the [Diocesan Social Media Guidelines](#).



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Diocese takes health, safety and wellbeing very seriously. You are encouraged to report any concerns to an Archdeacon as soon as reasonably practical.

Everyone has responsibility to look after both their own and other people's safety by acting in a safe manner and following instructions provided.

ACCIDENTS

You must report any accident which results in injury immediately to the Archdeacon.

PERSONAL VEHICLES

When you are using your own vehicle to fulfil your duties, you should ensure that the vehicle is maintained to a safe standard, has a current MOT, taxed if required and is appropriately insured for the journey, including commuting or business cover where required.

The Diocese will not cover the cost of any excess in connection with your insurance cover in the event of an accident.

You must ensure that you abide by the relevant laws when driving the vehicle. You are encouraged not to use your mobile phone at all whilst driving but any mobile phone use must be in line with the law.

PERSONAL SECURITY

In the event of any incident involving verbal abuse, threats or actual violence to you or your family, you should immediately contact the Police and / or (where the involvement of the Police is not considered to be necessary) your Archdeacon who will endeavour to provide practical and pastoral assistance.

The Diocese is committed to doing all it can to provide a safe working environment for all office holders and to equipping them to minister safely. Office holders should take all possible steps to ensure the personal safety of themselves and their families in relation to their houses and church office and vestries. You should:

- Ensure porches and entrances are well-lit, and where possible use spy-holes.
- Not invite unknown visitors beyond the office or study in your house.
- Not leave unknown visitors unattended in your office or house.
- Not see children alone.
- Always ensure someone knows when people will be visiting your house, or where you are going to and when you expect to return.
- Ensure someone has a contact number for emergencies.

It is recognised that clergy will often work alone and you are advised to familiarise yourself with the Diocese [Lone Working Guidelines](#).

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

You should not allow the use of alcohol to affect your ability to carry out your duties. It is recognised that there will be occasions where it is acceptable for you to partake in the consumption of alcohol at a work event but you should not allow it to affect your ability to fulfil your duties and to travel home safely. You should behave in a professional, courteous and respectful manner at any function.

The use of illegal drugs is never acceptable.

Where someone comes forward and informs the Diocese that they have a problem with alcohol or drugs the Diocese will endeavour to support them to access the help they need.

WELLBEING

The Diocese recognises that the role of clergy is a unique and challenging position which is both professional and personal in nature. We encourage all clergy to be mindful of their own and their families wellbeing. There is support available for those who want it:

Support in your Ministry (SIM) - provides pastoral support for clergy, readers, churchwardens and their partners. It aims to support and encourage ministers in their vocation by challenging them to use their gifts creatively and effectively.

The Clergy Counselling Service - provides a professional, confidential counselling service for all clergy, their partners and older children.

Spiritual Direction (Spiritual Accompaniment) - is the prayerful ministry by which one Christian accompanies another, seeking to enable them to discern the place and work of God in their life and to deepen their spirituality, that is, their relationship with God.

Some of the grants listed in the Financial Support section are specifically aimed at clergy wellbeing or the wellbeing of their families.

WORKING PRACTICES AND POLICIES

The Diocese has a number of policies which outline our ways of working which you are required to familiarise yourself:

[Environment Policy](#).

[Whistleblowing Policy](#).

[Anti Bribery Policy](#).

[Conflicts of Interest Policy](#).

[Race Equality Policy](#).

[Health and Safety Policy](#).



DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The Diocese conducts a Mission and Ministry Development Review (MMDR) every two years, alternating with a biennial visit from a Bishop or Archdeacon. The purpose of the review is to give clergy an opportunity to reflect on their ministries, so that they can flourish as disciples and grow in faithfulness and fruitfulness. It is a condition of Common Tenure that you engage with this process.

MMDR gives you an opportunity to look back and reflect on what has happened over the last year or two of ministry and, informed by that, to look forward to plan, anticipate and develop a clearer vision for what lies ahead for you. In looking back there is an opportunity to acknowledge all there is to be thankful for and anything that is a matter for lament, and in looking forward to anticipate the changing demands of the role, identify future objectives and areas for potential development.

Clergy will be required to take part in MMDR by the MMDR and Wellbeing Administrator, who will also email the necessary forms and documents.

MMDR documents and forms are also available via the Diocesan website, except for a list of Review Consultants, which the Clergy Appointments and Review Secretary will send on request.

[Mission and Ministry Development Review - Diocesan Website](#)

LEAVING



RESIGNATION

If you decide to resign from your office, you are required to give no less than three months' notice in writing to the Bishop of St Albans. The Bishop of St Albans may accept a shorter notice period if they consider it to be appropriate.

