

**Permission to Officiate:**  
**A guide to Diocese of Chichester practice**



**April 2026**

## Welcome from the Diocesan Bishop

Permission to Officiate (PTO) brings to life the reality of the grace bestowed at ordination. That grace makes an indelible imprint on the life of a baptised Christian who responds to the call not simply to take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ, but to feed his sheep with life-giving word and sacrament.

Those who apply for PTO have already given years of service to this calling. Your experience of that ministry is a gift to us in this household of faith and it is received with respect and gratitude.

We also recognise the need to support you and to ensure that there is some sense of accountability for how this ministry is exercised. The identification of a sponsor is now a Church of England requirement, regulated by the House of Bishops. The details are available on this part of the diocesan website.

We hope that the process of applying for PTO and its renewal will be simple. The forms for doing this seek agreement on the scope of the ministry envisaged. That will also help to identify the level of safeguarding training that is required. At the point of renewal, we would expect this to be reviewed.

So let us pray for each other, that in heart and understanding we might be enlarged and enlightened, to the glory of God and the advancement of his mission of love and salvation.

+Martin

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## Introduction

In July 2018, the House of Bishops approved a Policy on Granting Permission to Officiate<sup>1</sup>. This policy covered a wide variety of matters, including pastoral care for PTO clergy, processes for granting and ending PTO, and duties of PTO clergy, in particular around safeguarding training.

Much has happened since 2018, both in terms of policy and guidance updates, and as a result of the pandemic. In particular, the former has resulted in the safeguarding training requirements for many PTO clergy becoming less onerous, whereas the latter resulted in more safeguarding training lapsing and not being renewed because of the difficulties of accessing training. In addition, the House of Bishops' policy leaves a number of matters open to local determination and Safer Recruitment and People Management guidance is evolving. This booklet aims to set out how PTO is approached practically in the Diocese of Chichester and will be revised from time to time as national guidance evolves.

We hope this will help you understand the process, and ensure that all steps which need to be taken are taken in good time. The law of the Church of England is clear that no member of the clergy may minister<sup>2</sup> without a current licence or PTO in the relevant diocese<sup>3</sup>, or allow another member of the clergy to do so. We hope a clear explanation of the process and timelines for granting PTO will avoid anyone being unable to minister for purely administrative reasons, the impact of which we well understand.

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<sup>1</sup> [Microsoft Word - House of Bishops Policy on PTO July 2018 .docx \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> See paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the House of Bishops' Policy for more details of what 'ministry' covers

<sup>3</sup> Subject to a limited exception described in paragraph 2.3 of the House of Bishops' Policy

# 1. Applying for PTO if you do not have a current or recent licence or PTO in the Diocese of Chichester

*This section is substantially the same as the following two, but with minor differences for the situation where your blue file is not yet held in Chichester and you are not yet familiar with the diocese. If your blue file is held in Chichester, please follow section 2 (if you have a current or recent licence) or section 0 (if you have a current or recent PTO) instead.*

## 1.1. Identify a sponsor

As required by the House of Bishops' policy, every PTO holder must have a Designated Responsible Person who sponsors them. This is normally the incumbent or priest in charge of the parish where you will be living or worshipping, or the rural dean if the parish is in vacancy.

You should identify your proposed sponsor, and seek his or her support, before applying for PTO.

You should then meet your sponsor for a discussion, which should cover the matters outlined in [section 7.1](#) below.

## 1.2. Check the level of safeguarding training you need and ensure it is up to date

Since the House of Bishops' policy was published, the safeguarding training requirements for PTO clergy have been changed, with differing needs depending on whether or not you exercise 'significant leadership in a parish'.

If you **will be** exercising a leadership role, then you must have up to date Leadership training (formerly known as C2). You must also have undertaken Foundation (C1) training at some point, even if it has now expired.

If you **will not be** exercising a leadership role, then you must have up to date Foundation (C1) training<sup>4</sup>. In due course a specific PTO training pathway will replace the option of Foundation (C1) training, but this has not yet been rolled out in this diocese.

**PTO cannot be granted to clergy without in-date Foundation OR Leadership level (C1 or C2) training in place.**

Which level of training you need should be decided jointly by you and your sponsor. Further guidance on making the decision can be found in the [Appendix](#).

It is diocesan policy that clergy must have training in place which will not expire for at least 9 months from the date of the application. If your training expires in less than 9 months'

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<sup>4</sup> It is acceptable to have up to date Leadership training (C2) instead, but in that case you must also have undertaken Foundation (C1) training at some point, even if it has now expired.

time, please make arrangements to renew it, and explain those arrangements on the application form. Your application can still be processed while you are renewing your training, but PTO will not be granted until you have provided your new training certificate.

### 1.3. Complete an application

The application form is available [here](#), as well as a [privacy notice](#), and the [clergy files privacy notice](#). You will also need to complete the confidential declaration form available [here](#). You can find the privacy notice [here](#).

Once you have completed the application form, please ask your sponsor to email [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) to confirm their support of your application.

Please email or send the confidential declaration and copies of your safeguarding training certificate(s) to [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) or to The Palace, Canon Lane, Chichester PO19 1PY marked for the attention of the PTO Administrator.

If you intend to help out regularly in a particular parish, you are also encouraged to agree a statement of mutual expectations with your sponsor and include this with your application, although this can be done later. More information, and a model statement, can be found in section 1.6 below.

### 1.4. Processing your application

Once your application, confidential declaration and sponsor's confirmation of support have been received, the PTO Administrator<sup>5</sup> will check your documents and advise you of any issues. If everything is in order, the PTO Administrator will then explain what is required to apply for a DBS check.

