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**Self-Supporting Ordained Ministers (SSOM)**

A Pattern of Living:

Working and Learning Agreement Form

January 2023

**ENGAGE – GROW – DEEPEN**

Diocese of Ely

# Introduction

Incumbents working with a Self-Supporting Ordained Ministers (SSOMs) who holds a licence from the Bishop are required to draw up a working agreement in consultation with the SSOM.

Working agreements are intended to establish:

* how incumbents will share ministerial responsibility with the SSOM and other members of the local ministry teams
* how SSOMs may exercise their particular ministerial skills
* the SSOM’s working pattern, taking into account the amount of time being offered in the light of personal, family or work circumstances.

Working agreements aim to provide a covenanted framework that is open and negotiated, so as to give confidence and clarity about the boundaries within which incumbents and SSOMs may find the freedom to explore, value and develop their ministries together. Working agreements should be reviewed annually and take account of changing situations, personal circumstances and developing experience.

Since SSOMs may be deployed at some distance from their homes, the consequences of this need to be taken into account. For instance, an SSOM’s family may continue to worship in their ‘home’ church.

If the SSOM also exercises an intentional ministry in secular employment (MSE), it is important that the balance of priority between work and parish commitments is mutually clarified.

It will terminate if there is a change of incumbent or if the SSOM is deployed elsewhere, resigns, or retires (at or before the age of 70). On retirement, the SSOM (with the support of their incumbent) may apply to the Bishop for Permission to Officiate.

The Bishop and his Senior Staff and Rural Deans have the pastoral care of all clergy, including SSOMs. In addition the Bishop appoints an Adviser for Self-Supporting Ministry.

# Definitions for this document

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| **Self-Supporting Ordained Minister (SSOM)** | Self-Supporting Ordained Ministers (SSOMs) are licensed clergy not in receipt of a stipend, and retired clergy with PTO who have previously been SSOM. Some House for Duty clergy, chaplains, those working outside parochial ministry and others not in receipt of a full stipend also consider themselves to be SSOM. |
| **Incumbent** | Local lead for the parish or benefice location of ministry. This may be an Incumbent, Priest in Charge, Church Warden during a vacancy, the nominated Local Lead for the parish or an approved trusted person (agreed with the Bishop’s Advisor for SSOMs). |

This document can be found on the Diocesan website at: <https://www.elydiocese.org/church-roles/parish-clergy/ssom/> 1. Location and focus of ministry

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| **Period of Agreement:** | **From:** | **To:** |
| **Name of Self-supporting ordained minister:** |  | |
| **Email:** |  | |
| **Mobile phone:** |  | |
| **Incumbent:** |  | |

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| **Benefice, team, parish, or other place of Licence:** |  |
| **Specific areas of ministry focus:** |  |
| **SSOM title in location** |  |

**Other areas of work**

The ministry of licensed SSOMs embraces many different contexts alongside parish ministry. These may include voluntary or paid, full or part time ‘secular’ work. The range of an SSOM’s commitments should be briefly noted here.

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| **Description of other full or part-time, voluntary or paid ‘secular’ or other ministerial work** |  |

Incumbents are encouraged to take an interest in what the SSOM does in their places of work and elsewhere and support them in their ministry; and SSOMs to make available their ministry experience in other contexts.

SSOMs are asked to consider whether, how and to what extent they:

* expect to be able to express their vocation and role as ordained Christians in their other areas of work
* might hope to reflect their other working experience in their parish ministry.

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| **Expression of vocation within other areas of work**  **Diocesan involvement:** |
| **Reflection within parish ministry of other areas of working experience** |

SSOMs in full or part-time employment are encouraged to discuss their role as an ordained minister in the workplace with their employer.

# 2. Working Pattern

The self-supporting ordained minister’s time spend on parochial duties will include time for leading worship, taking occasional offices (including preparation and follow up), meetings, reading, prayer and sermon preparation.

Time spent within the parish must take account of special responsibilities and commitments outside the faith community, as well any at a Diocesan level.

*This form template is to be used as it best fits the SSOM’s ministry. All text in italics can be deleted.*

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| **Description of agreed working pattern** | |
| **Hours per week offered by the SSOM to the parish** | *This should be as specific as possible and accommodate family and working life, and recovery time.* |
| **Arrangements for time off** | *It is important the SSOM has time free from parish work on a regular basis, within the week and over a month.* |
| **Number of Sundays per month available for parish duties** | *An indication of the overall availability should be agreed and noted here.* |
| **Arrangements for making retreats** | *Indicate plans to accommodate time for a retreat in the year and how the parish may wish to support this.* |
| **Cover in absence of incumbent** | *This will depend on the time the SSOM has for parish ministry and his/her experience and skills.* |

# 3. Worship and preaching

This section covers the specifics of the SSOMs role in conducting worship. The statements here need not be ‘hard and fast’ rules. They should reflect what the SSOM can maintain on a regular basis whilst taking care of their own spiritual and personal well-being.

