Diocese of Wakefield

Handbook for clergy households

1 Housing

The clergy house is first and foremost your home – for you and your family. You decide how it is to be used. You must not feel pressurised by how the house has been used in the past.

1.1 Assistant Curates

A curate's house is usually the property of the diocese. It is maintained and insured by the parish or diocese, whichever is the owner.

The insurance of contents and liability as to third parties is the curate's responsibility. The curate is also responsible for internal decoration of the house, and for maintaining the house and garden in reasonable order. The house is inspected on a Quinquennial basis by the Property Department, and repairs and improvements are carried out.

Two smoke detectors are provided by the diocese for each parsonage house where they are not already in place. **THESE SHOULD BE TESTED EVERY FEW MONTHS.**

A grant is payable for deacons going to a first curacy, and this is usually paid before the move. Details are available from:

Property Department
Church House
1 South Parade
Wakefield, WF1 1LP
01924 371802

Removal expenses are also paid. You should normally obtain two estimates and submit them to the Houses Officer at Church House.

The Archdeacon is always willing to try and help with any problems about the house which cannot be sorted out in the parish.

1.2 Incumbents and Team Vicars

The provision, maintenance and insurance of the house itself is the responsibility of the Wakefield Diocesan Board of Finance.

1.2.1 On appointment to a Living

Before accepting a living it is normal to see the house.

A vacancy inspection will have been carried out by the Houses Officer. You will have the opportunity to meet the Houses Officer at the house if you wish.

The diocese pays for the professional redecoration of hall, staircase and landing and gives an initial grant towards the cost of materials for the redecoration of rooms on a DIY basis of up to £250. This grant needs to be specifically claimed, and receipts must be produced.

Removal costs are paid by the diocese. You should obtain two estimates and submit these to the Diocesan Property Department.

A resettlement grant towards the cost of curtains, carpets, etc, is paid on moving to a new parish. There is an additional and once only grant for a first incumbency. Payment is arranged through the Diocesan Office. **Cookers are not normally provided by the diocese.**

1.2.2 Insurance and security

It is advisable to consider the whole matter of insurance very carefully. The diocese undertakes the insurance of the actual building and structure of the house. The insurance of the contents of the house and liability to third parties is the responsibility of the incumbent. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group or any other reputable insurance firm will send a proposal form on request.

Any damage to the house, however caused, should be notified immediately to the Property Department at Church House, so that an insurance claim (if applicable) can be made.

Two smoke detectors are provided by the diocese for each parsonage house where they are not already in place. **THESE SHOULD BE TESTED EVERY FEW MONTHS.**

In detectors not installed when the house is built there is a battery. It should be renewed every year. It is also a good idea to have a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the house, but it is the responsibility of the incumbent to provide these.

Detectors installed in newly built houses are connected to mains electricity, and do not need batteries.

Burglar alarm systems are fitted in most houses and the Committee has a programme to install them in all houses.

1.2.3 Central heating

The diocese has a contract for annual servicing of central heating boilers and gas fires. Details of this and contact numbers can be obtained from the Property Department at Church House.

1.2.4 Repairs

In an extreme emergency (for example, a broken front door) contact a local tradesman, and inform the Diocesan Property Department as soon as possible so that the work can be accounted for. With plumbing emergencies (leaks and boiler failure) contact the firm with which the diocese has an ongoing contract: Dale Stephenson – 01422 835702.

All other repairs and minor improvements, including any you or your spouse wish to undertake, must first be referred to the Diocesan Property Department. If you carry out work or repairs without permission, you will not have your costs reimbursed, and could be responsible for restoring the house to its original state.

1.2.5 Quinquennial survey

Each parsonage house is inspected every five years. A copy of the report will be sent to the incumbent, who then has one month in which to comment on it. Following authorisation of the expenditure in this report, repairs are carried out. The Property Committee is willing to consider suggestions by the incumbent for possible improvements to the house.

