

## Section 14

### Professional Code of Conduct for Readers (version 5 January 2018)

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## **PART ONE**

### **Code of Ministerial Practice for Readers within the Diocese of Gloucester**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code of Ministerial Practice is to set out clear and consistent guidelines, expected behaviours, and standards of good practice, for Readers and those supporting them in their parish settings across the Diocese.

#### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This Code of Ministerial Practice encompasses:

- ✓ Readers in Training
- ✓ Readers
- ✓ Incumbents
- ✓ PCCs
- ✓ The Vocations Officer
- ✓ Sub-Wardens of Readers
- ✓ The Warden of Readers
- ✓ The Archdeacons
- ✓ The Bishop of Tewkesbury
- ✓ The Bishop of Gloucester

- 2.2 The Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry are obtainable through the Readers' pages of the Church of England web-site. Readers may find these website links useful:  
<http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/>  
[http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/u\\_d\\_lib\\_pub/p23.pdf](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/u_d_lib_pub/p23.pdf)

- 2.3 This code should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines found at Annex B.

#### **3. Introduction**

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

- 3.2 The call to Ministry is first and foremost a call to the discipleship of our Lord Jesus Christ 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.

The following quotation from "The Ordination of Priests" (Common Worship) applies, in spirit, to all those in any form of ministry:

*"You cannot bear the weight of this ministry in your own strength but only in the grace and power of God. Pray, therefore, that your heart may daily be enlarged and your understanding of the Scriptures enlightened. Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

The following words are helpfully added in the Alternative Service Book (1980) Ordination Service and are also worth keeping in mind:

*"... so that you may grow stronger and more mature in your ministry, as you fashion your life and the lives of your people on the word of God".*

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

It is important that Readers should remain mindful at all times of the power and responsibility that go with their Office, of the call to be servants of Christ who is servant of all.

- 3.2 For each Reader the arrangements of their Ministry will be individually determined and may include a variety of aspects (such as educational, pastoral, liturgical, administrative).

#### **4. Spiritual life and Standards of Behaviour**

- 4.1 Readers 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 to whom the individual can turn for help or support on a regular basis as spiritual guides or confidants.
- 4.2 Readers must remember that, whatever their personal circumstances, these are part of God's calling, and should be taken as seriously as their ministry; protected time for family, friends, recreation and relaxation is essential.
- 4.3 Readers are reminded that they are required to uphold the highest standards of behaviour and that an aspect of their role is to uphold and enhance the good standing of the Church as the Body of Christ.
- 4.4 Readers are responsible for their continuing training and skill development and for ensuring that their Continuing Ministerial Education is pursued conscientiously and in line with Diocesan policy.
- 4.5 Readers should have an awareness of the conduct that is appropriate 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.
- 4.6 Readers should aspire to the highest standards of preaching, teaching and the leading of worship.
- 4.7 Readers should be aware that confidentiality is of great importance at all times in order to develop and maintain trust and confidence in all relationships.
- 4.8 Grievance and Disciplinary processes 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.
- 4.9 This Code of Ministerial Practice is explicitly subject to the requirements of the Diocesan policy in relation to children and vulnerable adults; and all Readers have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the policy and appropriate changes in legislation.

#### **5. Professional Relationships, Responsibilities & Boundaries**

- 5.1 Readers are an important part of local collaborative ministry arrangements, in which they must work with colleagues 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.

- 5.2 The relationship between a Reader and his or her Incumbent is key. Readers and Incumbents should work together to ensure that there is an appropriately negotiated working agreement in place from the outset of a working relationship. Family/marriage/personal space should be protected and recognised as part of God's calling and taken seriously as part of ministerial responsibilities. A template for a Working Agreement is attached at Annex A. The Warden of Readers may be involved in the negotiation of this agreement.
- 5.3 Readers should regularly review their workload and activities. They should be encouraged and supported at all times by their Incumbent and by the people of the parishes and local settings in which they minister..
- 5.4 Readers and Incumbents should meet regularly for support, encouragement and professional development.
- 5.5 Where relationships become strained, or where difficulties become apparent, Readers, in liaison with their Incumbents, should take responsibility for ensuring that the Warden of Readers is aware and that, if necessary, the requirements of the Grievance Procedure for use by Readers are observed.
- 5.6 Readers should dress appropriately at all times.
- 5.7 Readers 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.
- 5.8 Readers may never take fees from funerals or other offices and all appropriate expenses should be reimbursed through local arrangement.

