**Code of Good Ministerial Practice for Licenced Lay Ministers (LLM) in Ely Diocese**

1. **Purpose** 
   1. The purpose of this Code of Ministerial Practice for LLMs is to set clear and

consistent guidelines, expected behaviours, and standards of good practice, for LLMs and those supporting them in their parish settings across the Diocese.

1. **Scope**

2.1 This Code of Ministerial Practice applies to LLMs holding a Bishop’s licence, and LLMs in training.

2.2 We refer to The Bishops’ Regulations for Reader Ministry which are obtainable through the Central Reader Council, but we note that these are currently under review. We also refer to Canon E5, and E6 and E7. These can be found in a separate Document, ‘Canons Relating to the Licence of Readers/LLMs.’

2.3 This document also refers to the **‘Resolving a Complaint Involving an LLM - The Initial Process’,** The **‘LLM Grievance Procedure’** and the **‘LLM Disciplinary Process.’** These can be found at <https://www.elydiocese.org/church-roles/llms/>

1. **Introduction**

3.1 The Ministry of the Church of England in the Diocese of Ely involves a great number of people, both lay and ordained. Many Christians respond to the call to serve God and people through the Church. LLMs have a publicly recognised ministry and their licences are recognised at the national and the local level.

3.2 The call to ministry is first and foremost a call to the discipleship and the development of that discipleship in the disciplines of prayer, worship, and Bible study, and the giving of time and space to the discernment of the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

3.3 LLMs are pastors, teachers, spiritual guides and representatives of the faith and are in a position of trust in their relationships with all in their communities.

3.4 It is important that LLMs should remain mindful at all times of the authority and responsibility that go with their Office; LLMs work collaboratively with others in ministry. They are called to be servants of Christ, who is servant of all.

1. **Spiritual life** 
   1. LLMs should recognise the importance of their own devotional life as the foundation

of Christian ministry. Spiritual health and discernment can be facilitated by sharing the journey of faith with another person or a team. In the Diocese of Ely, all LLMs are encouraged to engage with a Spiritual Director, or some other team or spiritual guide. More information can be found by following this link; <https://www.elydiocese.org/spiritual-accompaniment--sharing-the-journey.php>

4.2 LLMs should be people of prayer. They should have a daily discipline of prayer and be faithful in attending Sunday worship.

4.3 LLMs should model the holiness and active discipleship to which all Christ’s people are called by their baptism. They should love God and love their neighbour.

4.4 LLMs must remember that whatever their personal circumstances, protected time for family, friends, recreation and relaxation is essential. These are part of God’s calling and should be taken as seriously as their ministry.

**5. Ely Diocese Requirements from LLM**

5.1 Ely Diocese has some specific requirements from all LLMs. Firstly, that they have a signed working agreement with their Incumbent, or in the case of a vacancy, the Rural Dean, or in the case of a chaplaincy role, their supervisor or other line manager.

5.2 Secondly, that they attend the Annual Gathering which takes place each year, usually in May.

5.3 Thirdly, LLMs are required to attend the Annual Licensing Service. At this service new LLMs are Licensed and those LLMs who have moved into the Diocese have their Licences transferred and are welcomed into the Diocese. If you cannot attend for any reason, then you are required to send apologies to the Diocesan Director of Lay Ministry (DDLM)

5.4 Fourthly, they are required to take part in the Triennial Service, which takes place every three years. LLMs are expected to prepare for this both spiritually, and by renewing their Working Agreement with their Incumbent. LLMs are expected to return their Licence to the Bishop before this service. The Licence is signed by the Bishop and given back to the LLM after the LLM has renewed their commitment to LLM ministry, and once they have completed all the Safeguarding Checks and Training.

5.5 Each year, LLMs are also required to fill in the new Statistical Return form and to carry out an Annual Review of their ministry. The template forms for these can be found here: <https://www.elydiocese.org/church-roles/llms/>. This preparation is intended to be helpful before they discuss the annual review or annual renewal of their Working Agreement.

5.6 LLMs are expected to have regular supervision with their Incumbent or a Rural Dean in a vacancy. Incumbents or Rural Deans may on occasion delegate this responsibility to another trusted leader.

1. **Standards of Behaviour**

6.1 LLMs are reminded that they are required to uphold the highest standards of behaviour, their role is to model the Church as the Body of Christ.