While some police forces respond to DBS applications within a week, some take much longer. It is recommended that you allow 3 months for your DBS check to come back. Additional checks will be required if you have lived, worked or volunteered abroad or if you will be exercising any ministry in your own home, so please allow longer if this is the case.

The PTO Administrator will then ask the bishop of your current or most recent diocese for a Clergy Current Status Letter and episcopal reference. If the episcopal reference is not sufficiently detailed, additional references may be sought.

Once all paperwork is in order, including return of a satisfactory DBS check<sup>6</sup> and provision of any outstanding safeguarding training certificates, the PTO Administrator will pass the file to the Diocesan Bishop for review and decision.

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<sup>5</sup> The PTO Administrator is the Responsible Person for the purposes of the Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance

<sup>6</sup> Any information disclosed on a Confidential Declaration form or within a DBS Certificate, or any other information of concern, will be discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and addressed in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy

### 1.5. Grant of PTO

It is the Diocesan Bishop's decision whether or not to grant Permission to Officiate, and if so when it will commence. If he is content with the application and with the sponsor, he will sign the Permission to Officiate. In some instances, the Bishop may indicate that there should be a period of time between the end of a previous licence and the start of your PTO.

In line with the House of Bishops' requirement that PTO should only be valid for as long as the DBS check remains in force, your PTO will be granted to expire on the same date as your DBS check will expire. Since January 2022, DBS checks must be renewed every three years, so PTO will not be granted for more than 3 years and in some circumstances for a shorter period.

Ordinarily, PTO is valid across the diocese of Chichester, but on occasion a restriction may be imposed.

The PTO Administrator will send the signed Permission to Officiate to the Rural Dean along with two copies of the Declaration and Oaths. Please make arrangements to swear these in the presence of your Rural Dean, and return one copy to the Palace.

### 1.6. Agreeing expectations

Your Permission to Officiate will be accompanied by the standard diocesan conditions and expectations, which form the principal part of the role description which is required for all Church of England posts, whether paid or voluntary, under the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment and People Management policy. You should read these carefully.

If you intend to help out regularly in a particular parish, you should normally also agree mutual expectations with your sponsor once PTO has been issued if you have not already done so. A model form which can be adapted as appropriate is available [here](#). Please send a copy to the PTO Administrator to be added to your blue file.

Mutual expectations are not binding, and can be reviewed at any time.

### 1.7. Filing and databases

Unless the majority of your ministry will be carried out in another diocese, the PTO Administrator will ask the bishop of your current or most recent diocese to send your blue file to Chichester. On receipt, the file will be reviewed in the Bishop's office, and the PTO Administrator will add a copy of the signed Permission to Officiate, together with your application and supporting documents.

If your blue file will remain in another diocese, a separate Chichester PTO file will be opened, with a note of the diocese where your blue file is held.

The PTO Administrator will also add details of your PTO, your contact details, your DBS check and your safeguarding training to the diocesan database. Details of your DBS check

and safeguarding training will be accessible only to limited diocesan personnel but details of your PTO and your contact details will by default be accessible to anyone who has been granted access to the database, such as other clergy, churchwardens and other parish officers. If you would prefer your contact details to be accessible only by diocesan personnel, please contact the Database Administrator ([databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org) or 01273 421021).

The database will show your role as *Permission to Officiate – Diocese of Chichester*. The place will be shown as the benefice of your sponsoring incumbent/priest-in-charge. This does not mean that your PTO is limited to that place; by default PTO enables you to exercise ministry anywhere in the diocese, with the permission of the relevant incumbent or priest in charge (or churchwarden or Rural Dean as sequestrator in a vacancy). If your PTO has a restriction, your role will be shown as *Permission to Officiate [Restricted]*, with a comment giving details of the restriction.

Your name and the period for which you have PTO in the Diocese of Chichester will also be added to the publicly available [National Clergy Register](#).

### 1.8. Refusal of PTO

If it is intended to refuse PTO, the reasons for this will generally be discussed with you and your sponsor beforehand. The Bishop will be keen to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is in place, usually provided by the sponsor or Chaplain for Retired Ministry.

In the event of a refusal of PTO, the PTO Administrator will check the National Register of Clergy and inform any other bishops whose PTO you hold of the refusal. A list will be maintained of all refusals of PTO in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy.

It should be noted that a refusal does not necessarily indicate any concerns. It may simply be that there is no good reason for giving PTO, for example if you already have PTO in other dioceses and will not regularly be ministering in Chichester.

## 2. Applying for PTO if you have a current or recent licence in the Diocese of Chichester

*This section is substantially the same as the previous section, but with minor differences for the situation where as a result of a current or recent licence in the Diocese, your blue file is already held in Chichester and you are already familiar with the diocese. If your blue file is held in a different diocese, please follow section 1 instead. If you have a current or recent PTO in the Diocese, please follow section 0 instead.*

### 2.1. Identify a sponsor

As required by the House of Bishops' policy, every PTO holder must have a Designated Responsible Person who sponsors them. This is the incumbent or priest in charge of the parish where you will be living or worshipping, or the rural dean if the parish is in vacancy.

You should identify your proposed sponsor, and seek his or her support, before applying for PTO.

You should then meet your sponsor for a discussion. While the House of Bishops' policy requirement for an entry interview does not apply if you are not moving diocese, it will still be helpful to discuss the matters covered in the [section 7.1](#) on entry interviews. In particular, you will need to agree with your sponsor what level of safeguarding training you will require for your planned ministry.