## **6. Vacancies**

- 6.1 During a vacancy Readers 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.
- 6.2 It is important before any vacancy for a Reader to agree with the Archdeacon or Area Dean and his or her PCC or other appropriate body what level of support it is possible to give.
- 6.3 Readers should actively participate in the recruitment and selection process of a new incumbent.
- 6.4 Where a Reader's licence is to come up for renewal during a vacancy the Warden of Readers will arrange for an extension of the current licence until a new incumbent is in place.
- 6.5 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 licensing arrangements.

## **7. Administration**

- 7.1 Readers should provide timely and appropriate responses to paperwork and correspondence.
- 7.2 All records should be maintained according to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.
- 7.3 Incumbents and The Warden of Readers should ensure that the 3 yearly arrangements for a Reader's licence to be renewed are not delayed unless there are mitigating circumstances.
- 7.4 On reaching the age of 70 a Reader will be asked, in liaison with his or her Incumbent, whether he or she wishes to assume Permission to Officiate status. If not, the licence will be renewed up to the next general renewal date. All Readers, on reaching the age of 75, will assume Reader Emeritus status.

## **8. Diocesan Support**

- 8.1 Readers are encouraged to contact their Incumbent and the Warden of Readers when they are unwell or experiencing health or other worries.
- 8.2 In some circumstances, the Incumbent or The Warden of Readers may consult the Head of HR and Safeguarding (with the Reader's permission) as some external support and advice might be available and helpful.
- 8.3 Readers may make use of the Diocesan counselling scheme.

## PART TWO

### A Grievance Procedure for Reader Ministry in the Diocese of Gloucester

#### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this Grievance Procedure is to:

- ✓ set out clear and consistent guidelines for dealing with grievances relating to the ministry and/or conduct of Readers in their settings across the Diocese
- ✓ ensure that Readers are able to pursue grievances without fear of sanction
- ✓ promote good working relationships between Readers, clergy, accredited lay ministers and members of church communities

#### **2. Background**

2.1 It is important to reflect that Readers are not employees of the church, nor do they have any of the usual employment-related contracts, etc. However, Readers through their vocation, their licences, their dedication to their roles as pastors, spiritual guides, and representatives of the faith, and their training, have a position of trust and privilege in the church and in their communities.

2.2 It is central to the teaching of Jesus that those who are reconciled to God must be open to being reconciled to those who have offended them or those they have offended.

2.3 Reconciliation involves clarification of what has happened, how it is perceived by the other person and acknowledgement of the depth of anger and hurt. Reconciliation, for both parties, involves the rebuilding of damaged relationships.

2.4 Any grievance should be treated seriously because of its significance to the person concerned. In addition no-one should be disadvantaged in relation to new appointments, other opportunities, or access to training by bringing a grievance, or by acting as a friend or colleague to someone who has registered a grievance.

#### **3. Scope**

3.1 The scope of this Grievance Procedure is to cover issues of grievances which arise between Readers, other ministers, and members of church communities which do not amount to disciplinary-related misconduct or matters that may lead to criminal charges. It also covers issues about conditions of Reader service, such as a perceived lack of access to certain opportunities for development, etc.

3.2 This Grievance Procedure encompasses:

- ✓ Readers in Training
- ✓ Readers
- ✓ Incumbents
- ✓ Parochial Church Councils
- ✓ Accredited Lay Ministers
- ✓ The Sub-Wardens of Readers
- ✓ The Warden of Readers
- ✓ The Archdeacons
- ✓ The Bishop of Tewkesbury
- ✓ The Bishop of Gloucester

## **4. The Grievance Process**

### **4.1 The Informal Stage**

- 4.1.1 Any person who has a grievance with regard to Reader ministry, should, in the first instance, discuss it with the person against whom he or she has a grievance, in order to seek a swift and acceptable resolution.
- 4.1.2 If this is not possible or is unsuccessful, the person should raise the matter with
  - a. a peer
  - b. the person responsible for his or her ministerial review
  - c. the Warden of Readers
  - d. another suitable personin order to explore whether, and if so, how, the matter might be resolved informally.