1.2.6 Internal decoration

Internal redecoration is the responsibility of the occupants.

1.2.7 When you leave the parish

Please make sure the house is totally cleared of all property and is left clean for your successors. This includes the loft and garage(s). In the event of a house being left in a grossly unsatisfactory condition, a claim will be made on the outgoing clergyperson for cleaning, clearance or repair.

Leave a note in the empty house of where to find the stopcock and the instructions for the heating and security systems. Ensure that confidential and/or parish documents are removed or left secure.

Inform the Property Department about your proposed day of removal and arrange to meet the Houses Officer on that day and provide him/her with a set of keys.

You should arrange for gas and electricity meters to be read before you leave, and give a

forwarding address for final bills. Also make sure the telephone bill is paid up to date. **These services must not be disconnected.**

During the vacancy, gas and electricity standing charges will be paid by the diocese. The telephone is the responsibility of the PCC.

If you wish to leave carpets or curtains for your successor that must be by a private arrangement.

Please leave a working light bulb in every room, hall and landing. Curtain rails and hooks and all other benefice fittings must remain in the house. Please do not remove shelves or similar items if the wall behind would be damaged.

1.3 Housing of other clergy

Stipendiary but non-parochial clergy (eg sector ministers) are normally provided with a house owned by the diocese, and the conditions for parsonage houses apply.

2 Finance

Parochial clergy and sector ministers of the diocese are paid by the Church Commissioners. The Council Tax on the clergy house is paid by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

2.1 Official expenses

2.1.1 Telephone, travel, secretarial, hospitality and other expenses are negotiated with the PCC. In case of any difficulties about expenses, please contact the Archdeacon.

2.1.2 The Church Commissioners operate a Car Loan Scheme. Details are available from the Finance Department at Church House, and on www.wakefield.anglican.org/handbook.

2.2 Personal finance

2.2.1 Looking to the future

Clergy have different financial situations. It is generally good to speak with a trusted financial adviser, in order to assess provision for dependents and for retirement. This is best done early in ministry, and then with regular reviews as personal circumstances change. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group may be an organisation that can help.

2.2.2 Wills

Consider making a will. A solicitor will advise and draw this up for you, and it need not be very expensive.

Keep all securities, deeds and wills in a safe place and tell some responsible person, eg your executor, where they are.

2.2.3 Financial difficulties

Clergy who, owing to the size of their family or other reasons, experience financial difficulty should approach the Archdeacon or Diocesan Secretary where advice and support may be found.

2.3 Charitable trusts

In this diocese there are some charitable trusts for clergy and their dependants. These trusts may be able to help those who are facing unforeseen expenditure through sudden illness, or are in need of a holiday or convalescence. There are also charities that help widows and orphans of clergy. The Archdeacon or Diocesan Secretary can provide information on this. Information about organisations who give support to clergy can be found on www.wakefield.anglican.org/handbook.

3 Education

3.1 State sector

Information about local schools may be obtained from the Local Education Authority. Each school has its own admission procedure. The criteria for admissions are set out in each school's brochure.

Besides consulting school brochures, it is wise to visit several schools to ensure that you find the one most suited to your child's needs. Remember, if through your own choice your child attends a school outside your neighbourhood, you would be responsible for the cost of his/her travel.

There are many church-aided schools in this diocese, most of which are primary. For further information about church schools, please contact the Diocesan Education Department at Church House.

3.2 Independent sector

There are also some independent day and boarding schools in the diocese. Some of these offer bursaries for clergy children. For further information contact the Diocesan Education Department at Church House.

3.2.1 Grants

Some grants may be available to help payment of fees and expenses and details of these can be obtained from the Diocesan Education Department at Church House.

4 Health

It is advisable to register with a GP as soon as you move to a new area. Your predecessor, neighbouring clergy or churchwardens may be able to advise you about this.