### 2.2. Check the level of safeguarding training you need and ensure it is up to date

Since the House of Bishops' policy was published, the safeguarding training requirements for PTO clergy have been changed, with differing needs depending on whether or not you exercise 'significant leadership in a parish'.

If you **will be** exercising a leadership role, then you must have up to date Leadership training (formerly known as C2). You must also have undertaken Foundation (C1) training at some point, even if it has now expired.

If you **will not be** exercising a leadership role, then you must have up to date Foundation (C1) training<sup>7</sup>. In due course a specific PTO training pathway will replace the option of Foundation (C1) training, but this has not yet been rolled out in this diocese.

**PTO cannot be granted to clergy without in-date Foundation OR Leadership level (C1 or C2) training in place.**

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<sup>7</sup> It is acceptable to have up to date Leadership training (C2) instead, but in that case you must also have undertaken Foundation (C1) training at some point, even if it has now expired.

Which level of training you need should be decided jointly by you and your sponsor. Further guidance on making the decision can be found in the Appendix.

It is diocesan policy that clergy must have training in place which will not expire for at least 9 months from the date of the application. If your training expires in less than 9 months' time, please make arrangements to renew it, and explain those arrangements on the application form. Your application can still be processed while you are renewing your training, but PTO will not be granted until you have provided your new training certificate.

### 2.3. Complete an application

The application form is available [here](#), as well as a [privacy notice](#), and the [clergy files privacy notice](#). You will also need to complete the confidential declaration form available [here](#). You can find the privacy notice [here](#).

Once you have completed the application form, please ask your sponsor to email [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) to confirm their support of your application.

Please email or send the confidential declaration and copies of your safeguarding training certificate(s) to [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) or to The Palace, Canon Lane, Chichester PO19 1PY marked for the attention of the PTO Administrator.

### 2.4. Processing your application

Once your application, confidential declaration and sponsor's confirmation of support have been received, the PTO Administrator<sup>8</sup> will check your documents and advise you of any issues. If everything is in order, the PTO Administrator will then check when your DBS check expires, and if it will expire in less than 9 months' time, they will explain what is required to apply for a new DBS check.

While some police forces respond to DBS applications within a week, some take much longer. It is recommended that you allow 3 months for your DBS check to come back. Additional checks will be required if you have lived, worked or volunteered abroad or if you will be exercising any ministry in your own home, so please allow longer if this is the case.

Once all paperwork is in order, including return of a satisfactory DBS check if required<sup>9</sup> and provision of any outstanding safeguarding training certificates, the PTO Administrator will pass the file to the Diocesan Bishop for review and decision.

### 2.5. Grant of PTO

It is the Diocesan Bishop's decision whether or not to grant Permission to Officiate, and if so when it will commence. If he is content with the application and with the sponsor, he will

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<sup>8</sup> The PTO Administrator is the Responsible Person for the purposes of the Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance

<sup>9</sup> Any information disclosed on a Confidential Declaration form or within a DBS Certificate, or any other information of concern, will be discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and addressed in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy

sign the Permission to Officiate. In some instances, the Bishop may indicate that there should be a period of time between the end of a previous licence and the start of your PTO.

In line with the House of Bishops' requirement that PTO should only be valid for as long as the DBS check remains in force, your PTO will be granted to expire on the same date as your DBS check will expire. Since January 2022, DBS checks must be renewed every three years, so PTO will not be granted for more than 3 years.

In some circumstances, PTO will be granted for a shorter period. This is likely to be the case for your first PTO (unless a new DBS check has been obtained) in order to ensure that your PTO expires on the same date as your DBS check.

Ordinarily, PTO is valid across the diocese of Chichester, but on occasion a restriction may be imposed.

The PTO Administrator will send the signed Permission to Officiate to the Rural Dean along with two copies of the Declaration and Oaths. Please make arrangements to swear these in the presence of your Rural Dean, and return one copy to the Palace.

## 2.6. Agreeing expectations

Your Permission to Officiate will be accompanied by the standard diocesan conditions and expectations, which form the principal part of the role description which is required for all Church of England posts, whether paid or voluntary, under the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment and People Management policy. You should read these carefully.

If you intend to help out regularly in a particular parish, you should normally also agree mutual expectations with your sponsor once PTO has been issued if you have not already done so. A model form which can be adapted as appropriate is available [here](#). Please send a copy to the PTO Administrator to be added to your blue file.

Mutual expectations are not binding, and can be reviewed at any time.

## 2.7. Filing and databases

The PTO Administrator will place a copy of the signed Permission to Officiate, together with your application and supporting documents, on your blue file.

If another diocese asks for your blue file, on the basis that the majority of your ministry will be in that diocese, a separate Chichester PTO file will be opened, with a note of the diocese where your blue file is held.

The PTO Administrator will also add details of your PTO, your new contact details, your DBS check and your safeguarding training to the diocesan database. Details of your DBS check and safeguarding training will be accessible only to limited diocesan personnel but details of your PTO and your contact details will by default be accessible to anyone who has been granted access to the database, such as other clergy, churchwardens and other parish

officers. If you would prefer your contact details to be accessible only by diocesan personnel, please contact the Database Administrator ([databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org) or 01273 421021).

The database will show your role as *Permission to Officiate – Diocese of Chichester*. The place will be shown as the benefice of your sponsoring incumbent/priest-in-charge. This does not mean that your PTO is limited to that place; by default PTO enables you to exercise ministry anywhere in the diocese, with the permission of the relevant incumbent or priest in charge, or churchwarden or Rural Dean as sequestrator in a vacancy. If your PTO has a restriction, your role will be shown as *Permission to Officiate [Restricted]*, with a comment giving details of the restriction.