### **4.2 The Formal Stage**

- 4.2.1 If an informal approach proves unsuccessful, the person with the grievance should refer the matter in writing to the Incumbent in the first instance or, if this is not possible (eg during an Interregnum or if the issue involves the Incumbent), to the Warden of Readers, Area Dean or Archdeacon stating the issues and the steps that have been taken to try to resolve the matter informally.
- 4.2.2 The person receiving the written grievance ('the Referee') should, in consultation with the Diocesan Registrar (and Bishop if appropriate), decide whether there is an issue that can properly be dealt with under the Grievance Procedure.
- 4.2.3 If the Referee, with the Registrar's and the Bishop's advice, considers that the grievance amounts to an allegation of misconduct, and would therefore be more appropriately dealt with as a disciplinary matter, it must not be dealt with under the Grievance Procedure. Instead, it should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 4.2.4 If the Referee, after due consultation, decides that no further action should be taken under the formal stage of the Grievance Procedure he or she should write within 28 days of receiving the letter described in 4.2.1 to the person who has brought the grievance stating the reasons for the decision.
- 4.2.5 The aggrieved person may request the Referee in writing to reconsider his or her decision within 14 days of receiving the Referee's letter. Only one such approach to the Referee should be made
- 4.2.6 If the Referee, after due consultation, decides that there is an issue that can be dealt with under the Grievance Procedure, then he or she should not become further involved in dealing with the grievance. Within 28 days of receiving the letter described in 4.2.1 he or she should nominate two suitably trained people from the Diocesan list ('the Nominees') available from the Warden of Readers, the Head of HR and Safeguarding or the Archdeacons, to explore the matter and make recommendations as appropriate.

- 4.2.7 The Diocesan list of Nominees (previously assembled and maintained by the Bishop) should consist of suitably qualified clergy and lay people, including those with particular expertise in dealing with sensitivities and issues relating to gender, race and disability.
- 4.2.8 Nominees on the list should be trained in the understanding and resolution of conflicts and in mediation. They should not deal with more than one grievance at a time.
- 4.2.9 Those involved with the process should respect proper boundaries of confidentiality and only share information with those who genuinely need to know it. The Nominees should not enter discussions relating to the grievance with the parties to the grievance outside the framework of the meetings arranged by the Nominees in accordance with this procedure.
- 4.2.10 Within 14 days of receiving the 4.2.6 nomination, the Nominees should take the following steps:
- i. They should write to the aggrieved person to report their nomination and explain the role of the Nominees.
  - ii. They should write on the same day to the person against whom the grievance has been brought, setting out the name of the aggrieved person and the substance of the grievance, and also reporting their nomination and explaining the role of the Nominees.
  - iii. They should advise both parties that they are entitled to be accompanied at meetings by a friend or colleague who may participate in discussions.
  - iv. They should copy this correspondence to the Bishop and to the Referee, unless either of them is the subject of the grievance.
- 4.2.11 If either party objects to the choice of the Nominees, that party should, within 7 days of receiving notification of the Nominee's identity, write to the Referee (sending copies at the same time to the Nominees and to the other party to the grievance) stating his or her objection and the reason for it.
- 4.2.12 The Referee should, within 14 days of receiving the letter of objection, write to both parties to the grievance, sending copies at the same time to the Nominees and (unless he is otherwise involved in the proceedings) to the Bishop, stating whether or not the objection is upheld, and, if it is, appointing new Nominees. After due consultation the Referee's decision is final.
- 4.2.13 The Nominees should as soon as practicable, but within 28 days of being accepted as Nominees unless acceptably unavoidable, hold separate meetings with the aggrieved person and the person against whom the grievance has been brought.
- 4.2.14 These meetings will be followed (again as soon as practicable but preferably within 28 days of the meeting referred to in 4.2.13) by a joint meeting between the Nominees and both parties to the grievance. At this joint meeting the Nominees will seek to achieve reconciliation and agreement about a way forward.
- 4.2.15 If, as a result of the joint meeting, the grievance is satisfactorily resolved, the Nominees should record the outcome, including any agreed course of action,

and, within 14 days of the date of the joint meeting send copies to both parties, the Referee and the Bishop.