4.1 If you fall ill

Inform the Rural Dean and the churchwardens. It is their responsibility to arrange for duties to be covered. The Rural Dean will inform the Bishop and the Archdeacon. If the illness is prolonged, it is important to ask the churchwardens to arrange for any enquiries to be dealt with, for example about baptisms or weddings.

4.2 Statutory sick pay

If you are ill for more than seven calendar days you should obtain a certificate from your GP and send it to:

Church Commissioners
Clergy Payments Dept (Wakefield)
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ

You also need to fill in the standard form on which clergy notify the Church Commissioners of illness and which can be obtained by telephoning or writing to them. Illness for less than seven calendar days can be self-certified. Further information and links are available on www.wakefield.anglican.org/handbook.

You will continue to receive the stipend in full for 28 weeks. After that time you will receive both the full stipend and the Statutory Sick Pay. It is left to you as to how the excess payment is recovered by the Diocesan Office. If there are any problems please ask the Diocesan Secretary or staff in the Finance Department for help and advice.

4.3 Convalescence

If you have had an operation or serious illness, it is vital that you convalesce properly before returning to work. Funds may be available to help towards the cost of convalescence. Ask the relevant Archdeacon, for information.

4.4 St Luke's Hospital for the Clergy

For over a hundred years the aim of St Luke's has been to care for the clergy of the Anglican Communion, active and retired, stipendiary and non-stipendiary; their spouses, widows/widowers and dependent children; members of recognised monastic and conventual Orders; active and retired overseas missionaries; theological students who have been accepted by a Bishop for Holy Orders and their families, and full time lay workers Licensed by a Bishop.

Their aim is to help them as quickly as possible so that they can get back to work with all speed and with as little disruption as possible to parish and family life. There are no fees or charges.

A referral letter from a patient's doctor should be sent to:

The Medical Officer, St Luke's Hospital for the Clergy
14 Fitzroy Square, London, W1P 6AH

Further details can be found on www.stlukeshospital.org.uk.

4.5 Early retirement due to ill-health (invalidity)

In genuine cases, should medical authorities advise, the Pensions Board agree and the Bishop and Archdeacon concur – early retirement can be arranged so that the cleric is at no financial disadvantage. The Church of England Pension will be calculated **as though** the cleric had retired at 65 and receive the equivalent lump sum. Please see page 8 of the C of E Pension Measure Booklet 'Your Pension Questions Answered' available from:

The Pensions Department
Church Commissioners
Church House
29 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3PS

020 7898 1800

5 Retirement

The Bishop has appointed two Diocesan Retired Clergy and Widows Officers – one for each Archdeaconry. Their names and addresses are published in the Diocesan Handbook, and they may be contacted for advice about pensions, housing and all retirement matters. The Secretary of the Church of England Pensions Board is, however, the primary source of information.

5.1 When

Clergy must retire from their benefice at the age of 70 (unless appointed to their current post before 1 April 1976). However, they may retire and draw a full pension when they have completed 37 years of service, provided they have reached their 65th birthday.

Three months' notice of retirement should be given to the Bishop.

5.2 Pension

5.2.1 A clergy pension must be applied for at least a month before retirement. It is a non-contributory pension but voluntary contributions can purchase additional benefits. This may be particularly helpful for those unable to complete 37 years' service. Further details can be found in the booklet 'Your Pension Questions Answered', which is updated annually. If you have not received a copy, you may obtain one from:

The Church of England Pensions Board
Church House
29 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3PS

020 7898 1800

5.2.2 The basic pension provided by the Pensions Board for a cleric retiring after 37 years' full-time pensionable service is two-thirds of the previous year's national minimum stipend. The retirement lump sum is adjusted annually.

5.2.3 For shorter periods of service, above a minimum of two years, the pension and lump sum are calculated in direct proportion to the length of pensionable service completed, eg 20 years' service entitles the cleric to 20/37ths lump sum and pension rates.

