

Third Year Placements – for those who plan ahead

The placement aims to:

- Address any weaknesses or omissions in the primary training context – for example, occasional offices
- Offer the opportunity to explore future ministerial contexts – for example, chaplaincy
- Provide further preparation for posts of responsibility
- Ensure that curates are equipped to play their part in meeting future strategic needs of the diocese
- Provide a contained environment in which to revisit skills of theological reflection (and to write a reflective report)
- Hold up a mirror to the primary training context
- Generally broaden the curate's experience

Planning a placement

Placements will need to be planned carefully, in consultation between curate, training incumbent and the Head of Ministerial Development. They should usually take place in the Autumn of the third year of curacy. A placement may take place later with the agreement of the Head of Ministerial Development.

The placement may take a number of forms, but a 'standard form' would be that of a five week 'block' placement, in which the curate was completely released from commitments in their title parish. This would enable a thorough engagement with the placement context, and avoid unmanageable strains upon the curate.

Parishes, chaplaincies and other communities are blending physical and virtual presence so a placement may include both. All the aims of a placement listed above are still possible with a combination of physical and virtual presence.

Placements might take place:

- In another parish, within or beyond the diocese
- In a hospital, university, or other chaplaincy
- Overseas
- In an exchange with another minister
- In any other context which would allow the aims listed above to be fulfilled

Some SSMs are unable to do a block placement due to other responsibilities, in which case another pattern which reflects the amount of time they would normally give to ministry is possible. It is important that curates doing this kind of placement don't attempt to continue responsibilities in their primary context. The final year is a year of transition even if a curate is staying in their current context, and the curate's absence from the context for the placement helps both curate and context with the transition.

The essence of a successful placement is effective supervision within the placement – both in the creation of a programme, and providing good opportunity for reflection, both intellectual, emotional and spiritual - and this needs to be a vital part of considering possible placements.

The proposal

The initial proposal for a placement is likely to come from the curate, and will need to indicate:

- The proposed placement context
- The aim of the placement – what training or other needs is it intended to fulfil
- The content of the placement
- The proposed supervisor
- The dates envisaged
- Financial implications
- Implications for the training parish, and an indication of how these may be managed
- Anything else that will need to be borne in mind!

It would be helpful if a draft proposal is submitted to the Head of Ministerial Development at an early stage of exploration and a final version at least one month before the start of the placement. The Head of Ministerial Development may also be approached for advice, if a curate has an aim for a placement, but is unsure how it may be fulfilled. It may also be necessary, on occasion for the Head of Ministerial Development to suggest a placement in order to address an apparent training need.

A report on the placement will form part of the curate's portfolio.

The placement will clearly have a significant impact upon the curate's work within their training parish, and will need planning for with care. It may be possible, through an 'exchange' programme, to lighten the burden for a training parish during a placement. However, the purpose of a curacy is for training, and we would not expect that a curate would be unable to undertake a placement for reasons of workload in the training parish. The placement will need to be explained carefully to the PCC and members of the parish.

Curates who are part-time with a parish focus would normally be expected to commit a similar number of hours to the placement as they are accustomed to committing to their weekly ministry. Those who are self-supporting with a work-based focus (ie Ministers in Secular Employment) may not be able to undertake a placement in the same way as described here, but would be encouraged to explore the possibilities and opportunities available to them.

Locally deployable curates would need to ensure that a placement offered an appropriate context for them to exercise their particularly collaborative character of ordained ministry.

Hopefully placements will not normally carry major financial implications. Training parishes are not expected to contribute financially: allowable expenses (primarily travel) may be claimed from the IMD budget, within a limit of around £150 per person.

The Third Year Placement Supervisor's Report

Thank you for your help and support in having the curate on placement with you. I would be very grateful if you could write a brief report on your experience of them during the placement. This will help them with the evidence they need to provide to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the Learning Outcomes for a curate. Please discuss this report with the curate and show them what you have written – honest feedback helps us all develop.

Please respond to these questions (if it is a short placement, a sentence or two will probably be sufficient).

- 1 Work report (experience gained and activities undertaken - what was the candidate invited to observe, experience and do?)
- 2 (a) impressions given at outset
(b) impressions given at end of placement
- 3 Personal relations:
 - (a) ability to work in the framework of the (parish) team
 - (b) acceptability to (church) members and ability to form relationships (empathy but not over-involvement)
- 4 General ability: initiative, common-sense, powers of observation, etc.
- 5 Ability to understand situations, the general style and aims of ministry in the context.
- 6 Ability to relate theory to practice, i.e. to apply theological understanding to the placement experience, and vice versa.
- 7 Ability to set learning goals and progress in achieving these.
- 8 Ability to organise work, e.g. planning time (to include leisure, keeping appointments, recording efficiently, etc.)
- 9 Any particular gifts (e.g. teaching, leading worship, pastoral) which are becoming evident in the placement situation.
- 10 Attitude to authority and supervision, and relationship with supervisor (willingness to discuss work freely and not to conceal weaknesses nor minimise gifts, etc.)
- 11 Any particular difficulties that have arisen for the candidate, or candidate's family, in relation to the placement.
- 12 Overall assessment:

Impressions of candidate's progress during period and potential for future development. Please note any strengths and weaknesses not mentioned elsewhere.