- 4.2.16 If a consensus cannot be achieved, the Nominees should recommend a course of action to be followed. This may include counselling, more formal mediation, supervision or spiritual direction. Where relationships are deemed to have broken down it may be appropriate to recommend a Reader be transferred elsewhere either temporarily or for an extended period to allow a time for reflection. Both parties to the grievance, the Referee and the Bishop (except in the circumstances above) must be informed of the recommendation in writing within 14 days of the meeting.
- 4.2.17 The Nominees should assume responsibility for a period of up to 12 months, which may be extended after consultation with the Bishop, for checking with both parties that the grievance has been resolved and that the agreed or recommended action has been taken. This period will be specified in writing to the parties, the Referee and the Bishop.
- 4.2.18 The Nominees will send a final report to the Referee and the Bishop at the end of the specified period. If the grievance persists, it will be for the Referee, in consultation with the Bishop to decide whether further action should be taken.

## **5. Appeals**

- 5.1 Both parties to the grievance may appeal in writing to the Referee and/or the Bishop about the Nominee's recommendation under paragraph 16 within 28 days of receiving the written record of that recommendation.
- 5.2 The Referee and/or the Bishop may (but need not) interview both parties to the grievance. Again, the parties may, if they wish, be accompanied by a friend or colleague.
- 5.3 The Referee and/or the Bishop may recommend a new course of action to be followed. The Nominee will have responsibility during the next 12 months for checking whether the action has been taken and the grievance has been resolved.
- 5.4 The Referee and/or the Bishop's decision on the appeal will be final and will be given as soon as practicable but preferably within 28 days of receiving the appeal. In the case of a grievance against an Archbishop, the Archbishop of the other province will be the final arbiter.
- 5.5 If the Referee deals with the appeal, any final decision must be agreed by the Bishop

## **6. Recording of Action on Grievances**

- 6.1 A written record of actions will be retained by the Warden of Readers on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop under this procedure and will be subject to the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998 (including the access rights of data subjects). The pattern of grievances in the Diocese will be monitored annually by the Bishop.

**7. Grievances procedures where the grievance is made regarding senior clergy**

- 7.1 Where a grievance is made regarding the Warden of Readers – the full process (1-6) remains the same, with the Referee being the Archdeacon within whose area the Warden resides.
- 7.2 Where a grievance is made regarding an Archdeacon – the full process (1-6) remains the same, with the Referee being the Diocesan Bishop.
- 7.3 Where a grievance is made regarding a Bishop – the full process (1-6) remains the same with the Referee being the Archbishop who will contact an appropriate Nominee.

## PART THREE

### A Disciplinary Procedure for Reader Ministry in the Diocese of Gloucester

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Disciplinary Procedure is to:
- ✓ set out clear and consistent guidelines for dealing with disciplinary issues relating to the ministry and/or conduct of Readers in their settings across the Diocese
  - ✓ promote good working relationships between Readers, clergy, accredited lay ministers and members of church communities
- 1.2 Where Readers wish to make a formal disciplinary complaint regarding a member of the clergy, they should do this through the appropriate processes set out in the Clergy Discipline Measure.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 It is important to reflect that Readers are not employees of the church, nor do they have any of the usual employment-related contracts, etc. However, Readers through their vocation, their licences, their dedication to their roles as pastors, spiritual guides, and representatives of the faith, and their training, have a position of trust and privilege in the church and in their communities.
- 2.2 It is central to the teaching of Jesus that those who are reconciled to God must be open to being reconciled to those who have offended them or those they have offended.
- 2.3 Reconciliation involves clarification of what has happened, how it is perceived by the other person and acknowledgement of the depth of anger and hurt. It also may involve the acceptance of appropriate “sanctions”. Reconciliation, for both parties, involves the rebuilding of damaged relationships, which in some exceptional circumstances may take some considerable time and work.
- 2.4 Any discipline related complaint should be treated seriously because of its significance to the person concerned. In addition no-one should be disadvantaged in relation to new appointments, other opportunities, or access to training by having made a formal discipline related complaint or by acting as a friend or colleague to someone who has been part of a disciplinary process.

#### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 The scope of this Disciplinary Procedure is to cover discipline related issues which arise between Readers, other ministers, and members of church communities which would not lead to criminal charges.
- 3.2 This Disciplinary Procedure encompasses:
- ✓ Readers in Training
  - ✓ Readers
  - ✓ Incumbents
  - ✓ Parochial Church Councils
  - ✓ Accredited Lay Ministers

- ✓ Area Deans
- ✓ The Sub-Wardens of Readers
- ✓ The Warden of Readers
- ✓ The Archdeacons
- ✓ The Bishop of Tewkesbury
- ✓ The Bishop of Gloucester

## **4. The Disciplinary Process**

### **4.1 The Informal Stage**

- 4.1.1 Any person who has a potential disciplinary complaint with regard to Reader ministry, should, in the first instance, if possible and if appropriate, discuss it with the person against whom he or she has a complaint to clarify the issues and ensure that there has not been any sort of misunderstanding. Where possible there should be an attempt to seek a swift and acceptable resolution.
- 4.1.2 If this is not possible, not appropriate or is unsuccessful, the person should raise the matter with
- a) a peer
  - b) the person responsible for his or her ministerial review
  - c) the Incumbent or equivalent
  - d) the Warden of Readers
  - e) another suitable person
- in order to explore whether, and if so, how, the matter might be resolved informally. These discussions should also involve an exploration of whether the issue is a potentially *disciplinary* matter.
- 4.1.3 Where information is being passed in writing, the writer should attempt to ensure that only the known facts are referred to and not add any information that could be construed as subjective or based on “gossip” or hearsay.

### **4.2 The Formal Stage**

- 4.2.1 If an informal approach proves unsuccessful, the person with the disciplinary issue should refer the matter in writing to the Incumbent (or equivalent) in the first instance or, if this is not possible (eg during an Interregnum or if the issue involves the Incumbent), to the Warden of Readers, Area Dean or Archdeacon stating the issues and the steps that have been taken to try to resolve the matter informally.
- 4.2.2 Unless the issue involves the Warden (in which case the matter should remain with the Archdeacon of the area in which the Warden resides), it should be referred in writing to the Warden of Readers (‘the Referee’). The Referee will then send a copy to the Reader and request a response within 7 days. The Referee should then arrange to meet the Incumbent (or equivalent), Area Dean or Archdeacon to ensure that he or she is in receipt of all available and appropriate information and to seek clarity as necessary.
- 4.2.2 The person receiving the discipline related complaint (‘the Referee’) should, in consultation with the Diocesan Registrar (and Bishop if appropriate), decide whether there is an issue that can properly be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Consideration should be given to whether the issue

could be more appropriately resolved through the use of some other method, eg the Diocesan Grievance Procedure.

- 4.2.3 If the Referee, with the Registrar's and the Bishop's advice, considers that the complaint amounts to an allegation of misconduct, the Referee will contact the Reader concerned and invite him or her to attend a meeting at which the nature of the issue and the Disciplinary process will be outlined. A copy of the Disciplinary Procedure will be sent to the Reader.
- 4.2.4 The Reader should be made aware that they are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting, and be assured that nothing will be pre-judged, and that due process will be followed.
- 4.2.5 The meeting will be Chaired by the appropriate Area Dean and attended by the Referee, the Reader and his or her accompanier. The Area Dean may request that minutes are taken at this meeting and an appropriate note taker will be identified from the Diocese/DBF. These will be circulated – only to those present - for agreement on matters of fact after the meeting.
- 4.2.6 The Area Dean may at this stage decide to recommend to the Bishop that the Reader's licence be temporarily withdrawn to ensure that there is no compromise of role, to allow some space for an investigation to take place, or until the full disciplinary process has run its course.
- 4.2.7 The Bishop will write to the Reader to set out the terms of any temporary cessation of duties/licence, and to assure the Reader of due process and right of appeal. A copy of this letter will be sent to the appropriate senior clergy, the Incumbent, and the Diocesan Registrar. The Referee will ensure that appropriate pastoral and spiritual support is in place.
- 4.2.8 The Area Dean at the meeting (4.2.5) will inform the Reader that the whole matter will be investigated through the framework of the Disciplinary Process by 2 suitably trained persons from the Diocesan list ('the Nominees').
- 4.2.9 The Diocesan list of Nominees (previously assembled and maintained by the Diocesan Bishop) should consist of suitably qualified clergy and lay people, including those with particular expertise in dealing with issues of great sensitivity. Nominees on the list have a different remit from those who assist in Grievance issues. They should be trained in interviewing skills, active listening skills, and analytical skills. It is NOT their role to instigate resolution of conflicts or mediation. They should not deal with more than one disciplinary process at a time.
- 4.2.10 Those involved with the process should respect proper boundaries of confidentiality and only share information with those who genuinely need to know it. The Nominees should not enter discussions relating to the process with the parties to the complaint outside the framework of the meetings arranged by the Nominees in accordance with this procedure.
- 4.2.11 Within 14 days of being identified to take up an investigation the Nominees should take the following steps:
  - i. Write to the individual making the complaint to report their nomination and explain the role of the Nominees.