5.3 Early retirement

5.3.1 If clergy retire more than 10 years ahead of pension age, their church pension cannot become payable until they reach the age of 55 at the earliest (unless they are in ill-health).

5.3.2 If clergy are over the age of 55 they may take an immediate pension but it will be reduced for life – as will the prospective pension for your surviving spouse. The 'lump sum' will also be reduced.

Note that this reduction takes place even if clergy have completed more than 37 years' service.

5.4 Disability pension

If the Pensions Board is satisfied, after consulting its own medical adviser, that early retirement is necessary for you on grounds of ill-health, both a pension and lump sum can be paid before you reach the age of 65.

5.5 Retirement housing

5.5.1 Living in a 'tied house' often faces clergy who are planning retirement with a problem. It may be that some already possess a property, or may have been able to make financial provision for housing when the time comes. But for those not in this situation the Pensions Board have a scheme called 'Church Housing Assistance for the Retired Ministry'. This is not offered 'as of right', but can be made available having regard to the applicant's circumstances. Clergy are advised to consult the latest edition of the booklet, 'Retirement Housing'. For links and resources see www.wakefield.anglican.org/handbook.

5.5.2 Many factors have to be taken into consideration when the Pensions Board is deciding the degree of help which is appropriate. They are very willing to give help and advice, and as they have built up over the years a very good reputation for personal care, it is worthwhile to get in touch with them as soon as you start planning for retirement.

6 Bereavement after retirement

6.1 A widow is entitled to the State Widow's Benefit (if she is over the age of 60) and will also receive a clergy widow's pension at the rate of 2/3rds of the clergy pension. No further 'lump sum' is payable, but if his/her husband dies within one year of retirement, the balance of the first year's pension is payable to his estate. A fact sheet about widow's benefit and supplementary benefits can be obtained from the DSS.

6.2 Children will receive pensions as of right until the age of 18. If a child is still in full time education after that age, the pension may be continued until full time education ceases, or until 30 June following his or her 23rd birthday, whichever is the earlier.

6.3 Widows, widowers and dependants are able to remain in the retirement home unless they choose to move. In this case, the Pensions Board will discuss with him/her the help which can be offered in providing suitable accommodation.

The Pensions Board will also consider sympathetically the position of other dependants, but would not normally expect to continue housing them after the death of both the cleric and his/her spouse.

6.4 There is a minimum income standard for all widows and widowers of clerics. Augmentation grants may be awarded by the Pensions Board to bring the income up to that standard, bearing outgoings in mind. A widow/widower is not expected to pay more than a quarter of her/his gross income from all sources towards the charges for the housing.

6.5 The Retirement and Widows' Officers are happy to be contacted and to visit where advice is need. Please do not hesitate to ask for their help.

7 Bereavement while your spouse is in office

Nothing can prepare any of us for the trauma of bereavement, but some practical advice may help.

7.1 Make a note of:

- Where essential documents (such as wills, marriage and birth certificates, insurance policies, etc) are kept.
- Who should be notified of the death (family friends, etc).
- Any special requests for funeral arrangements.

7.2 What do I do to inform the church authorities?

If your spouse dies, ask somebody (eg a friend, or a churchwarden) to telephone the Rural Dean and the Archdeacon. One of them will inform the Bishop and the Diocesan Office. The Archdeacons have the overall responsibility for clergy widows and widowers in the diocese and will advise on finance and housing. The Bishop also has a special officer in each Archdeaconry to support widows and widowers. Contact Church House for more details, or go to www.wakefield.anglican.org/retired.

7.3 Finance and your pension

All serving clergy are covered for Life Assurance on death before retirement. If clergy die while in office, their spouse receives a lump sum. This sum does not apply to clergy who have already retired. The pension for the surviving spouse of a cleric will be 2/3rds of his/her pension if s/he has already retired, or 2/3rds of the prospective pension if s/he dies in office. The Diocesan Office will notify the Pensions Board who will initiate payment.