6.2 LLMs are responsible for their continuing training and skill development and for ensuring that their Continuing Ministerial Development is pursued conscientiously and in line with Diocesan policy. See the website for more information about this. elydiocese.org/church-roles/parish-clergy/continuing-ministerial-development/

The Diocese provides regular information about training opportunities and ways to access the Bishop’s Study Days (Information about this can be found in the regular weekly mailing elydiocese.org/subscribe-to-the-ministry-newsletter.php

6.3 LLMs should conduct themselves appropriately in situations where pastoral advice is sought or given. They should act with sensitivity, with competence and in an ethical manner in all pastoral situations.

6.4 LLMs should ensure that their personal safety is considered and in line with Diocesan Policy. [Parish Violence and Aggression Policy Mar 2023 v1](https://www.elydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/parish-violence-and-aggression-policy-mar-2023-v1.docx) and [EDBF Dignity and Respect Policy - February 2021](https://www.elydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/edbf-dignity-and-respect-policy---february-2021.pdf)  There are further policies and risk assessments to be found here. https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-templates-resources/

6.5 LLMs are not expected to solve every problem presented to them, an important role is to signpost people to the Incumbent or to other relevant agencies.

1. **Safeguarding**

7.1 This **Code of Good Ministerial Practice** is explicitly subject to the requirements of the Church of England’s safeguarding policy for children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to all additional or supplementary diocesan policies, protocols and guidance.

7.2 LLMs need to ensure that their Safeguarding checks and training are up to date. LLMs can check this information by contacting Operations Support Team Administrator, Sophie Smith [**sophie.smith@elydiocese.org**](mailto:sophie.smith@elydiocese.org)or you can find out the information yourself by logging onto the Church of England Safeguarding Portal here. **https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/**

7.3 LLMs have a responsibility to support a culture within the Church of England which promotes safety and prevents harm for those who take part in worship and activities undertaken.

7.4 All LLMs have a responsibility to familiarise themselves and to keep up to date with diocesan safeguarding policies, protocols and guidance, and to promote adherence to these within the congregations where they minister.

1. **Preaching and Teaching**

8.1 LLMs should aspire to the highest standards of preaching and teaching. Their calling comes from Christ himself. They are to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom and to draw all people to Christ.

8.2 LLMs must set aside adequate time for reflection on, and preparation of, sermons and other teaching materials and resources.

8.3 LLMs are encouraged to give the opportunity to others to respond critically to the material they impart (whether implicit or overt) and to engage with criticism appropriately.

8.4 LLMs should be prepared to be held accountable for what they teach and preach and to exercise sensitivity regarding the occasions and settings upon which they do it. They should be particularly careful in handling material that may be deemed radical, reactionary, or liable to give offence. Regular supervision should consider preaching as well as other aspects of ministry. It will be appropriate for the Incumbent to reflect on sermons with the LLM. Further support can be found by contacting the DDLM or warden of LLMs, or their area sub warden.

1. **Leading Worship** 
   1. LLMs should aspire to the highest standards in leading worship,

planning with great care to be worthy of God and his people.

* 1. Worship should be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Canons of

the Church of England and the Bishop of the Diocese. You can find information about this in Section B here: https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england/section-b#b9

* 1. LLMs have the role, with their Incumbent, to encourage others to share in the

worship and to nurture others in this ministry.

* 1. LLM will lead worship in collaboration with others. They should be sensitive at

all times to the needs of the community and the faith of the church.

LLMs will agree with the Incumbent on what is appropriate attire for the services they are involved in. LLMs will comply with the local agreed practice and expectation.

1. **Pastoral Care** 
   1. LLMs will be involved in pastoral care in their parish, and they will also offer

pastoral care to their Incumbent.

10.2 LLMs should act with sensitivity, competence, and in an ethical fashion, in all pastoral situations, with an awareness of the needs of those in their care, remaining vigilant to their own professional boundaries and to legal requirements. They have a duty to make themselves familiar with the Parish, Diocesan and National Safeguarding policies for children and vulnerable adults. **elydiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies-guidance-and-procedures/**

10.3 In determining boundaries (physical, emotional and psychological), LLMs should clarify with those in their care what help is being requested, the range of support that they are able to give, what is confidential and what is not, and remain vigilant to potential manipulation. They should be mindful of possible compromise in the pastoral relationship.