ii. Write on the same day to the Reader against whom the complaint has been made:

- ✓ to introduce themselves and the role and remit of Nominees
- ✓ to confirm the substance of the complaint
- ✓ to detail their understanding of what has occurred in the process and circumstances so far
- ✓ to assure the Reader that nothing has been prejudged
- ✓ to assure the Reader that he or she may be accompanied by a friend or colleague to any meeting arranged and that this person may participate in any of the discussions

4.2.12 The Nominees should copy this correspondence to the Referee who will maintain the case file throughout the process.

4.2.13 If either the Reader or the person bringing the complaint objects to the choice of either of the Nominees, that party should, within 7 days of receiving notification of the Nominees' identities write to the Area Dean stating his or her objection and the reason for it.

4.2.14 The Area Dean should, within 14 days of receiving the letter of objection, write to both parties, sending copies at the same time to the Nominees, stating whether or not the objection is upheld, and, if it is, appointing a new Nominee(s). Two further Nominees may be identified in the process, and after due consultation the Area Dean's decision is final.

4.2.15 The Nominees should as soon as practicable - but within 28 days unless acceptably unavoidable, determine the scope of their investigation, identify the individuals concerned, ensure they have all current relevant letters, paperwork etc, and arrange to hold separate meetings with each person they believe is involved in the issue. They then conduct a detailed investigation.

4.2.16 Following a detailed investigation of the issue the Nominees should, within 7 days, prepare a full report for the Referee.

4.2.17 The report may suggest personal and/or professional views about the circumstances and individuals involved.

4.2.18 The Referee will send a copy of the report to the Area Dean and the Reader and arrange to convene a meeting with the Area Dean, the Reader and the Nominees to review the report and ask for any final comments.

4.2.19 At this meeting (4.1.18) the Reader may not make any changes to the report, but may append their own comments to it.

4.2.20 Within 7 days of the meeting taking place the Area Dean and Referee should decide what recommendations they would want to make to the Bishop.

4.2.21 Sanctions/Options may include:

- ✓ Acquittal and no further action
- ✓ An apology
- ✓ A letter expressing disappointment and clear expectations for the future
- ✓ A period of review during which only certain tasks within the context of the licence may be undertaken (with supervision where appropriate)

- ✓ A temporary withdrawal/suspension of the licence for a given period of time, with clear grounds upon which the licence will be re-established
- ✓ A permanent withdrawal of the licence
- ✓ Where relationships are deemed to have broken down it may be appropriate to recommend a Reader be transferred elsewhere either temporarily or for an extended period to allow a period of separation and/or reflection

4.2.22 Within 7 days of the decision being made regarding what is to be recommended to the Bishop, the Archdeacon should write to the Reader clarifying what has occurred during the process and what recommendations are to be made.

4.2.23 Within 14 days of receipt of the report, any appendices, and the recommendations of the Area Dean and Warden of Readers or Referee, the Bishop should reflect on and judge what is the most appropriate course of action to be taken and should communicate this to the Reader along with the acknowledgement of the Reader's right to appeal against the judgement. A copy of this letter should be sent to the Incumbent and appropriate senior clergy, the Area Dean, the Referee, the Nominees and the Complainant.

## **5. Appeals**

- 5.1 A Reader wishing to appeal against a judgement should write directly to the Bishop and set out in writing the reasons for his or her appeal. A meeting should be held by the Bishop within 28 days of receiving the written appeal.
- 5.2 The Bishop may interview the Area Dean, the Referee, the Reader and the Nominees. Again, the Reader may, if they wish, be accompanied by a friend or colleague.
- 5.3 If the Bishop feels that further information has become evident or that there are mitigating circumstances following the appeal meetings he may review the written decision on sanctions/options.
- 5.4 The Bishop should formally write to the Reader within 28 days of hearing the appeal with his final judgement against which there is no further right of appeal.
- 5.5 A copy of this final judgement will be sent to the Incumbent and appropriate senior clergy, the Area Dean, the Referee and the Nominees.

## **6. Recording of Disciplinary Procedures**

- 6.1 A written record of actions taken throughout the process will be maintained and retained by the Referee on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop. Any information held under this procedure will be subject to the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998 (including the access rights of data subjects).