OTHER LEAVE REASONS

- Retirement
- Capability
- Discipline
- The office ceases to exist because of a pastoral scheme or order
- The office is designated as held in conjunction with another office or employment which ceases to exist
- A fixed term curacy comes to an end
- A fixed term interim ministry post comes to an end

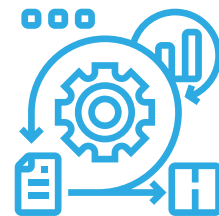
RETIREMENT

Clergy who hold office under Common Tenure are required to retire at 70. You may chose to retire before the age of 70 if you wish. Should you wish to continue your ministry after this date you can apply (in advance of retirement) for an extension of licence up until the age of 72 at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop. Alternatively, or after which you can apply for Permission to Officiate (PtO).

When you are close to normal retirement age you will be invited to attend a retirement course.

If you require any advice or guidance of matters related to retirement then you can contact the [Retired Clergy Officer](#) for your Archdeaconry.

[Retired Clergy and PtO - Diocesan Website](#)



CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

The principal objective of the capability procedure is to help office holders whose performance falls below an acceptable minimum standard to improve in cases where the problems are not disciplinary in nature.

The below procedures are in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

INFORMAL STAGE

If your performance in your office falls below the expected standard then a member of staff senior to you will be appointed to manage this process and review the issues concerned.

You will be invited to attend a meeting with the appointed person to review your performance. This meeting can occur at your home, a suitable meeting room or another agreed location. There is no automatic right to have someone accompany you at this meeting but if you feel you require additional support, for example if you have a disability, you may make a request to the appointed person to be accompanied.

At this meeting your performance and any reasons for it falling below the expected standard will be discussed and ways to support you will be explored. A period of review will be agreed. The outcomes and actions from the meeting will be provided to you in writing no more than 7 days after the date of the meeting.

A follow up meeting will be arranged with you after the agreed period; if there has been no improvement to your performance then the formal process may be invoked. At all stages support will be offered.

FORMAL STAGE

If your performance does not improve, then this formal process may be used.

Stage 1

You will be informed in writing of the intention to begin the formal process and will be invited to a capability meeting. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The letter will also detail the names of the other attendees and the capability panel.

The capability panel will be formed in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

The panel will consider all information and mitigation provided and make a decision. This decision may include a sanction up to and including issuing a first formal warning. They will also determine the period for the next review and whether additional or different support may be made available. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing by the appointed person and you will have the right to appeal.

Your appeal must be submitted to the appointed person within 7 days and must state the reasons for appeal. Appeals may be made on the grounds of new information or that procedures were not correctly followed.

Stage 2

The appointed person will continue to maintain contact with you throughout the period between the first and second stages. They will meet with you informally towards the end of the set period to confirm whether there has been sufficient improvement in your performance to end the process or whether it will continue to stage 2.

If the decision is made by the appointed person to continue to stage 2, you will be informed in writing and will be invited to a second capability meeting. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The letter will also detail the names of the other attendees and the capability panel.

The capability panel will be formed in line with the [Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice](#).

The panel will consider all information and mitigation given and make a decision. This decision may include a sanction up to and including issuing a final formal warning. They will also determine the period for the next review and whether additional or different support may be made available. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing by the appointed person and you will have the right to appeal.

Your appeal must be submitted to the appointed person within 7 days and must state the reasons for appeal. Appeals may be made on the grounds of new information or that procedures were not correctly followed.

Stage 3

The appointed person will continue to maintain contact with you throughout the period between the second and third stages. They will meet with you informally towards the end of the set period to confirm whether there has been sufficient improvement in your performance to end the process or whether it will continue to stage 3.

If the decision is made by the appointed person to continue to stage 3, you will be informed in writing and will be invited to a final capability meeting. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The letter will also detail the names of the other attendees and the capability panel which in this stage will include the Bishop of St Albans.

The capability panel will be formed in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

The panel will consider all information and mitigation given and make a decision. This decision may include a sanction up to and including removal from office.

If the decision is made to remove you from office then the Bishop of St Albans will write to you confirming the following:

- the reasons for removal from office,
- the date on which the removal from office will take effect,
- the period of notice,
- any practical issues, or details of how these will be managed,
- the appeals process.

Your appeal must be submitted to the appointed person within 7 days and must state the reasons for appeal. Appeals may be made on the grounds of new information or that procedures were not correctly followed.

Appeals

Appeals will be heard as soon as reasonably practical after receipt.