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| **Description of agreed involvement with conduct of worship and preaching** | |
| Conduct of public worship on a regular basis | *Indicate how often and to what extent the SSOM will participate in conducting public worship* |
| Involvement in the conduct of worship at Christmas and Easter and other festival or special occasions | *Take special consideration of the seasons of Christmas and Easter and the immediate Sundays after* |
| Frequency of presidency at the Eucharist |  |
| Participation in shared Daily Office (if applicable) | *Indicate the frequency and the degree of participation.* |
| Frequency of preaching | *Invitations to preach and minister outside the parish should only be accepted in consultation with the incumbent.  A Sunday away on such activities does not count as a holiday Sunday.* |
| Opportunities to share in occasional offices | *Baptisms, weddings and funerals (including associated preparation and visiting) should be assessed separately from regular public worship.* |
| Expectations of liturgical dress | *In the first instance the provision of robes and vestments for the conduct of worship is a parochial responsibility. If an SSOM does not already own what is required, the incumbent should negotiate with the PCC(s) for their provision as necessary.* |

# 4. General Pastoral and Teaching Ministry

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| **SSOM’s skills and how they might be exercised in the parish**  *acknowledge any particular skills associated with parish ministry or with ‘secular’ work which the SSOM possesses and assess how those skills might be exercised in the parish* |
| **Pastoral involvement – visiting, residential homes, schools etc.**  *indicate the degree of involvement the SSOM may offer in respect of visiting and support of individuals, residential homes and schools associated with the parish.* |

# 5. Attendance at meetings

SSOMs along with other licensed clergy are ex-officio members of their PCC, Deanery Chapter and Deanery Synod. SSOMs are encouraged to attend meetings of these bodies whenever possible as agreed in negotiation with their incumbent. Incumbents should ensure that SSOMs have the dates of these meetings.

Time spent attending such meetings should be considered part of the weekly time given to parish ministry.

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| **Meetings: PCC, Deanery Chapter, Deanery Synod**  *Agreed pattern of attendance at PCC, Deanery Chapter and Deanery Synod meetings where applicable.* |

Whenever possible meetings of any ministry or leadership team should be arranged to enable the SSOM, as appropriate, to be involved with the planning and organisation of parish life.

Incumbents should ensure that SSOMs receive minutes of such meetings.

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| **Meetings: location ministry or leadership team**  *Agreed pattern of attendance at meetings for location ministry team meetings.* |

# 6. Praying together

The incumbent and the SSOM should agree regular times to meet and pray together.

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| **Agreed pattern of praying together** |

# 7. Practical Support

SSOMs who live some distance from the benefice of their appointment should wherever possible be provided with a base from which to operate within the benefice.

*Factors to consider include privacy, space and somewhere warm with WC, tea/coffee-making facilities and, wherever practically possible, a telephone or provision of a mobile phone.*

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| **Practical provision for SSOM within the benefice** |

While expenses of office should be met by the PCC(s), SSOMs deployed by the Bishop to benefices in which they are not resident are normally entitled to claim from the Diocese for car mileage from their home to the benefice boundary.

# 8. Ministerial Review

Licensed SSOMs participate in the Bishop’s Ministerial Review programme. One of the main outcomes of the annual meeting is the identification of objectives for ministerial development and individual CME.

CME grants are available by application to the Head of Development Mission & Ministry. Time spent on retreats and CME training should be counted as part of the SSOM’s overall time commitment to the parish.

# 9. Review and Termination of Working Agreement

Working agreements should be reviewed at least annually. A good time to hold this meeting is shortly after the SSOM’s annual meeting for Review of Ministry.

# 10. Vacancy

The SSOM is not obliged under the terms of their licence to provide cover during a vacancy*.* The conduct of the church’s affairs and the maintenance of services, including the occasional offices, are legally the responsibility of the Churchwardens.

Should an SSOM be able to offer cover during a vacancy this should be discussed with the Churchwardens and the Rural Dean (with support from the SSOM Advisor if required), and any modifications to the Working Agreement noted. If an SSOM is in post when a vacancy is filled, the Working Agreement must be renegotiated with the incoming Incumbent.

# 11. Mediation

If either the incumbent or SSOM has concern about their role or relationship, they should feel free to discuss this on a confidential basis with the Diocesan SSOM Advisor. If matters need to be taken further, the Diocesan SSOM Advisor will advise the Deputy Director of Ministry accordingly.

# We have read and understood this Working Agreement:

**Incumbent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signed |  |
| Date |  |

**Self-Supporting Ordained Minister**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signed |  |
| Date |  |

Whilst the Working Agreement is between the Incumbent and the Self-Supporting Ordained Minister, incumbents are encouraged to share the content with Churchwardens.

**Self-Supporting Ordained Minister Advisor**

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| Signed |  |
| Date |  |

**The completed form should be emailed to:** [**ssm.advisor@elydiocese.org**](mailto:ssm.advisor@elydiocese.org)