

Policy and Procedure for the appointment and commissioning of lay ministers to take Holy Communion to private and residential homes

Background

This policy and procedure applies to lay ministers who take Holy Communion to private homes, to residential homes and hospitals/hospices.

It is not concerned with those who assist at the altar during a Service of Holy Communion in Church, nor with those who are authorised to lead a Service of Public Worship with Communion by Extension.

This policy and procedure supersedes the letter from Bishop Tim Thornton to licensed diocesan clergy dated 1 June 2016.

Policy

The distribution of Holy Communion to those unable to attend services in Church is an important part of the pastoral ministry offered in our parishes. Any individual (lay or ordained) taking communion to a home or an institution is engaged in an intimate ministry to potentially vulnerable people. As well as the giving of communion, it is inevitable that pastoral conversations will take place, which can then lead to other pastoral matters arising.

It is therefore a requirement that all those involved in this ministry have a current Enhanced DBS check in place, and have completed the appropriate safeguarding training. In addition, lay ministers (e.g. Local Worship Leaders), who are not already authorised as Local Pastoral Ministers will be required to attend diocesan pastoral training. Those who are licensed as Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) will be required to demonstrate that they have attended relevant pastoral ministry training.

When recruiting new people to take on this important ministry, Safer Recruitment practices must be followed, and those to be authorised must be proposed by their PCC and supported by their Incumbent.

Procedure - Recruiting new people

1. The PCC identifies the need to recruit lay ministers to distribute communion to private homes, residential homes, hospitals or hospices.
2. A role description and person specification is developed (template - Appendix A) and congregation members are invited to register their interest, and/or the incumbent will encourage those with appropriate gifts to apply.
3. The Incumbent, the Lead Pastoral Minister (or equivalent) and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator will meet with those who have expressed interest and discuss with them the role and responsibilities, seeking to discern whether they have the appropriate skills and attitudes for the role.

Training

4. Those chosen for the role will be asked to complete the Local Pastoral Ministry (LPM) course plus the additional Home Communion session.

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5. If they are already authorised as a LPM or licensed as a Reader/LLM, they will be required to attend the additional Home Communion session or attend a training session with their Incumbent.
6. Those chosen will also be required to complete Safeguarding Training C2 Leadership and Domestic Abuse Awareness, and apply for an Enhanced DBS check.
7. Those who are already authorised as a LPM (or licensed as a Reader/LLM) will need to ensure that their Safeguarding training and DBS check are still current (i.e. within 3 years) and if not, they will need to complete the courses and apply for a new Enhanced DBS disclosure.

Authorisation

8. The Incumbent or PCC Secretary will be responsible for collating the evidence of Safeguarding and LPM training certificates or other evidence, together with the completed *Request for Authorisation/Renewal of Authorisation for those taking Communion to private and residential homes, hospitals and hospices form*, (Appendix B) and sending to the Lay Ministry Development Officer at Church House to request authorisation from the Bishop.
9. The Lay Ministry Development Officer will confirm that all required evidence is in place and will notify Lis Escop that an authorisation can be issued, by sending the completed Authorisation template (Appendix C - Template).
10. Following confirmation of approval from the Bishop, Lis Escop will electronically sign the Authorisation on behalf of the Bishop, and send it to the Lay Ministry Development Officer, keeping an electronic record on file.
11. The Lay Ministry Development Officer will send the authorisation on to the Incumbent or PCC Secretary for printing and display in the Church.
12. The Authorisation will be valid for 3 years from the date of issue.
13. The Lay Ministry Development Officer will update the individual's CMS record.

Renewal of authorisation

14. The Parish is responsible for applying for the renewal of the authorisation of their ministers, using the *Request for Authorisation/Renewal of Authorisation for those taking Communion to private and residential homes, hospitals and hospices form*. (Appendix B)
15. The Lay Ministry Development Officer and the Safeguarding Administrator will also be involved in the arrangements, ensuring that the required safeguarding training is completed and an Enhanced DBS check has been obtained.
16. Anyone choosing not to apply to renew their authorisation must notify their Incumbent and the PCC Secretary who should notify the Lay Ministry Development Officer. The Lay Ministry Development Officer will update the CMS accordingly. The person must not be permitted to continue to distribute Holy Communion.

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Record Keeping

Lis Escop will keep the signed Authorisation certificate as an electronic file. The diocesan CMS system will be kept up to date by the Lay Ministry Development Officer.

Parishes must maintain a record of all visits to private homes, residential homes, hospitals and hospices for the purpose of distributing Holy Communion. The record should note the date of the visit, the venue and the name(s) of the person/people visited and the name(s) of the ministers. The record could simply be an entry in the Register of Services held in the church from which the Sacrament has been shared, provided that it includes all of the information above.

Accountability and Supervision

Local Pastoral Ministers, Readers/LLMs and those authorised to distribute Holy Communion to private homes, residential homes, hospitals and hospices, are accountable to their Incumbent. They should receive regular pastoral supervision on either a 1-2-1 basis, or as a member of a small group.

Pastoral Supervision provides an opportunity for ministers to reflect on their ministry, and on their response to it; it also provides a safe space where practice (especially Safeguarding practice) can be reviewed, challenged and improved.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Approved by Episcopal College

May 2023

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Appendix A

Role Description and Person Specification

Preamble

The distribution of Holy Communion to those unable to attend services in Church is an important part of the pastoral ministry offered in our parishes. It is therefore important that the people who are authorised to do this have been selected by their PCC and Incumbent, appropriately trained, supported and supervised.

