



## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Council for Christian Unity

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# Authorisation

*How dioceses can authorise ministers of other churches for work in single-congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships*

In general the Church of England offers full interchangeability of ministries to churches with which it is in communion (see leaflet A-1). Since the ministers concerned will usually be from overseas, The Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 will apply.

Dioceses can also authorise ministers of churches designated under the Ecumenical Relations Measure (1987) – ‘participating churches’ (again see leaflet A-1) - to have sole ministerial responsibility in Local Ecumenical Partnerships subject to certain conditions and limitations.

## A The status of ministers from a participating church

### 1. Ministry of word and sacrament

Canon B44.4 (1) provides for a degree of shared ministry without implying full interchangeability of ministries – see Ecumenical Relations, Canons B43 and B44 Code of Practice, paragraph 32.

By this Canon, the bishop may, by written instrument,

*c) authorise ministers of any other participating church with the good-will of the persons concerned to baptise in a place of worship of the Church of England in that area in accordance with a rite authorised by any participating church;*

*d) make provision for the holding in that area of joint services with any other participating church, including services of baptism and confirmation;*

*f) authorise the holding, in a place of worship of the Church of England in that area, of services of Holy Communion presided over by a minister of any other participating church*

### 2. The cure of souls and pastoral care

The bishop may, by letter to the minister of the other church, declare that person to be engaged in the cure of souls and to have the pastoral care of the area served by the Local Ecumenical Partnership. The basis for this lies in the 1953 Diocesan Stipends Measure Section 5.1, which states that monies from the Diocesan Stipends fund may be applied to the stipend of ...

*“other persons who are declared by the bishop to be engaged in the cure of souls within the diocese.”*

### 3. Deanery Chapter and Synod

The minister may be invited to take part as an ecumenical observer in both Deanery Chapter and Synod. Although a minister of another church could legally join a Church Electoral Roll and stand for election to Synod as a lay person, this would not be appropriate to express the minister’s status within the LEP.

## B Continuing Anglican Requirements

### 1. Chairmanship of meetings:

An Ecumenical Church Council for a single-congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership, if properly constituted and approved by the Diocesan Pastoral Committee, will have been designed to cover the requirements of the Church Representation Rules, which continue to apply in any LEP where the Church of England is a partner. These state that, *if there is no incumbent* (see below under **C: The Pastoral Framework**), the Vice Chairman of the PCC should preside at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and at the four required meetings of the Parochial Church Council each year. The Chairman of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the appointment of churchwardens is chosen by the meeting.

### 2. Marriages

- Only a Church of England priest or bishop may solemnise Holy Matrimony according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.
- If the worship centre for the Local Ecumenical Partnership is not also a parish church, residents have the right to have a Church of England wedding in an adjoining parish church.
- A building where there is a Sharing Agreement between the Church of England and another church may be *both* licensed by the bishop for Church of England marriages *and* registered (under the 1949 Marriage Act) for marriages by an authorised person of another church.

### 3. Holy Communion

The bishop must ensure that a Church of England service of Holy Communion, celebrated by a priest whose orders are “recognised and accepted”... *“shall be celebrated at least on Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Easter Day, Ascension Day and Pentecost.”* (Canon B44.5)

Where the LEP is part of a parish (see C: The Pastoral Framework), it is generally accepted as sufficient if Church of England services taking place elsewhere in the parish are advertised in the LEP.

#### 4. Other Anglican Worship

Canon B44.5 also requires the bishop to ensure that Church of England worship takes place “with reasonable frequency” in the LEP. Canon B43 (1) provides for a minister or lay person of another church to lead Morning or Evening Prayer, to read scripture or to preach.

## C The Pastoral Framework

One of the following pastoral arrangements will almost certainly need to be put in place when a single-congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership is established, to facilitate the continued availability of Anglican ministry as required by law:

1. The LEP is a Team Ministry or a District within it. Anglican ministry is then available from other members of the team.
2. The LEP is part of a Group Ministry. An incumbent from elsewhere in the group provides the Anglican ministry.
3. The area served by the LEP is designated a Conventional District. Arrangements for Anglican ministry form part of the formal designation.
4. The LEP is part of a United Benefice including several parishes.
5. Presentation to the benefice is suspended. Appointing a minister from another church as the sole resident minister can be regarded as part of ongoing pastoral re-organisation (Pastoral Measure 1983, S.67). Providing necessary Anglican ministry is then the responsibility of the churchwardens and Rural Dean jointly.
6. The benefice is held nominally by a priest holding another appointment – who also provides the required Anglican ministry in the LEP.

## D Finance etc

### 1. Terms of appointment

The following will need to be agreed at the outset by the Diocesan Board of Finance in negotiation with partner churches through the Sponsoring Body – and incorporated as a schedule to the constitution of the LEP:

- a) *Procedures for making ministerial appointments.* The constitution for the LEP will often make provision for a “staffing consultative group” which will agree policy and procedures.
- b) *Length of service and rotation of ministers from each partner church.* Appointments are often for a specified term of years, each church taking turns to

provide the minister. Other patterns are however negotiable.

- c) *Arrangements for payment of stipend etc.* The church which supplies the minister will remain responsible for paying the minister according to its own denominational conditions of employment.
- d) *Arrangements for making contributions to the costs of ministry (stipends etc).* Agreement needs to be made through the Sponsoring Body. Sometimes the church which supplies the minister will meet the costs. Alternatively all participating churches will contribute a fixed proportion of the costs and transfer it to the church whose minister is currently in post. Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches make these payments through central agencies. Contributions from Baptists and other churches of congregational polity will need to come from the local church
- e) *Sourcing ministry costs within the Church of England.* If the bishop declares the minister of another church to be engaged in the cure of souls, payments can be made from the Diocesan Stipends Fund. (See A.2 above)

### 2. Housing

*See separate leaflet C~2 Housing*

### 3. Contributions by the LEP to denominational funds and working expenses

Agreement will be needed on the following:

- Direct contributions to the minister’s stipend etc – normally only applicable when the LEP includes Baptist partners or churches of a similar polity (see D.1 (d) above).
- A formula for assessing LEP contributions to general denominational funds. *See separate leaflet C~3 Finance.*
- How the minister’s proportion of funeral and other fees should be a contribution to stipend.
- The basis for re-imbursing parochial working expenses. These usually come direct from the LEP.