



FROM THE PROVINCIAL REGISTRARS

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Advice Note

The National Clergy Register and Invitations to Minister

The National Clergy Register was created following the implementation of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) [Measure](#) 2020 and the National Ministry Register (Clergy) [Regulations](#) 2020. The Register can be found [here](#).

For the purpose of the Regulations, the relevant archbishop is the registration officer for all diocesan bishops in their province, and each diocesan bishop is the registration officer for all other bishops and clerks in Holy Orders authorised to minister in their diocese.

The purpose of the Register is to list all clergy who are lawfully authorised to minister in the Church of England. As provided for in [Canon C8.3](#), that authority can be given in the following forms: through institution/collation of an incumbent to a benefice; by licence under the bishop's seal; or by granting the bishop's written permission to officiate. No clergyperson should exercise ministry (including vesting in any church) unless holding authority to minister of some sort in a diocese within the Church of England. In each case, this is subject to obtaining an Overseas Permission to Officiate if they are an 'overseas' clergyperson and do not already hold a valid OPTO.

Where a clergyperson duly holds such authority in one diocese and wishes to exercise ministry in another diocese the following rules apply:

1. An invitation can be given to them by the minister with cure of souls (or, in a vacancy, by the sequestrators) to exercise ministry in their church, without permission from the bishop, if:
 - (i) the inviting minister is satisfied by actual personal knowledge or by good and sufficient evidence that the clergyperson is of good life and standing and has authority to minister within a diocese of the Church of England, and
 - (ii) the invitation does not result in the clergyperson exercising ministry in that church for more than seven days within three months (though there is no limit on an incumbent or licensed clergyperson ministering within the same diocese).

2. Where the inviting minister cannot be satisfied as to (i) and/or the period for ministry exceeds that in (ii), the clergyperson must not minister without further authority from the bishop of that diocese (which, if given, would be a written permission to officiate following the House of Bishops' [Policy](#)); and
3. The invited clergyperson must sign the services register.

The inclusion of a clergyperson's name on the National Clergy Register should be taken - without the need for any further checks or references - as "good and sufficient evidence" that the clergyperson is of good standing with authority to minister in the Church of England. There is no requirement or obligation for any further permissions to be sought or given. Similarly, it is a matter of invitation, not of right, and there is no obligation for a minister to invite another clergyperson to minister in their church, even if requested to do so by a parishioner hoping for a friend or family member to officiate at an occasional office.

Where a clergyperson's authority to minister has come to an end (whether that is by resignation, compulsory retirement, withdrawal of PTO, or prohibition under disciplinary proceedings) or following voluntary withdrawal from ministry or formal suspension under the Clergy Discipline Measure, the registration officer must notify the Archbishops' Council (by updating the People System) so that the clergyperson's name is removed from the Register.

The absence of a name on the Register should, therefore, mean that the person in question is *not* authorised to minister; and the inclusion of a name should indicate that a person *is* authorised to minister. Where it is believed there is an error in the inclusion or exclusion of a name this should be taken up with the relevant diocesan bishop's office.

The Register can also be relied upon where there is a request for a diocesan or suffragan bishop to officiate outside their own diocese; neither Archbishop intends to give any further reference or supporting letter for these requests. Those bishops who are honorary assistant bishops should have authority to minister from a diocesan bishop by way of a written permission to officiate as well as a commission or appointment as an honorary assistant bishop in that diocese. Such an appointment must follow the same House of Bishops' Policy and the diocesan bishop will be responsible for ensuring that the honorary assistant bishop's name is included on the National Clergy Register for so long as they are exercising ministry as an honorary assistant bishop in that diocese.

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