Your name and the fact you have PTO in the Diocese of Chichester will also be added to the publicly available [National Clergy Register](#).

### 2.8. Refusal of PTO

If it is intended to refuse PTO, the reasons for this will generally be discussed with you and your sponsor beforehand. The Bishop will be keen to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is in place, usually provided by the sponsor or Chaplain for Retired Ministry.

In the event of a refusal of PTO, the PTO Administrator will check the National Register of Clergy and inform any other bishops whose PTO you hold of the refusal. A list will be maintained of all refusals of PTO in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy.

It should be noted that a refusal does not necessarily indicate any concerns. It may simply be that there is no good reason for giving PTO, for example if you have PTO in other dioceses and will not regularly be ministering in Chichester.

### 3. Renewing PTO if you have a current or recent PTO in the Diocese of Chichester

*This section is substantially the same as the previous section, but with minor differences for the situation where you already hold PTO in Chichester.*

It is important to apply for a renewal in good time before your current PTO expires. You are advised to allow 3 months, to give time for DBS checks to be returned. Additional checks will be required if you have lived, worked or volunteered abroad or if you will be exercising any ministry in your own home so please allow longer if this is the case.

Note that if your PTO expires, you will not be able to minister unless and until a new PTO is granted, unless exceptionally a formal letter of extension is obtained.

#### 3.1. Discuss your application for renewal with your sponsor

Your sponsor will remain the same when you apply for renewal, namely the incumbent or priest in charge of the parish where you live or worship, or the rural dean if the parish is in vacancy.

You should discuss your renewal with your sponsor before making your application, and seek his or her support. In particular, you should review your statement of mutual expectations if you have one (see section 0 below) and discuss whether the level of safeguarding training you require has changed. You may find it helpful to complete a ministerial return to aid the discussion. A template is available [here](#). If you do complete one, please send a copy to the PTO Administrator with your application.

#### 3.2. Ensure your safeguarding training is up to date

Details of the safeguarding training requirements should be familiar to you and are therefore not repeated here. They are set out in the Appendix to this booklet if you need a reminder.

It is diocesan policy that clergy must have training in place which will not expire for at least 9 months from the date of the application. If your training expires in less than 9 months' time, please make arrangements to renew it, and explain those arrangements on the application form. Your application can still be processed while you are renewing your training, but PTO will not be granted until you have provided your new training certificate.

#### 3.3. Complete an application

The application form is available [here](#), as well as a [privacy notice](#), and the [clergy files privacy notice](#). You will also need to complete the confidential declaration form available [here](#). You can find the privacy notice [here](#).

Once you have completed the application form, please ask your sponsor to email [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) to confirm their support of your application.

Please email or send the confidential declaration to [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) or to The Palace, Canon Lane, Chichester PO19 1PY marked for the attention of the PTO Administrator.

Once you have completed the application form, please ask your sponsor to email [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) to confirm their support of your application, giving the details requested in the form.

Please then send your application form, confidential declaration, your current statement of expectations if you have one, and your ministerial return if you have completed one to [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org) or to The Palace, Canon Lane, Chichester PO19 1PY marked for the attention of the PTO Administrator.

### 3.4. Processing your application

Once your application, confidential declaration and sponsor's confirmation of support have been received, the PTO Administrator<sup>10</sup> will check your documents and advise you of any issues. If everything is in order, the PTO Administrator will then check when your DBS check expires, and if it will expire in less than 9 months' time, they will explain what is required to apply for a new DBS check.

While some police forces respond to DBS applications within a week, some take much longer. It is recommended that you allow 3 months to allow time for your DBS check to come back. Additional checks will be required if you have lived, worked or volunteered abroad or if you will be exercising any ministry in your own home, so please allow longer if this is the case.

The PTO Administrator will then ask the Diocesan Safeguarding Team if there are any issues to be aware of and will review your blue file. Further checks may be made as outlined in section 4.6 of the House of Bishops' policy.

Once all paperwork is in order, including return of a satisfactory DBS check if required<sup>11</sup> and provision of any outstanding safeguarding training certificates, the PTO Administrator will pass the file to the Diocesan Bishop for review and decision.

### 3.5. Grant of PTO

It is the Diocesan Bishop's decision whether or not to grant Permission to Officiate, and if so when it will commence. If he is content with the application and with the sponsor, he will sign the Permission to Officiate.

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<sup>10</sup> The PTO Administrator is the Responsible Person for the purposes of the Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance

<sup>11</sup> Any information disclosed on a Confidential Declaration form or within a DBS Certificate, or any other information of concern, will be discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and addressed in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy

In line with the House of Bishops' requirement that PTO should only be valid for as long as the DBS check remains in force, your PTO will be granted to expire on the same date as your DBS check will expire. Since January 2022, DBS checks must be renewed every three years, so PTO will not be granted for more than 3 years and in some circumstances for a shorter period.

Ordinarily, PTO is valid across the diocese of Chichester, but on occasion a restriction may be imposed.

The PTO Administrator will send the signed Permission to Officiate to the Rural Dean along with two copies of the Declaration and Oaths. Please make arrangements to swear these in the presence of your Rural Dean, and return one copy to the Palace.

### 3.6. Agreeing expectations

Your permission to Officiate will be accompanied by the standard diocesan conditions and expectations, which form the principal part of the role description which is required for all Church of England posts, whether paid or voluntary, under the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment and People Management policy. You should read these carefully.

If you intend to help out regularly in a particular parish, you should normally also agree mutual expectations with your sponsor once PTO has been issued if you have not already done so. A model form which can be adapted as appropriate is available [here](#). Please send a copy to the PTO Administrator to be added to your blue file.