10.4 LLMs should be very mindful of their role in pastoral care, which they must not confuse with the professional skills of other professionals. It is appropriate to sign people to others alongside the pastoral care in the parish. LLMs should ensure that they have in place appropriate supervision.

10.5 With their Incumbent, LLMs should discern the right time to bring different phases of pastoral relationships to appropriate conclusions, thus encouraging maturity and growth.

10.6 LLMs should be mindful of the appropriate venues, timing and space, for meetings. This protects the well-being of all the people involved in pastoral care. They should be aware of areas of sensitivity and take care to undertake risk assessments. LLMs should:

• avoid arrangements for visiting someone alone, whether it is in the Care-seeker’s home, or the LLM’s, especially late at night, or where unavoidable take appropriate steps to minimise risks.

• ensure that there are proper safeguards in place where there is potential for violence or risk to self and others

• think about what to wear.

• consider whether it is appropriate to have another person alongside.

10.7 LLMs should be always mindful of their actions/body language and be especially aware of behaviour which could be misinterpreted however well intentioned. They should be aware of Diocese and National Safeguarding Policies. **elydiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies-guidance-and-procedures/**

10.8 LLMs should be mindful at all times of their own safety, and that of those they are meeting/visiting. They should undertake a risk assessment for the pastoral care that they undertake.

10.9 LLMs can access Diocese Counselling Services. Contact the Interim Director of Mission and Ministry, Peter Leech. peter.leech@elydiocese.org

10.10 LLMs will work with the Church Wardens to make sure that the risk assessments for activities and services that they are involved with, are undertaken. They will check that these are in place and up to date. https://www.elydiocese.org/department/risk-assessments.php

10.11 LLMs should seek immediate professional support and advice from their Incumbent, Area Sub-Warden or Warden of Readers as a matter of urgency whenever a pastoral breakdown or pastoral safeguarding concern is raised, or they feel out of their depth.

10.12 When the National Church has produced Pastoral Guidance on any matter, the LLMs, Incumbents and ministry team will comply with them.

1. **Professional Relationships, Responsibilities & Boundaries**

11.1 LLMs are an important part of local collaborative ministry arrangements, in which they must work with colleagues, lay and ordained, to develop a growing relationship through shared responsibilities. Within this environment all ministry should be affirmed, and all talents and skills should be acknowledged and nurtured.

11.2 The relationship between a LLM and their Incumbent is key. LLMs and Incumbents should work together to ensure that there is an appropriately negotiated working agreement in place from the outset of a working relationship and that there is time given to supervision. Personal space and relationships should be protected and recognised as part of God’s calling and taken seriously as part of ministerial responsibilities. The Working Agreement should be reviewed every year. The Area Sub-Warden may be involved, if necessary, in the negotiation of this agreement.

11.3 In situations where the LLM is not ministering in a parish, they will have a supervisor who carries out the responsibility of the Incumbent above (11.2). Again, the Area Sub-Warden may be invited to be involved in discussions around the working agreement.

11.4 Ely Diocese no longer grants LLMs permission to officiate (PTO). LLMs can continue with their active Licensed ministry into their 70s and 80s as long as they are willing and able to do so. When an LLM reaches the age of 80, it is important that they do not feel that they are of no further use. If they so wish, they can retire and enjoy time to rest. However, many LLMs still feel able and may wish to continue active ministry. The Warden will contact the LLM six months before their 80th birthday to review with them and their Incumbent, that what they are being asked to do is appropriate to their current circumstances, or to ascertain whether they are ready to become Emeritus. This will be reviewed annually. If someone wishes to retire and take the Emeritus Status, then they can do so.

11.5 LLMs and Incumbents should meet regularly for support, encouragement and professional development as well as their regular supervision.

11.6 Where relationships become strained, or where difficulties become apparent, LLMs, in liaison with their Incumbents, should take responsibility for ensuring that the Warden of Readers is aware. The LLM will work with the Warden of LLMs to resolve the issues. The Director of Lay Ministry in the Diocese, along with the Interim Director of Mission & Ministry may be involved to settle the issues if this is possible. If there are legal or disciplinary matters identified, then the matter will be taken further to the Bishop and The Registrar of the Diocese. For more information about making a complaint, see the ‘Resolving a Complaint Involving an LLM’ Initial Process’. This is the first and less formal process to address a complaint. See also the ‘**Summary of Resolving a Complaint Involving an LLM’** document

11.7 LLMs should be mindful at all times of their professional integrity when dealing with issues of finance and financial resources. They should not infringe the boundaries between church finance and personal money, and they should never seek to receive any personal advantage or gain from a pastoral situation.