It is worth remembering that having a joint bank account, or a separate account, can avoid the immediate problems of no cash flow when the account is in a partner's name only.

7.4 Where shall I live?

Be reassured that clergy dependents will not be asked to leave the house immediately on the death of your partner. Each case will be looked at compassionately and the Archdeacon will discuss this.

A widow/widower is entitled to the same facilities for housing as a retiring cleric, ie either the ability to purchase a property through an equity sharing mortgage, or to rent a property through the Church.

7.5 What about the children?

Your dependent children will receive a pension until they reach the age of 18. If the child is still in full time education at that age, the pension may be continued until full time education ceases, or until the 30th June following his/her 23rd birthday, whichever is earlier.

8 Separation and divorce

If you feel stresses building up, it is best to talk it through with someone sooner rather than later; either between yourselves as a couple or with a friend on whose confidence you can rely. But if things may be seriously wrong then there are people who can help; a Relate Counsellor, a nearby priest, the rural dean, a clergy spouse with experience of parish life, or a doctor. Alternatively, contact the Revd Chris Bullimore – 01924 849161 – who can help by putting clergy and their families in touch with short or long term support or counselling.

Try not to leave it until the situation has deteriorated almost beyond repair. The Christian ideal of life-long marriage can mean that couples will not face the fact that something may be wrong until it is almost too late. The feelings of failure, embarrassment, shame, fear – and many others that may arise when the news leaks out to the parish that all is not well in the Rectory or Vicarage – may mean it is too easy to put off seeking help.

When a couple suffer the tragedy of a marriage breakdown, practical help and personal support is needed. The bishops and archdeacons may be a source of sympathetic and practical help.

One of the major problems arises from the fact that clergy couples have been living in a 'tied' house. The bishop and archdeacon will be able to advise you about finding a new home, and also about the legal position, pension rights and possible sources of financial help if needed.

'Broken Rites' is an independent, interdenominational organisation that exists to support the spouses of clergy through the time of crisis. Counselling and practical advice are offered. See www.brokenrites.org.

9 Holidays and time off

9.1 Time off

You should take **one complete day off each week**.

9.2 Holidays

All parochial clergy are entitled to holidays of six weeks including four full Sundays per year. The payment of Locum Tenens during clergy holidays is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council.

9.3 Retreats

Sometimes it is good to get away from it all in order to think and pray, even for a day. Some suggestions in this region are:

The Briery, 36 Victoria Avenue, Ilkley, West Yorks, LS29 9BW. 01943 607287.

St Peter's Convent, Dovecote Lane, Horbury, Wakefield, WF4 6BB. 01924 272181.

Foster Place Retreat Centre, Hepworth, Holmfirth, Huddersfield, HD7 1TR. 01484 688680.

Community of the Resurrection, Stocksbank Road, Mirfield, WF14 OBN. 01924 497596

Whirlow Grange Conference Centre, Ecclesall Road South, Whirlow, Sheffield, S11 9PZ. 0114 2363137.

Scargill House, Kettlewell, Skipton, North Yorks, BD25 5HU. 01756 760234.

Parcevall Hall, Bradford Diocesan House, Appletreewick, Skipton, North Yorks, BD23 6DG. 01756 720213.

The Society of Mary and Martha (caring for people in ministry), The Sheldon Centre, Dunsford, Exeter, EX6 7LE. 01647 252732.

Retreats and quiet days are important and should **not** be considered as holidays.

9.4 Sabbatical leave

The diocese currently offers a limited number of Sabbatical Bursaries. Application can be made to:

The Continuing Ministerial Training Officer
Church House, 1 South Parade,
Wakefield, WF1 1LP
01924 371802

It is the cleric's responsibility to arrange cover for the time s/he is away from duty in consultation with the Rural Dean and Archdeacon.

10 Confidential advice and support

Many people are often under severe strain through the stresses and tensions of their working life. Clergy household can often face significant additional stress – as well as experience significant additional rewards.