Mutual expectations are not binding, and can be reviewed at any time.

### 3.7. Filing and databases

The PTO Administrator will place a copy of the signed Permission to Officiate, together with your application and supporting documents, on your blue file.

If another diocese asks for your blue file, on the basis that the majority of your ministry will be in that diocese, a separate Chichester PTO file will be opened, with a note of the diocese where your blue file is held.

The PTO Administrator will also add details of your PTO, any changed contact details, your DBS check and your safeguarding training to the diocesan database. Details of your DBS check and safeguarding training will be accessible only to limited diocesan personnel but details of your PTO and your contact details will by default be accessible to anyone who has been granted access to the database, such as other clergy, churchwardens and other parish officers. If you would prefer your contact details to be accessible only by diocesan personnel, please contact the Database Administrator ([databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org) or 01273 421021).

The database will show your role as *Permission to Officiate – Diocese of Chichester*. The place will be shown as the benefice of your sponsoring incumbent/priest-in-charge. This does not mean that your PTO is limited to that place; by default PTO enables you to exercise

ministry anywhere in the diocese, with the permission of the relevant incumbent or priest in charge, or churchwarden or Rural Dean as sequestrator in a vacancy. If your PTO has a restriction, your role will be shown as *Permission to Officiate [Restricted]*, with a comment giving details of the restriction.

Your name and the fact you have PTO in the Diocese of Chichester will also be added to the publicly available [National Clergy Register](#).

### 3.8. Refusal of PTO

If it is intended to refuse PTO, the reasons for this will generally be discussed with you and your sponsor beforehand. The Bishop will be keen to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is in place, usually provided by the sponsor or Chaplain for Retired Ministry.

In the event of a refusal of PTO, the PTO Administrator will check the National Register of Clergy and inform any other bishops whose PTO you hold of the refusal. A list will be maintained of all refusals of PTO in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy.

It should be noted that a refusal does not necessarily indicate any concerns. It may simply be that there is no good reason for giving PTO, for example if you have PTO in other dioceses and will not in future regularly be ministering in Chichester.

## 4. Considerations during PTO

### 4.1. Ministering

It is important to remember that you should only officiate (which includes preaching) if you have been invited to do so by the minister having the cure of souls, or the churchwardens or Rural dean as sequestrators in a vacancy.

Similarly, you may only take funerals if you have been asked to do so by the deceased person's family. So far as practicable, you must inform the minister of the deceased person's parish and seek his or her goodwill.

### 4.2. Keeping safeguarding training up to date

It is vital that safeguarding training is kept up to date. As made clear in the House of Bishops' policy at 2.6 and 2.11, no clerk in Holy Orders should minister without up-to-date safeguarding training, and so if safeguarding training expires, PTO will be withdrawn.

To assist clergy in keeping their training up to date, the Diocese issues rolling reminders to clergy as their training nears expiry.

3-4 months before expiry, the safeguarding team will contact the PTO holder to advise training needs to be updated prior to expiry date.

If training has not been completed 1-2 months before expiry, the archdeacon will write to the PTO holder and their sponsor to advise that the training must be completed before the expiry date.

If training has expired without being renewed, the Diocesan Bishop will write to withdraw PTO. If PTO is withdrawn because of a failure to update safeguarding training, then it will not be reissued until the Bishop is satisfied of the reasons why it lapsed. There is no requirement to re-instate PTO.

### 4.3. Fees and expenses

Clergy who have retired from stipendiary ministry, have reached state pension age, are not in receipt of an income from any other employment or self-employment, and have an in-date PTO are entitled to 80% of the DBF's portion of the fee for marriages and funerals, capped for funerals in crematoria or cemeteries. Other clergy may apply to the Remuneration Committee for the right to claim fees by contacting [anne-marie.mizler@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:anne-marie.mizler@chichester.anglican.org)

Clergy should never receive fees from funeral directors directly; fees should be paid by the funeral director to the PCC (for a service in a church or churchyard) or the DBF (for a service in a crematorium or cemetery), and the PCC or DBF will remit your portion to you. Further information, including the current fee levels and cap, and the form to notify the DBF of a funeral you have taken, can be found at [www.chichester.anglican.org/pto-fees-expenses/](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/pto-fees-expenses/)

Retired clergy with PTO can also claim Occasional Duty Fees from the DBF for conducting public worship during a vacancy or while an incumbent is unable to do so for reasons of ill health. The claim form, with further information, can be found at [www.chichester.anglican.org/pto-fees-expenses/](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/pto-fees-expenses/). Claims may not be made for services at the church where you regularly worship or assist. The parish may offer expenses in other cases, such as covering annual leave.

Other expenses, such as pastoral visits for occasional offices, should be reimbursed by the PCC or equivalent.

#### 4.4. PCC and Synod membership

Clergy with PTO are not automatically members of any PCC, although they may be co-opted to the PCC<sup>12</sup>. Any co-option will last only until the next APCM, but further co-options for additional terms can be made each year if desired.

It is also possible for the Diocesan Bishop to authorise a PTO holder to act as chair of a PCC in the absence of the incumbent/priest-in-charge<sup>13</sup>. The PTO holder's consent is required, and the PCC and the incumbent/priest-in-charge (if there is one) must make a joint application to the Bishop. If authorisation is given, the PTO holder does become a member of the PCC.