This document is intended to provide a template Role Description and Person Specification for PCCs to use when deciding to recruit volunteers to this role.

Role description

At the request of, and under the guidance of the Incumbent (or Rural Dean):

- take Holy Communion to those unable to attend church in person, this could be to a private home, a residential home, a hospital or hospice.
- lead the Service, using only the authorised texts and liturgy
- enable those present to join in as much as they are able and want to
- work with others engaged in this ministry and/or the pastoral support of people in the parish
- be sensitive to the needs of those being visited, and those nearby in residential homes, hospitals and hospices
- carry a Truro Diocese issued ID card
- attend Pastoral team meetings
- abide by all requests made by those in authority at the venues being visited
- record all visits made for the purpose of distributing Holy Communion. The record should note the date of the visit, the venue and the name(s) of the person/people visited and the name(s) of the ministers. This information needs to be stored confidentially within GDPR guidelines. The record could simply be an entry in the Register of Services held in the church from which the Sacrament has been shared, provided that it includes all of the information listed above
- be mindful at all times of the need to keep everyone safe, especially those who are vulnerable
- report and record (using the appropriate form) all safeguarding concerns in accordance with the Parish/Benefice Safeguarding policy
- alert the incumbent of any concerns or spiritual needs
- Carry out risk assessment prior to visiting and follow any guidelines established
- Follow the parish/diocesan Lone Working policy
- engage in regular supervision (121 or group) dependent on context
- Renew and update training (including Safeguarding) and ensure you have a valid enhanced DBS check

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Person Specification

Any individual (lay or ordained) taking communion to a home or an institution is engaged in an intimate ministry to potentially vulnerable people. As well as the giving of communion, it is inevitable that pastoral conversations will take place, which can then lead to other pastoral matters arising.

It is therefore a requirement that all those involved in this ministry have a current Enhanced DBS check in place, and have completed the appropriate safeguarding training. In addition, lay ministers (e.g. Local Worship Leaders), who are not already authorised as Local Pastoral Ministers will be required to attend diocesan pastoral training (Key Skills). Those who are licensed as Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) will be required to demonstrate that they have attended relevant pastoral ministry training.

Personal Qualities required for this role:

- A person of prayer and faith, a disciple of Christ
- A regular worshipping member of the church community
- A good listener, kind and gentle
- Able to lead worship with integrity and wisdom
- A team player, willing to work with others
- A demonstrably deep commitment to excellent Safeguarding practice
- Sensitive to complex situations and needs, and ready to ask for help from others
- Committed to a high level of accountability
- Ready to continually learn and develop

Reimbursement of expenses:

This is an unpaid voluntary role but travel expenses and any other expenses incurred whilst undertaking the role and necessary to it, will be reimbursed by the PCC.

Appendix B

Request for Authorisation/Renewal of Authorisation for those taking Communion to private and residential homes, hospitals and hospices form

To be completed by the applicant

I, *(insert full name in capitals)*

of the Parish(es)/Benefice/Cluster of

(insert full names of parishes/benefice/cluster)

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apply for authorisation/renewal of authorisation to take Communion to private and residential homes, hospitals and hospices in the parish(es)/benefices/clusters named above.

Signed:

Dated:

To be completed by the Incumbent/Priest in Charge

I, *(insert name in capitals)*

the incumbent of the Benefice/Parish(es)/Cluster of

(insert full name of parishes/benefice/cluster)

support *(insert name of the applicant)* in their application.

I confirm that I have discussed this application with the above named person and we have agreed the arrangements under which this ministry will be undertaken. I wish *(insert name)* to be able to take Communion to those in private and residential homes, hospitals and hospices in this parish/benefice/cluster and request that authorisation be given/renewed for a period of three years.

Signed:

Dated:

To be completed by the PCC Secretary *(in the case of multi-parish benefices or clusters, only the Secretary of the PCC in which the minister is on the Electoral Role needs to sign)*.

The PCCs of *(insert name of parish(es)/benefice/cluster)*

met on *(insert meeting date(s))* and passed a motion to support the application by *(insert name)* for the renewal of their authorisation for a period of three years.

Signed:

Date:

Please return the completed form to sarah.welply@truro.anglican.org (scanned copies are acceptable), or by post to Church House, Truro.

Safeguarding Training & DBS Check

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|---|--|
| Date of Enhanced DBS Check | |
| Date of Safeguarding C2 Leadership Training | |
| Date of Domestic Abuse Awareness Training | |

Confirmation that Authorisation can be given:

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Signed:

Date:

Name:

Role: Lay Ministry Development Officer

Appendix C

Authorisation Template

I, Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, Bishop of Truro confirm that

(insert full name in capitals)

of the Parish(es)/Benefice/Cluster of

(insert full names of parishes/benefice/cluster)

is authorised to take Communion to private and residential homes, hospitals and hospices in the parish(es)/benefices/clusters named above.

This authorisation is valid for 3 years from the date below, provided that the individual continues to have the confidence of their Incumbent and the PCC(s). It may be withdrawn (at my discretion) at any time (either temporarily or permanently) in the event that an allegation is made against the individual concerned, or there is any other cause for concern.

Signed:

Dated:

**Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen
Bishop of Truro**