There are many different kinds of pressure on clergy families. Among the more common ones are:

- The sense of isolation.
- Your partner's erratic timetable and work load.
- Remaining the person **you** want to be.
- The unfair high expectations that some people have, not only of you, but also of your children.
- Times of spiritual dryness and loss of faith.
- A feeling of inadequacy.

Very often clergy partners are the only people with no priest to turn to, largely because all those near at hand are professional colleagues of their spouses, and they would rather talk to someone further afield. Help is often not sought for fear of appearing disloyal to a partner, or of adversely affecting his/her standing in the Diocese.

It is recognised that there is a need for someone **totally confidential** who can listen, advise and support on a wide range of matters and to whom a clergy partner can turn to for help in times of isolation and depression, of strain in marriage, of anxiety about children, money difficulties or as a spiritual adviser. The diocese has a network of people who can help in a variety of ways, and who operate totally confidentially. Contact the Revd Chris Bullimore – 01924 849161. Please have the courage to ring them **before** your worry becomes a crisis.

11 Callers at the door or on the telephone while your partner is out

11.1 NEVER LET CALLERS KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALONE IN THE HOUSE.

11.2 You are advised to **never** give money to casual callers.

Some callers may be in a real distress. In such situations it may be helpful to have available a list of people to whom you can refer a caller. The following addresses and phone numbers may be useful:

- Churchwardens
- Rural Dean
- Neighbouring clergy
- Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Samaritans
- Social Services

12 Useful addresses

Each household should have a copy of the Wakefield Diocesan Directory. The Diocesan web site (www.wakefield.anglican.org) lists many useful resources and contacts.

12.1 Diocesan

The Bishop of Wakefield, Bishop's Lodge, Woodthorpe Lane, Wakefield, WF2 6JL. 01924 255349 – Fax: 01924 250202 – bishop@bishopofwakefield.org.uk.

The Bishop of Pontefract, Pontefract House, Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield WF2 7DR. 01924 250781 – Fax: 01924 240490 – bishop.pontefract@wakefield.anglican.org.

The Archdeacon of Halifax, 2 Vicarage Gardens, Brighouse, HD6 3HD. 01484 714553 – Fax: 01924 711897 – archdeacon.halifax@wakefield.anglican.org.

The Archdeacon of Pontefract, Church House, Wakefield, WF1 1LP. 01924 371802 – Fax: 01924 364834 – archdeacon.pontefract@wakefield.anglican.org.

The Dean of Wakefield, 1 Cathedral Close, Margaret Street, Wakefield, WF1 2DP. 01924 210005 – dean@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk.

The Diocesan Secretary, Church House, 1 South Parade, Wakefield, WF1 1LP. 01924 371802 – Fax: 01924 364834 – diocesan.secretary@wakefield.anglican.org.

The Diocesan Registry, Bank House, Burton Street, Wakefield, WF1 2DA. 01924 373467 – Fax: 01924 366234.

12.2 Central

The Church Commissioners, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ. 020 7898 1000.

The Church of England Pensions Board, The Church of England Pensions Board, 29 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3PS. 020 7898 1800.

Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, 1 Dean Trench Street, London SW1P 3HB. 020 7799 3696. Fax: 020 72331913.

Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB. 020 7222 5533

St Luke's Hospital for the Clergy, 14 Fitzroy Square, London, W1P 6AH. 020 7388 4954.

12.3 Other

Broken Rites, 114 Brown Edge Road, Buxton, Derbyshire. SK17 7AB. 01298 73997 – www.brokenrites.org.

Cruse, Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1UR. Help Line: 0870 167 1677 – www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk.

Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester, GL1 1JZ. 01452 528533 – www.ecclesiastical.co.uk.

Independent Schools Information Service, 56 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6AG. 0171 630 8793.

Relate, Herbert Gray College, Little Church Street, Rugby, Warwicks. CV21 EAP. 01788 573241 – www.relate.org.uk.