

Policy and procedure for a clergy person dying in post

Following the death in office of a licensed ordained minister, the care of bereaved dependents is one of our primary concerns.

- **Funeral costs** – Diocese will fund up to £4,000 towards the costs of the funeral for stipendiary or house for duty clergy who have died in post. The funeral director should send a copy of the invoice to Church House Hove, marked for the attention of the Diocesan Secretary, or email it to diocesan.secretary@chichester.anglican.org, and the DBF will then make payment of the invoice, or the £4,000 contribution, direct to the funeral director. The Archdeacon / Rural Dean or a designated officer will support the bereaved through the funeral process.
- **Pastoral support** – after discussion with the bereaved and if required, the Bishop may nominate someone who has been through a similar situation to walk alongside them.
- **Counselling** – The Archdeacon will make sure that the bereaved are aware of how to access the self-referral diocesan counselling service which is available for close family (and dependent children).
- **Pensions board** – Any queries about pensions should be addressed to The Church of England Pensions Board, 020 7898 1800; email: pensions@churchofengland.org. Staff at the Pensions Board are also able to advise on DWP benefits on request.
- **Clergy Support Trust** – The Clergy Support Trust will consider grants to assist with removals. It is important to contact them as soon as the decision to move has been taken. The Trust will also consider wider support on application, for example help with medical matters, welfare grants or longer term counselling if needed, especially where children are involved. Contact either by telephone, 020 7799 3696, or through the web site: www.clergysupport.org.uk.

- **Housing**

Where the house provided for the minister is a parsonage or belongs to the DBF, it is the practice in this diocese to allow the widow, widower, surviving civil partner and/or any dependents to remain in the house for longer than the statutory period¹ after the death of their spouse or partner, although not normally more than six months after the death. The Bishop and Archdeacon would always seek to respond to the circumstances of the bereaved and will discuss the appropriate period with the bereaved, consulting with the parish, the Diocesan Secretary and the Finance Director as appropriate. The Archdeacon will confirm the discussion in writing. PCCs are expected to continue to cover the outgoings while the bereaved person remains in the property. Churchwardens should contact the Archdeacon for advice in all cases.

If the house belongs to someone else, for example the PCC or a trust, the owner is encouraged to follow the DBF's example.

Where clergy remain in a parsonage or other tied housing after their post has ended for any reason, for example retirement, it is normal practice to charge rent once the statutory period has ended. For widows, widowers and surviving civil partners, the Clergy Widows Fund will usually fund these rental payments for a period, to allow the bereaved time to plan for the future. The Archdeacon will discuss with the bereaved how long this period should be, and will confirm the discussion in writing no later than one month before the statutory period ends.

¹ Where the postholder dies in office, this is three months if the deceased was on common tenure or two months if he or she was a freeholder

For further advice

For further advice and assistance, please feel free to contact your Bishop, Archdeacon, Rural Dean, or Churchwarden at any time. The Archdeacon will be in touch regularly to assist you.

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