11.8 When an LLM is invited to conduct any service, including funerals in Church or Crematorium, or interring ashes or officiating at a burial, for one of the Incumbent’s parishioners, or in another benefice, the LLM will first contact the Incumbent where the parishioner lived (or the Rural Dean in the case of a vacancy) and have their agreement to go ahead.

11.9 LLMs will not undertake any service or any kind in another Diocese without getting the permission of the Bishop of that Diocese. They will need to know that the LLM is safe to work in their Diocese, so give as much time as possible. You may find it helpful to contact the local Incumbent to get help with this.

11.10 LLMs can claim a proportion of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) fee for certain services that they are invited to take. The information about the fee can be found in the Parochial Fee Letter on the Diocesan Website which is updated each year. [**https://www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/finance/parochial-fees/**](https://www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/finance/parochial-fees/) All fees should in the first instance be paid to the relevant parish/benefice. It is the responsibility of the parish/benefice to make the necessary payments.

1. **Confidentiality** 
   1. Appropriate confidentiality is of great importance at all times to develop and maintain trust in pastoral relationships. LLMs should make it clear at the outset of pastoral conversations that they may need to share confidences with their Incumbent. This should be made clear as soon as possible in the pastoral relationship, and before any disclosure is made.

12.2 LLMs will need to exercise careful judgement about when a confidence raises clear concerns and when their role may be compromised – especially remaining vigilant to the legal requirements for disclosure in extreme circumstances, particularly where the safety of children or vulnerable adults is concerned. [**https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding.php**](https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding.php)

12.3 LLMs may not hear confessions or give absolutions.

1. **Vacancies**

13.1 During a vacancy LLMs often agree to undertake duties over and above their normal responsibilities; this is much appreciated and valued by the Diocese, and by parishes and local settings, as it allows continuity of parish life.

13.2It is important before any vacancy for a LLM to agree with their Church Wardens and Rural Dean what level of support and (additional) commitment the LLM can offer.

13.3 LLMs in consultation with the Rural Dean and Archdeacon, should actively participate in the recruitment and selection process of a new Incumbent (up to, but not usually including, the formal interview).

13.4 Where a LLM’s licence is to come up for renewal during a vacancy, the Rural Dean will take the role of the Incumbent in anything that needs to be undertaken such as working through the working agreement, and making sure that the PCC is up to date with this agreement.

13.5 When a new Incumbent or other local arrangement changes, after an appropriate settling in period, it is important that there is a revisiting of the Working Agreement and the Licensing arrangements.

13.6 When an LLM is transferred into the Diocese they will have a six-month settling in period before they have a conversation with the Incumbent and the PCC in order to be Licensed in the Diocese. A conversation with the Warden of LLMs will need to take place. During these six months the incoming LLM should make themselves known to the Incumbent, who will welcome them and offer them support and guide them through the process of being Licensed in Ely Diocese.

1. **Administration**

14.1 LLMs should provide timely and appropriate responses to paperwork and correspondence.

14.2 LLMs should familiarise themselves with the Parish General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and act accordingly.

14.3 Licences are renewed every three years, following a review by Incumbent and LLM together.

**15. Parish Financial Responsibilities**

15.1 The Parish is encouraged to reimburse their LLM for expenses such as robes, retreats and travel expenses, stationery and, where possible, to contribute to books and resources.

**16 Diocesan Support**

16.1 LLMs are encouraged to contact their Incumbent and Area Sub Warden when they are unwell or experiencing health or other worries.

16.2 In some circumstances, the Incumbent or Area Sub Warden may consult the Warden of LLMs as some external support and advice might be available and helpful.

16.3 The ‘LLM Grievance Procedure’ and ‘The LLM Disciplinary Process’ are available to ensure that areas of concern, or other issues, are dealt with consistently, fairly, and with compassion, ensuring due process and the right of appeal. You can find these on the Diocese of Ely website, LLM page [elydiocese.org/church-roles/llms/](https://www.elydiocese.org/church-roles/llms/)

**Code of Good Ministerial Practice updated May 2024**

Signed: Date:

LLM

Incumbent

Return to Diocesan Director of Lay Ministry: Julie.norris@elyDiocese.org