Clergy with PTO may also be elected to be a member of deanery synod if they are resident in the deanery or have habitually attended public worship in the deanery during the preceding six months<sup>14</sup>. One PTO holder can be elected for every 10 (or part thereof) in the deanery. Elections are held every three years, at the same time as elections of lay representatives of deanery synod, and in Chichester, Rural Deans co-ordinate the elections. Election to deanery synod does not confer ex officio membership of a PCC.

Clergy with PTO who are elected to deanery synod are also eligible to stand for election to diocesan synod<sup>15</sup>. If elected to diocesan synod, they also become an ex officio member of deanery synod, and will remain an ex officio member<sup>16</sup> even if their elected term of office on deanery synod comes to an end. The ex officio membership is of the synod of the deanery in which they are resident, even if they were elected from a different deanery in which they worship. In this scenario, clergy will no doubt wish to select which synod they will be an active member of rather than be an active member of two.

Clergy with PTO may also be elected to General Synod whether or not they are a member of deanery synod. If elected, they become an ex officio member of Diocesan Synod and the deanery synod of the deanery in which they are resident.

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<sup>12</sup> Rule M15(1)(k) in Part 9 of the Church Representation Rules

<sup>13</sup> Rule M26(2)

<sup>14</sup> Rule 15(1)(f)

<sup>15</sup> Rule 36(1)

<sup>16</sup> Rule 15(1)(c)

If their PTO comes to an end, their synod membership also terminates, unless the clerical members of the Bishop's Council decide, **before** the PTO comes to an end, that membership of General or Diocesan Synod should continue. Continued membership must be reviewed annually. Diocesan Synod membership also terminates if the PTO holder ceases to live or worship in the deanery from which they were elected, again unless the clerical members of the Bishop's Council decide it should continue before the move.

#### 4.5. Reviews

It is healthy for there to be regular discussions with your sponsor about your ministry, perhaps once a year, or at any time you feel your statement of expectations should be amended. This is particularly the case if your parish enters vacancy and this significantly changes the nature or extent of your ministry there. Further guidance on vacancies and other long-term absences can be found in section 8 below.

These need not be time consuming or extensive. No paperwork is required, unless your statement of expectations is amended, although you may find it helpful to complete a ministerial return. A template is available [here](#). If you do complete one, please send a copy to the PTO Administrator.

For more information, including matters which might be discussed, see section [7.6](#) below in the Acting as a Sponsor section.

If any changes are made to your statement of expectations, please send a copy to the PTO Administrator. Please also inform the PTO Administrator if the changes result in a change to your safeguarding training needs.

#### 4.6. Applying for renewal in good time

Around 3 months before your PTO expires, you will receive an email inviting you to apply for a renewal. Renewals are not automatic and remain the gift of the Diocesan Bishop.

Please make sure you apply in good time, bearing in mind that DBS certificates can take some time to come through. You are advised to allow 3 months. In exceptional cases, you may ask the PTO Administrator to seek a letter of extension from the Diocesan Bishop if there are significant delays in receiving the DBS check.

If your PTO expires, you must not preach or preside at services until a new Permission has been granted. Taking services without a licence or PTO is in breach of Canon Law and may attract disciplinary action. For the same reason, no fees or expenses can be claimed for duties performed without an in-date PTO.

## 5. Withdrawing PTO

### 5.1. Withdrawal

There are a number of reasons why it may be appropriate for PTO to be withdrawn, as set out in section 6 of the House of Bishops' Policy. Permission to Officiate is held at the Diocesan Bishop's discretion, but the Bishop will generally discuss the situation with the PTO holder and the sponsor before withdrawing PTO. The Bishop will be keen to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is in place, usually provided by the sponsor or Chaplain for Retired Ministry.

Whilst it is always important to recognise that the associated parish may be left without cover with the withdrawal of PTO from a minister, it must not override other reasons if they would suggest PTO should be withdrawn. The risk of not withdrawing may have an adverse effect on the parish which should also be considered.

### 5.2. Record keeping

The reason for the withdrawal will be recorded on the blue file. The PTO Administrator will update the diocesan database and the [National Clergy Register](#) with the revised end date of the Permission to Officiate. They will also check the National Clergy Register to see if PTO is also held in another diocese, and if so will notify the relevant bishop. A list will be maintained of all refusals of PTO in accordance with the House of Bishops' policy.

### 5.3. Reinstatement

If PTO is withdrawn, the minister may make representations to the Diocesan Bishop as to why it should be continued. If circumstances change, a fresh application for PTO can of course be made.

## 6. When PTO comes to an end

No announcements or departure notices will be circulated. When Permission to Officiate expires, the diocesan database and the National Register of Clergy are automatically updated, as the expiry date is noted at the outset.

If your PTO has ended earlier than its natural expiry date, for example through your resignation, the PTO Administrator will update the diocesan database and the National Register of Clergy with the revised end date. They will also check the National Register to see if PTO is also held in another diocese, and if so will notify the relevant bishop. The Bishop will be keen to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is in place, usually provided by the sponsor or Chaplain for Retired Ministry.

Your blue file will usually be retained in Chichester. However, the PTO Administrator will check the National Register, and if you have PTO in another diocese, it will be sent to that diocese. This will normally happen a month after expiry, in case you make a late application for renewal. It will also be sent if another diocese applies for it.

If your blue file was not held in Chichester, then the supplementary file created in Chichester will be sent to the diocese which holds your blue file.

## 7. Acting as a sponsor

The sponsor plays an important part in the application for PTO, and during its continuation. It is therefore important that sponsors have up to date Safer Recruitment and People Management training.

