

Diocese of Ely

**Initial Ministerial Education for Curacy**

The first three years of Ordained Ministry

Self-Supporting Ministers

A Pattern of Living:

Working and Learning Agreement Form

**Introduction**

Incumbents working with an SSOM who holds a licence from the Bishop are required to draw up a working agreement in consultation with the SSOM.

Working agreements are intended to establish:

* how incumbents will share ministerial responsibility with the SSOM and other members of the local ministry teams
* how SSOMs may exercise their particular ministerial skills
* the SSOM’s working pattern, taking into account the amount of time being offered in the light of personal, family or work circumstances.

Working agreements aim to provide a covenanted framework that is open and negotiated, so as to give confidence and clarity about the boundaries within which incumbents and SSOMs may find the freedom to explore, value and develop their ministries together. Working agreements should be reviewed regularly to take account of changing situations, personal circumstances and developing experience.

Since SSOMs may be deployed at some distance from their homes, the consequences of this need to be taken into account. For instance, an SSOM’s family may continue to worship in their ‘home’ church.

If the SSOM also exercises an intentional ministry in secular employment (MSE), it is important that the balance of priority between work and parish commitments is mutually clarified.

The agreement will terminate if there is a change of incumbent or if the SSOM is deployed elsewhere, resigns, or retires. On retirement, the SSOM (with the support of their incumbent) may apply to the Bishop for Permission to Officiate.

The Bishop and his Senior Staff and Rural Deans have the pastoral care of all clergy, including SSOMs. In addition the Bishop appoints an Adviser for Self-Supporting Ministry.

*This document is available electronically on application to the Adviser for Self-Supporting Ministry, Revd Amanda O’Neill on* [*SSOM.advisor@elydiocese.org*](mailto:SSOM.advisor@elydiocese.org)

**1. Location and focus of ministry**

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| *Self-Supporting Minister* |  |
| *Incumbent/Team Rector* |  |
| *Benefice/Team/Parish/ Other place of Licence* |  |
| *Date of Licensing* |  |

**Other areas of work**

The ministry of licensed SSOMs embraces many different contexts alongside parish ministry. These may include voluntary or paid, full or part time ‘secular’ work. The range of an SSM’s responsibilities should be briefly noted here.

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| *Description of other full or part-time, voluntary or paid ‘secular’ or other ministerial work, or family responsibilities* |  |

Incumbents are encouraged to take an interest in what the SSOM does in their places of work and elsewhere and support them in their ministry; and SSOMs to make available their ministry experience in other contexts.

SSOMs are asked to consider whether, how and to what extent they:

* expect to be able to express their vocation and role as ordained Christians in their other areas of work
* might hope to reflect their other working experience in their parish ministry.

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| *Expression of vocation and role as an ordained Christian within other areas of work*  *Involvement in wider Diocese (e.g. participation in committees, working groups, other roles held…)* |
| *Reflection within parish ministry of other areas of working experience* |

SSOMs in full or part-time employment are encouraged to discuss their role as an ordained minister in the workplace with their employer as appropriate.

**2. Working Pattern**

The normal pattern of working in the parish should be agreed as soon as possible after licensing and reviewed at least annually. It should include the following:

1. the time the SSOM will be able to give to parochial work  
   *This should be as specific as possible and take into account family circumstances, secular employment and other commitments. When considering how much time to offer to parochial work, SSOMs in part or full time employment are encouraged to calculate how much time is given in hours to that employment, including travel and ‘recovery’ time.*
2. time off  
   *All licensed clergy should have at least one day off each week from parish duties. For SSMs in full or part time employment, this may seem inapplicable but it is important that consideration is given as to how an SSOM is afforded an uninterrupted period of 24 hours each week free from parish duties, and how they are to find time which is neither given to their employment or parish duties.*
3. Sunday availability  
   *Not all SSOMs will be able to commit to being available for parish duties every Sunday. An indication of the overall availability should be agreed and noted here. SSOMs whose families worship elsewhere should be enabled to worship with them regularly.*
4. arrangements for the SSOM to make a retreat each year
5. the extent to which the SSOM may be able to provide cover when the incumbent is away from the parish.  
   *This will depend on the time the SSOM has for parish ministry and his/her experience and skills.*

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| *Description of agreed working pattern* | |
| *Time given to parish ministry per week* |  |
| *Arrangement for time off* |  |
| *Number of Sundays per month available for parish duties* |  |
| *Arrangements for making retreats* |  |
| *Cover in absence of incumbent* |  |

**3. Worship and preaching**

The working agreement should specify:

