

Further Guidance on fees for clergy taking regular services during a vacancy

Context:

With the growth of multi parish benefices and the difficulties in recruiting new incumbents to some posts, a greater workload is falling on retired clergy, SSOM and LLMs than has hitherto been the case. This guidance seeks to recompense these ministers for the additional work they are called to offer to enable a benefice to function through a vacancy. It follows the principle that a worker deserves their pay. They may decline to ask for payment, but payment should be offered.

Guidance:

These guidelines enlarge the provisions made in Para 4 of **Running a parish during an Interregnum - Finance Guidance**.

A fee may be paid to retired clergy, LLMs and occasionally SSOM clergy provided:

1. The pattern of services during the vacancy in the benefice has been agreed between Rural Dean and Archdeacon. The assumption will be that service patterns continue as before the vacancy with payments as necessary, except where a service is routinely attended by less than 10 people. Services with fewer than 10 people will be assumed to be led by local lay people (e.g. ALMs or Churchwardens).
2. If services that are usually attended by fewer than 10 people continue, no fees will be paid to those who lead them. Clergy & LLMs should be informed of this before being asked to lead such services.
3. Retired clergy whose PTO is held under the incumbent of a benefice that is vacant may claim for services in that benefice at which they lead & preach above the level of services that they used to take before the vacancy in that benefice. Each retired clergy should agree with the Rural Dean the baseline of services where they won't receive a fee, and then they may charge a fee for additional services.
4. LLMs licenced to another benefice or licenced to a benefice that is larger than 4 parishes may also be paid a fee for services above the level of services that they used to take before the vacancy in that benefice.
5. SSOM clergy would not usually receive a fee for services (other than Life Events); however, they may be authorised to claim a fee by the Archdeacon, where ministry needs require. This will be by written agreement.
6. Retired clergy whose PTO is held under the incumbent of another benefice are entitled to claim the fee for any service that they take.
7. They may claim the standard fee for those services (£60 per service in 2026) according to the procedure in the document: **Running a parish during an Interregnum - Finance Guidance**
8. Travel expenses should be offered to all service leaders by the parish where the service takes place. They may be reclaimed from the Diocese via the claim form.

This policy was agreed by Finance Committee on 23 October 2025.

The provisions it makes are not retrospective.