## **PART FOUR**

### **Guidelines for Professional Conduct for Readers in the Diocese of Gloucester**

#### **1. Holiness**

- 1.1 Readers should be people of prayer. They should have a daily discipline of prayer and be faithful in attending Sunday worship.
- 1.2 Readers should model the holiness to which all Christ's people are called by their baptism. They should love God and love their neighbour.

#### **2. Preaching and Teaching**

- 2.1 Readers 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 men and women to Christ.
- 2.2 Readers must set aside adequate time for reflection, on and preparation of, sermons and other teaching materials and resources.
- 2.3 Readers are expected to discipline themselves to regular reading, research and reflection.
- 2.4 Readers 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.
- 2.5 Readers should be prepared to be held accountable for what they teach and preach and to exercise sensitivity with regard to the occasions and settings upon which they do it. They should ensure that integrity is exercised in handling material that may be deemed radical, reactionary, or liable to give offence. The pulpit is a privilege that must not be abused.

#### **3. Leading Worship**

- 3.1 Readers should aspire to the highest standards in leading worship; worship should always be planned with great care; it should be worthy of God and his people and be designed to gather a disparate group of people in praise and common purpose, in order that may gain a glimpse of God.
- 3.2 Worship should be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Canons of the Church of England and the Bishop of the Diocese.
- 3.3 When a Reader leads worship in collaboration with others, he or she should be sensitive at all times to the needs of the community and the faith of the church, and should ensure that people are aware of their roles well in advance, and are asked to carry out only tasks which the Reader considers are within their capabilities.
- 3.4 Attire should be appropriate and seemly to the tradition and requirement of the church/worship setting. Readers are expected to know what the Canons require.

#### **4. Pastoral Care**

- 4.1 Readers 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 guidelines for dealing with children and vulnerable adults.
- 4.2 In determining boundaries (physical, emotional and psychological), Readers 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 ever vigilant to potential manipulation. They should be ever mindful of possible compromise in the pastoral relationship.
- 4.3 Readers should be very mindful of their role in pastoral care, counselling and advice, which they *must not* confuse with the professional skills of qualified counsellors and therapists – despite inevitable overlaps. They should ensure that they have in place appropriate supervision.
- 4.4 Readers should discern the right time to bring different phases of pastoral relationships to appropriate conclusions, thus encouraging maturity and growth.
- 4.5 Readers should be mindful of the appropriate venues, timing and space, for pastoral care to take place. This is not only for individual protection but also for the sake of the wellbeing of the Church. They should be aware of particular areas of sensitivity; for example:
- arrangements for visiting someone alone, especially late at night, should be avoided or where unavoidable appropriate steps taken to minimise risks
  - arrangements for someone visiting a Reader alone, especially late at night should be avoided or where unavoidable appropriate steps taken to minimise risks
  - ensure that there are proper safeguards in place where there is potential for violence or risk to self and others
  - appropriate attire
- 4.6 Readers should be mindful of their actions/body language at all times and be especially aware of behaviour which could be misinterpreted however well intentioned. They should be aware of particular areas of sensitivity; for example:
- inappropriate touching or gestures of affections
  - spending time alone with a child/children/vulnerable adult – or away from a group
  - allowing the development of a long term pastoral relationship with one person in a partnership, when a significant part of the pastoral care focuses upon difficulties in the marriage/partner relationship (here the Reader should seek to work with the couple wherever possible)
  - allowing the development or continuation of a dependent pastoral relationship
  - allowing a particular pastoral relationship to endanger the life and wellbeing of the church and/or wider community
  - inappropriate use of Christian names or terms of endearment
- 4.7 Readers who wish to pursue acquiring professional counselling skills should make themselves fully aware of the appropriate guidelines and undertake the requisite training and supervision.

- 4.8 Readers should ensure that they have some knowledge of local and national support/specialist agencies which can provide alternative or complementary pastoral advice; and be mindful of when referrals to these agencies are appropriate.
- 4.9 Readers should be mindful at all times of their own safety, and that of those they are meeting/visiting.
- 4.10 Readers should seek immediate professional support and advice from the incumbent or Warden of Readers as a matter of urgency whenever a compromise in pastoral care occurs, or as soon as a pastoral situation feels “out of control” or they feel out of their depth.