1. the contribution the SSOM may make to the conduct of public worship  
   *There should be a clear statement of the extent to which the SSOM will participate on a regular basis. Special times of the year (eg Christmas and Easter) should also be considered separately.*
2. how frequently the SSOM may be asked to preside at the Eucharist and the degree of participation in a shared Daily Office (where applicable)
3. how frequently the SSOM may be asked to preach *Invitations to preach and minister outside the parish should only be accepted in consultation with the incumbent. A Sunday away on such activities does not count as a holiday Sunday.*
4. the SSOM’s share in the occasional offices *Baptisms, weddings and funerals (including associated preparation and visiting) should be assessed separately from regular public worship. Consideration of how SSOM curates are to fulfil their training requirements, if they are in full-time employment, should be considered.*
5. expectations of liturgical dress at the different churches in the benefice. *In the first instance the provision of robes and vestments for the conduct of worship is a parochial responsibility. If an SSOM does not already own what is required, the incumbent should negotiate with the PCC(s) for their provision as necessary.*

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| *Description of agreed involvement with conduct of worship and preaching* | |
| *Conduct of public worship on a regular basis* |  |
| *Involvement in the conduct of worship at Christmas and Easter and other festival or special occasions* |  |
| *Frequency of presidency at the Eucharist* |  |
| *Participation in shared Daily Office (if applicable)* |  |
| *Frequency of preaching* |  |
| *Opportunities to share in occasional offices* |  |
| *Expectations of liturgical dress* |  |

**4. General Pastoral and Teaching Ministry**

The working agreement should:

1. acknowledge any particular skills associated with parish ministry or with ‘secular’ work which the SSOM possesses and assess how those skills might be exercised in the parish
2. indicate the degree of involvement the SSOM may offer in respect of visiting and support of individuals, residential homes and schools associated with the parish.

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| *SSOM’s skills and how they might be exercised in the parish* |
| *Pastoral involvement – visiting, residential homes, schools etc.* |

**5. Attendance at meetings**

SSMs along with other licensed clergy are ex-officio members of their PCC, Deanery Chapter and Deanery Synod. SSOMs are encouraged to attend meetings of these bodies whenever possible as agreed in negotiation with their incumbent. Incumbents should ensure that SSOMs have the dates of these meetings. Time spent attending such meetings should be considered part of the weekly time given to parish ministry.

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| *Agreed pattern of attendance at PCC, Deanery Chapter and Deanery Synod meetings* |

Whenever possible meetings of any ministry or leadership team should be arranged to enable the SSOM, as appropriate, to be involved with the planning and organisation of parish life. Incumbents should ensure that SSOMs receive minutes of such meetings.

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| *Agreed pattern of attendance at ministry or leadership team meetings* |

**6. Praying together**

The incumbent and the SSOM should agree regular times to meet and pray together.

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| *Agreed pattern of praying together* |

**7. Practical Support**

SSMs who live some distance from the benefice of their appointment should wherever possible be provided with a base from which to operate within the benefice.

*Factors to consider include privacy, space and somewhere warm with WC, tea/coffee-making facilities and, wherever practically possible, internet access, a telephone or provision of a mobile phone.*

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| *Practical provision for SSOM within the benefice* |

While expenses of office should be met by the PCC(s), SSMs deployed by the Bishop to benefices in which they are not resident are normally entitled to claim from the Diocese for car mileage from their home to the benefice boundary.

**8. Ministerial Review**

Licensed SSMs participate in the Bishop’s Ministerial Review programme. One of the main outcomes of the annual meeting is the identification of objectives for ministerial development and individual CME. CME grants are available by application to the the Head of Development Mission & Ministry. Time spent on retreats and CME training should be counted as part of the SSOM’s overall time commitment to the parish.

**9. Review and Termination of Working Agreement**

Working agreements should be reviewed at least annually. A good time to hold this meeting is shortly after the SSOM’s annual meeting for Review of Ministry.

**10. Vacancy**

The SSOM is not obliged under the terms of their licence to provide cover during a vacancy*.* The conduct of the church’s affairs and the maintenance of services, including the occasional offices, are legally the responsibility of the Churchwardens. Should an SSOM be able to offer cover during a vacancy this should be discussed with the Churchwardens and the Rural Dean (with support from the SSOM Adviser if required), and any modifications to the Working Agreement noted.

If an SSOM is in post when a vacancy is filled, the Working Agreement must be renegotiated with the incoming Incumbent.

**11. Mediation**

If either the incumbent or SSOM has concern about their role or relationship, they should feel free to discuss this on a confidential basis with the Diocesan SSOM Adviser. If matters need to be taken further, the Diocesan SSOM Adviser will advise the Director of Ministry accordingly.

**We have read and understood this Working Agreement:**

**Incumbent**

Signed: ……………………………………………… Date: ……………………….

**Self-Supporting Curate**

Signed: ……………………………………………… Date: ……………………….

Whilst the Working Agreement is between the Incumbent and the Self-Supporting Minister, incumbents are encouraged to share the content with Churchwardens.

**Mission & Ministry rep (either Dep Dir Ministry and Mission or IME2 officer)**

Signed: ……………………………………………… Date: ……………………….