### 7.1. Initial interview

Where a minister is coming to Chichester from another diocese, the House of Bishops' policy requires an entry interview, and in Chichester this is undertaken by the sponsor. It should preferably be conducted in person rather than virtually and topics to be covered include:

- how the process of requesting PTO works and the need to complete an application form and a Confidential Declaration covering criminal and disciplinary matters and to undertake enhanced criminal record checks;
- future plans for ministry;
- any particular skills or experience that could support the mission of the parish or the Diocese of Chichester more widely;
- issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, covering both values and expected behaviours and skills, knowledge, qualifications and previous experience<sup>17</sup>;
- what level of safeguarding training is required and whether it needs refreshing (see section 7.2 below); and
- seeking consent to have personal data shared with the Chaplain for Retired Ministry, so that pastoral and other support can be provided.

If consent is granted, please forward on contact details to the Chaplain for Retired Ministry.

If the interview raises any concerns about understanding of or commitment to safeguarding, please contact the diocesan safeguarding team for advice.

There is no requirement for an entry interview if a minister is retiring to your parish from another part of the diocese, but you should meet nonetheless to discuss future plans for ministry and safeguarding training and satisfy yourself that you are able to commend the application for PTO.

You should also have a discussion with a PTO holder you sponsor before they apply for renewal, to ensure that you are able to commend the application for renewal, and to review the level of safeguarding training required and any statement of expectations which is in place. See section 7.6 below.

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<sup>17</sup> Model questions can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-7>

## 7.2. Safeguarding training

Since the House of Bishops' policy was published, the safeguarding requirements for PTO clergy have been changed, with differing training needs depending on whether they will be exercising 'significant leadership in a parish'. All PTO clergy must have in-date Foundation OR Leadership level (C1 or C2) training in place at all times, but which is required depends on the level of leadership they will have or be seen to have. Which level of training is needed should be decided jointly by you and the PTO applicant. Guidance on the different levels of training and making the decision can be found in the Appendix.

Once PTO is granted, you should keep the level of training required under regular review and also ensure that the PTO holder's training remains up-to-date. If it has not been renewed one to two months before it expires, you will be notified by email.

## 7.3. Countersigning the application

All applications for PTO must be accompanied by a written statement of support from the sponsor, sent by email to [pto@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:pto@chichester.anglican.org). The statement must:

- confirm that you have discussed the application with the applicant and commend it (see entry interview at section 7.1 above or reviewing ministry at section 7.6 below); and
- state what level of safeguarding training is required

Please also include any information arising from your entry interview or review meeting which it would be useful for the Bishop or diocese to know, for example about any particular skills or experience that could support the mission of the Diocese of Chichester.

If you do not feel able to commend the application, please contact the PTO Administrator in confidence to explain why.

## 7.4. Statements of expectation

If the PTO holder intends to help out regularly in your parish, you should normally also agree a statement of mutual expectations with them. This can be done before or after PTO has been issued. A model form which can be adapted as appropriate is available [here](#). Please ensure a copy is sent to the PTO Administrator to be added to the PTO holder's blue file.

If the PTO holder intends to help out regularly in a different parish, it may be more appropriate for that incumbent or priest in charge to act as sponsor. Alternatively, their agreement to a statement of mutual expectations should be sought.

PTO clergy should not be regarded as an integral part of the ministry team in a benefice. The House of Bishop's guidance suggests that where a minister is an integral part of the team, it may be more appropriate for them to be given a licence, which must be time-limited and subject to an occupational health check in the case of clergy over the age of 70. This should only be the case in exceptional circumstances, and you should therefore discuss

this with the Diocesan Bishop if you think that the extent of the likely ministry would bring this into consideration.

Mutual expectations are not binding, and can be reviewed at any time. They should in particular be reviewed prior to an application for renewal of PTO. See section 7.6 below for more details.

### 7.5. Pastoral care

Sponsors carry the primary responsibility for pastoral care of PTO clergy, and are encouraged to be in regular contact with them. You and the PTO holder can seek support from the Chaplain for Retired Ministry and, in deaneries with significant numbers of retired clergy, local retired clergy officers.

Sponsors are encouraged to be alert to whether there are any issues or health conditions which may be exacerbated by the role of active ministry. Where there are any such conditions, they should take steps to recognise them and assist the PTO holder to exercise their ministry. Sponsors should have the confidence to discuss with the PTO holder whether active ministry remains right for them. This is an important part of our collective duty of care to our valued PTO clergy and helps ensure that those in ministry are being utilised appropriately and wisely.

The sponsor should also ensure that the Diocesan Bishop is kept informed about any issues or health problems, particularly where the PTO holder might require additional pastoral support, or where it might be necessary to consider withdrawing PTO.

### 7.6. Periodic reviews of ministry

As part of the responsibility of pastoral care, the sponsor should discuss the ministry carried out by the PTO holder periodically, perhaps annually, and review the statement of expectations whenever necessary. Please ensure that a copy of the statement of expectations is sent to the PTO Administrator for the blue file whenever it is revised. If the expectations change, it will be necessary to reconsider the level of safeguarding training required. Again, please ensure that the PTO Administrator is notified of any changes.

You may find it helpful to ask the PTO holder to complete a ministerial return setting out briefly the ministry they have undertaken to aid the discussion. A template is available [here](#).

Matters for discussion might include whether the PTO holder:

- has talents and capacity that are currently not being used;
- has become an integral part of the ministry team with regular duties in the parish, necessitating a discussion with the Diocesan Bishop;
- might be willing to carry out additional duties, either in the deanery or for the diocese, particularly if these are temporary and the commitment is not permanent;

- needs to consider varying, or reducing, what he or she is able to offer or whether a transition to retirement from active ministry should be considered, for example if he or she is in poor health
- has any particular training needs (including the level of safeguarding training required and whether it needs refreshing)
- is having to take a more active role in the parish during a vacancy and needs to be kept informed about the appointments process
- will need to apply for renewal shortly in order to continue exercising a ministry.