A appeals panel will be established which is different from the capability panel but is in line with the Archbishops' Council – Capability Procedure Code of Practice.

You will be invited to attend the appeal hearing in writing. This meeting can occur in a suitable meeting room or another agreed location.

You will be invited to bring a colleague or trade union representative with you if you choose; you should make the appointed person aware of the name of the person accompanying you as soon as reasonably practical. They may ask you to choose someone else if there is a risk of a conflict of interest, for example they will be called to be a witness or are connected to someone on the panel.

The appeal hearing will repeat the original hearing but will review the process undertaken, all evidence put to the original panel or new evidence that has come to light and the decision made.

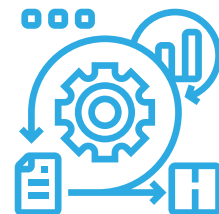
The chair of the appeals panel will confirm the outcome, potential outcomes will include upholding the original sanction or rejecting it. The outcome will be confirmed in writing. There are no further levels of appeal.

Other help

You may find it useful to speak to a member of the clergy counselling service.

The Church of England provide information in clergy health and wellbeing.

Clergy Health and Wellbeing



DISCIPLINARY POLICY

COMPLAINTS

We encourage you to try to deal with any minor complaints you receive informally in the first instance by discussing the matter directly with the complainant, if you do not feel comfortable to do this then the Diocese Dispute Advisory Service will be able to support you.

If you do not feel that this is sufficient or the complaint is more serious then you are encouraged to contact the relevant Rural Dean or Archdeacon who will follow the informal complaints procedure detailed on the next page.

If a complaint is received that is believed to be of a serious nature, including those that constitute misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 then these must be forwarded to office of the Bishop of St Albans.

Misconduct is defined as one of the following:

- Acting in breach of ecclesiastical law
- Failing to do something required by ecclesiastical law
- Neglect or inefficiency in performing the duties of office
- Conduct unbecoming

Complaints must be made in writing by someone who has proper interest, you can find more information [here](#).

Complaints received by the Bishop of St Albans will be sent to the Diocesan registrar (legal advisor) for advice.

Within four weeks of receipt the Bishop will decide on the course of action. The possible outcomes at this stage are:

- Dismissal of complaint – the complainant has no proper interest
- Dismissal of complaint – no sufficient substance
- Dismissal of complaint – not a discipline matter
- Require the respondent to provide a formal answer to the complaint.

If a complaint is dismissed the complainant has the right of appeal.

INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Archdeacon may refer any complaint to the Bishop of St Albans at any time if they believe it to be more serious than first thought or if they uncover further information that places the complaint into one of misconduct. The complainant could be someone else with proper interest, who is willing or able to make the complaint, or the Archdeacon themselves.

When an Archdeacon receives a complaint, they will in the first instance encourage both parties to contact the Diocese Dispute Advisory Service if they have not already done so.

If this is not successful then they will meet with the complainant(s). If there is only one complainant, then they should be offered the option to bring a friend or family member with them for support. The Archdeacon will hear what they have to say and ask them what resolution they are seeking.

Archdeacons are advised to have someone else present at the meeting who is able to take notes.

The Archdeacon will also meet with the member of clergy about whom the complaint is made. They will seek to understand their side of events and what resolution may be possible. If no misconduct has been identified, then it will be made clear to the member of clergy that it is not a disciplinary issue.

Archdeacons are advised to have someone else present at the meeting who is able to take notes.

The Archdeacon will seek a resolution to the complaint and offer mediation where appropriate. The outcome of the complaint will be provided in writing to both the complainant(s) and the member of clergy.

The Archdeacon's decision is final and there is no right of appeal for either the complainant or the member of clergy.

FORMAL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

This policy outlines how the Diocese will manage formal complaints of misconduct against members of the clergy, other than in relation to matters involving doctrine, ritual or ceremony, as required by the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. All those admitted to holy orders are covered by the Measure, whether or not they are in active ministry.

Complaints must be made in writing by someone who has a proper interest to the office of the Bishop of St Albans. Where the complaint is made on one of the following four grounds it will be dealt with using this disciplinary policy:

- Acting in breach of ecclesiastical law
- Failing to do something required by ecclesiastical law
- Neglect or inefficiency in performing the duties of office
- Conduct unbecoming

Upon receiving a complaint, the Bishop of St Albans will seek advice from the Diocesan registrar and the Bishop or the Diocesan registrar may refer any complaint they deem to be criminal to the police.

Clergy are advised to seek legal advice; trade union members can often get this advice from their trade union.