## 5. **Confidentiality**

- 5.1 Confidentiality is of great importance at all times in order to develop and maintain trust in pastoral relationships. Confidences should not be extended or shared without the express permission of the individual except in certain circumstances. These circumstances should be made clear at the outset of the pastoral relationship.
- 5.2 Readers 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.
- 5.3 Readers should remain mindful that they need to inform, and be reassuring to, those in their pastoral care when the content and process of their pastoral relationship may be shared with certain other people – e.g. an Incumbent, supervisory group, consultant or other involved colleagues; and that they make it clear that this is done to enable the Reader to offer them the best possible care. Particular care needs to be exercised when making use of illustrations in preaching and teaching.
- 5.4 Readers may not formally hear confessions or give absolutions. It should be noted that ANY disclosure by the individual to a priest, including within the context of formal or sacramental confession, may not be confidential and may require the priest by law to disclose any information to the authorities (particularly with regard to child protection issues and the safety of vulnerable adults).

## 6. **Administration**

- 6.1 Readers should provide timely and appropriate to their Office responses to paperwork and correspondence.
- 6.2 Readers should not maintain inappropriate records of any individuals or pastoral situations.
- 6.3 Any records which are kept should be filed in such a manner as to be secure and yet clear and open to the person to whom they refer.
- 6.4 General provisions of confidentiality and informed disclosure should apply to written records which should be open to examination.



## **ANNEX A**

### **Template Working Agreement for Readers in the Diocese of Gloucester**

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This Working Agreement should be planned in the context of the Code of Ministerial Practice within the Diocese of Gloucester. It should be adapted as necessary for non-parochial situations.

<b>Term</b>  	This Agreement is effective from:  And will therefore be reviewed after one year on:
<b>The Parties</b>	The Reader (name):  The Parish Priest (name):  The Church Wardens and PCC (state how they have been involved/consulted):
<b>Parish Duties:</b>	Through this Working Agreement the following duties are agreed:  <b>I. PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK</b>   <b>2. PUBLIC WORSHIP</b> The Reader shall be offered the opportunity to preach at least (X) times per year and not more than (X) times, always by prior agreement.   <b>3. LEADING THE OFFICES</b> The Reader shall be offered the opportunity to lead the morning or evening office, or to lead an (authorized) Service of the Word, at least (X) times per (X), and not more than (X) times, always by prior agreement)   <b>4. OTHER</b> The Reader shall be offered a variety of opportunities to take part/lead in Leading Intercessions; administration of the Holy Communion; reading lessons, taking Holy Communion to people unable to attend church eg by illness or disability.

<p><b>Work outside the Parish</b></p>	<p>Through this Working Agreement the following duties are agreed:</p> <p>The Reader shall be offered opportunities to: (detail here hospital visiting, workplace ministry, school or further education ministry etc)</p>
<p><b>Obligations of the Parish</b></p>	<p><b>WORKING AS A TEAM</b> The Reader will be involved in the following ways:</p> <p><b>PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL</b> The Reader will be involved in the following ways:</p> <p><b>OTHER GROUPS</b> The Reader will be involved in the following ways with other groups where ministers meet for prayer, fellowship, planning etc</p>
<p><b>Personal Obligations/ Parish Obligations</b></p>	<p>All parties accept the Ministry of Readers in the context of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Diocesan Code of Ministerial Practice for Readers</li> <li>- The Diocesan Grievance Procedure for Reader Ministry</li> <li>- The Diocesan Disciplinary Procedure for Reader Ministry</li> </ul> <p><b>LEAVE</b> – The Reader is entitled to designate (X) free weekends per year, and a further (X) weekends for ministry outside the Parish</p> <p><b>EXPENSES</b> – The Reader is entitled to claim for expenses in accordance with local claiming arrangements for: (give details here)</p>
<p><b>Review</b></p>	<p>All parties accept that the next Review will include:</p> <p>I. What has the Reader done, and how well has it gone?</p>

	<p>2. How has the Reader felt supported and encouraged, and as part of a team?</p> <p>3. What further training or experiences might be considered?</p> <p>4. What activities might it be time for the Reader to either give up/take on?</p> <p>5. Should the Reader stay in the parish or move elsewhere occasionally, temporarily, or permanently?</p>
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**This Working Agreement is agreed and signed on (date) .....**

<b>The Reader</b>	
<b>The Parish Priest</b>	
<b>The Warden of Readers</b>	