A review should always be undertaken prior to an application for renewal of PTO, to ensure that you are able to commend the application and to assess whether the level of safeguarding training required has changed.

## 8. Vacancies and other long term absences in a parish

When a parish goes into vacancy, or there is a period of authorised absence such as a sabbatical, maternity leave, or long term sickness, the Rural Dean will take over responsibility as sponsor.

The Rural Dean should review the statement of expectations. The PTO holder may take on more of a leadership role, but it is important to ensure that too much is not asked, and to guard against the PTO holder becoming acting incumbent. It should be remembered that a PTO holder is not a member of the PCC unless co-opted or specific authorisation from the Diocesan Bishop for the PTO holder to chair the PCC is obtained (see section 4.4).

Ordinarily, the PTO holder will need to undertake safeguarding Leadership (C2) training at this point if they have not already done so, and the Rural Dean should discuss this with the PTO holder, and then inform the PTO Administrator and the safeguarding team.

The Rural Dean as sequestrator will also assume primary responsibility for pastoral care, and should regularly check with the PTO holder that all is well, particularly if the vacancy or absence is protracted.

When a new incumbent or priest in charge is appointed, he or she will need to sensitively discuss the ministry to be carried out by the PTO holder, which may include reviewing the statement of expectations. Often the PTO holder will have worked hard in the parish during the vacancy, and the new incumbent or priest in charge and rural dean should acknowledge this.

## 9. Using PTO clergy

Clergy and churchwardens must always check that a member of clergy has a current licence or Permission to Officiate before inviting them to minister in their parish, by consulting the [National Clergy Register](#) in the first instance. Additionally, the diocesan database gives details of licensed clergy and clergy with PTO, including contact details unless they have requested otherwise. It will also show if there are any restrictions on the PTO holder's ministry.

To register for access to the database, click on the diocesan database link in the top right hand corner of the diocesan website, or contact [databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:databaseadministrator@chichester.anglican.org) for assistance.

The database will show the role of a minister with PTO as *Permission to Officiate – Diocese of Chichester* and the place as the benefice of their sponsoring incumbent. This does not mean that their PTO is limited to that place; by default PTO enables its holder to exercise ministry anywhere in the diocese. If a PTO has a restriction, the role will be shown as *Permission to Officiate [Restricted]* instead, with a comment giving details of the restriction. To find the comment, open the *Permission to Officiate [Restricted]* post and scroll down.

Lists of clergy with PTO are not published, to ensure that only up to date information is used. No announcements or departure notices are circulated so it is important that the database is checked regularly.

## Appendix: Safeguarding training needs assessment

### Summary

If you **will be** exercising a leadership role then you must have up to date Leadership training (formerly known as C2). You must also have undertaken Foundation (C1) training at some point, even if it has now expired.

If you **will not be** exercising a leadership role, then you must have up to date Foundation (C1) training<sup>18</sup>. In due course a specific PTO training pathway will replace the option of Foundation (C1) training, but this has not yet been rolled out in this diocese.

**PTO cannot be granted to clergy without in-date Foundation OR Leadership level (C1 or C2) training in place.**

Which level of training is needed should be decided jointly by the PTO applicant and their sponsor, depending on the level of leadership they will be exercising or be seen to be exercising. If the sponsor feels it is a marginal decision, they can consult the Rural Dean who can make a final decision. If the decision is disputed, the PTO applicant, the sponsor or the Rural Dean can contact the archdeacon, who will decide after consulting with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team as necessary.

### Is a PTO holder exercising significant leadership in a parish?

Leadership level training (formerly known as C2) is needed for those whose ministry is described by any of the below:

- Are ministering in a parish in vacancy or in circumstances such as the long-term sick leave of the incumbent
- Are named as being on the leadership team of the parish (eg on the parish website)
- Lead any ministries for children, young people, or vulnerable adults
- Have a particular congregational leadership eg in a multi-parish benefice / in regularly leading a specific Sunday service
- Are regularly undertaking significant pastoral work including home visiting, hospital visiting, nursing home visiting

### Examples

- Fr John is 79 and has PTO in St Swithun's benefice of 4 rural churches. He presides at Eucharistic services about 8 times a year across the 4 different churches. He presides more often when the incumbent is on holiday. He takes about 3 funerals a year. He does not attend ministry team meetings. His name and number are not

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<sup>18</sup> It is acceptable to have up to date Leadership training (C2) instead, but in that case you must also have undertaken Foundation (C1) training at some point, even if it has now expired.

listed in the Parish Magazine for 'who to contact'. He is not required to take Leadership level safeguarding training.

However at Christmas, Fr John's parish goes into vacancy. There are no other PTO priests to help, so he takes on leading 2 Sunday services and the midweek homegroup, as well as parish funerals. The Rural Dean reviews the position with Fr John, and they agree he does now need to take Leadership level safeguarding training.

- Trevor is recently retired. He was a very high profile priest in the diocese and held national-level portfolio work for the Church of England. He has said that he does not want to be named on the website of the parish and only wants to do sporadic services in the parish after such a demanding ministry over many decades. The level of influence Trevor holds in the parish is disproportionate to the modest quantity of ministry he undertakes. Trevor asks his incumbent, who asks the Rural Dean whether he needs Leadership Level Training. The Rural Dean decides that because of Trevor's previous roles, his influence, and the respect with which he is held and known across the community, it is appropriate for Trevor to take the training.