Within four weeks of receipt the Bishop will decide on the course of action. The possible outcomes at this stage are:

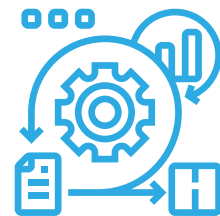
- Dismissal of complaint – the complainant has no proper interest
- Dismissal of complaint – no sufficient substance
- Dismissal of complaint – not a discipline matter
- Require the respondent to provide a formal answer to the complaint

If the Bishop decides that there is a disciplinary case to answer, then they will consider the evidence provided by both the complainant(s) and member of clergy and will decide on one of the following courses:

- Take no further action
- Record the complaint on file conditionally
- Attempt to bring about reconciliation
- Impose a penalty by consent
- Require the complaint to be formally investigated

If the Bishop decides that the complaint is to be formally investigated, then the complaint is passed on to the Designated Officer who will be a senior lawyer employed by the Church House Legal Office. Further information about this stage of the process can be found [here](#).

The Bishop of St Albans may at any time delegate the responsibility of managing a complaint to a Suffragan Bishop or Honorary Assistant Bishop.



GRIEVANCE POLICY

We recognise that situations may arise where misunderstandings, problems or concerns need to be resolved. We seek to create a culture of good communication, openness and a willingness to co-operate and listen. So, it is hoped that most of these issues can be addressed and resolved informally between individuals.

However, where such issues are unresolved, the grievance procedure aims to provide you with a readily accessible process for addressing any problems or concerns.

It also helps us to make sure that problems, complaints or concerns raised are dealt with in a fair, timely and consistent manner.

The grievance procedure should not be used to lodge appeals against disciplinary sanctions or complaints.

Informal Stage

In the first instance you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the Archdeacon, who will try to resolve the issues you raise. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome, you may choose to invoke the formal grievance procedure.

Formal Stage

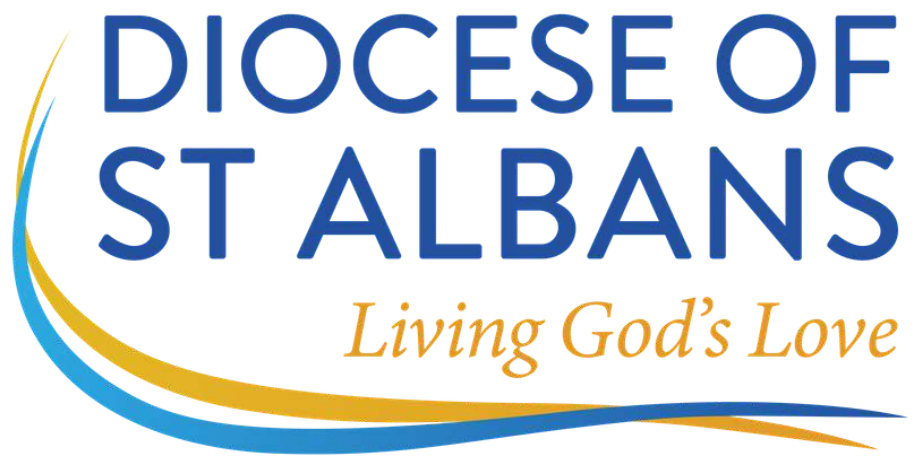
At each grievance meeting held under the formal procedure, you have a right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative.

To raise your concern formally, please write to your Archdeacon, explaining the nature and extent of the grievance and indicate the outcome you are looking for. If your grievance relates to concerns regarding the Archdeacon, or you are uncomfortable writing to them then you should address your grievance to a Suffragan Bishop.

The Archdeacon or Bishop will either investigate the matter themselves or appoint someone unrelated to the situation to do so on their behalf. They will arrange a meeting to discuss the grievance in detail with you and also separately with the respondent. They will review any documents or evidence you have regarding your concern. They may also interview witnesses, gather witness statements and reviewing other evidence. A decision will be taken following the investigation and you will receive a response in writing.

Grievance Appeal

You may appeal against the decision if you are not satisfied with the outcome, if you believe the process was not conducted fairly or if you have new evidence. To appeal you must write to the Archdeacon or Suffragan Bishop stating your reasons for appeal. An appeal meeting will be convened chaired by an appointed member of senior staff as soon as is reasonably practicable and you will be informed in writing of the decision following the conclusion of the meeting. This decision will be final and there is no further right to appeal.



St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance
Holywell Lodge
41 Holywell Hill
St Albans
AL1 1HE

stalbandsdiocese.org