

# **Notes for Working and Learning Agreement**

Below is an outline working and learning agreement for Readers in the context of parish or chaplaincy. It is provided as a framework by which the Reader can work through with his or her incumbent, chaplaincy team leader, or other responsible person, what are the expectations in terms of Reader ministry in this particular context. It is not intended to be prescriptive, but much of it describes good practice, which will be helpful to Reader and those with whom s/he works. In other words, it provides a structure with a degree of flexibility. It is important, too, that expectations are not too ambitious on the part of either the parish/chaplaincy or the Reader. So it needs to be realistic and practical. *There is no sense, for example, that any one Reader could undertake all the duties referred to here,* and a period after which it is reviewed should be kept in mind, since circumstances change. I have suggested that it is reviewed at least annually.

It is not intended for either Reader or incumbent/chaplain to draw up the terms of this agreement without prior discussion. Indeed, that is not to be recommended as good practice. Please use it as a working document and please feed back to me elements which you find helpful or unhelpful and any suggested additions to the format and contents.

If at any time in the discussion you have a query or want to talk something through please contact me and I am happy to help in whatever way I can, either by email, over the phone or, if necessary, to meet up. Once something has been agreed and signed, it would be really helpful to me, please, to have a copy on file.

Recent experience has shown that this is a particularly useful document where there is a new working relationship (Reader licensed for the first time, new post, new incumbent or chaplain, movement of Reader from one parish to another or a change of pattern of ministry). In these cases it can, in the first instance, help the Reader to clarify his or her new role as a preparation for licensing, or in other instances form the basis of my letter to the Bishop to inform him of the new circumstances and to arrange with the registry for a change in the wording of the licence. A previously agreed document could also be the basis for discussion when beginning a new ministry or establishing a new working relationship.

The document has been produced in discussion not only with those who have used it already, but with the Committee of the Readers' Association, with the Director of Reader Training and others involved in an advisory panel on Reader ministry, and the Bishop's Director of Continuing Ministerial Education. Many thanks to them.

Martin Stephenson  
Warden of Readers  
Birmingham Diocese

0121 777 1935  
[martin.stephenson@cantab.net](mailto:martin.stephenson@cantab.net)

# BIRMINGHAM DIOCESAN READERS' ASSOCIATION

## WORKING AND LEARNING AGREEMENT FOR A READER

**Between:**

.....**Reader and.....Incumbent/Chaplain**

**Parish/Chaplaincy** [Brief description of the nature of the parish and/or chaplaincy and the context of the Reader's ministry within either or both]

### **Sunday worship.**

The Reader takes a regular and active part in the preparation and leading of Sunday worship. Specifically this means the following:

- a) to preach on average (frequency) at ?? service(s).
- b) to conduct worship.....(as the main leader or in an assisting role)
- c) normally to attend - seated in the 'pews' ?? (if robes are normal, whether and when is the Reader robed?)
- d) to prepare, and work with others to do so, occasional services, e.g. ....

[Note that 'Communion by Extension' is arranged for specific circumstances, usually only in a multi-church benefice, and with the agreement of the Bishop under guidelines issued by the House of Bishops of the Church of England and by the Bishop of Birmingham. Applications should be made to the Bishop's Chaplain]

### **Occasional Offices**

- a) to conduct funerals as requested (Reader is required to have undertaken Reader training day on conducting funerals). [Fees are passed on to the incumbent to be assigned to the Diocese]
- b) to assist with the conducting of baptisms and to be involved in the preparation for baptism.

### **Home Communions**

Home Communions (to assist with the distribution of communion from the reserved sacrament to individuals in their homes and to small groups in Residential Homes)

### **Mid-week services**

(Participation in any mid-week services)

### **Daily Offices and prayer**

Morning Prayer is said publicly on ...

Evening Prayer is said on...

The Reader expects to attend (*on such and such days - or not at all*)

Retreats and Quiet Days...(here you might like to express what is your preferred practice in terms of receiving spiritual refreshment etc - including conferences like Spring Harvest, Greenbelt or New Wine)

**Study and prayer groups**

There are at present the following Home Groups, ecumenical groups, prayer groups, Alpha or Emmaus Courses.....

The Reader's responsibilities in this area are...

**Children's or Youth Ministry (or other specifically focused ministry)**

The Reader is involved in....

**Pastoral and community care.**

The Reader has pastoral responsibility for....

**Representative Ministry in Daily Life and Work**

The Reader is employed/works voluntarily at..... s/he has a role as a Reader at work in ..... by agreement with the employers/voluntarily and informally. Within the local community s/he has links with..... and regularly spends time doing.....

**Regular staff meetings.**

The staff team consists of..... and will meet regularly, (frequency)

**Attendance at PCC, Deanery Meetings, Council of Churches, Chaplaincy Team etc.**

The Reader is/is not expected to attend.... (*By Bishops' Regulations (5.5) Readers are not automatically ex officio members of the PCC, although a Reader may be invited to attend, or express a desire to attend. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting may elect a Reader or a representative of the Readers of the Parish to be a member of the PCC. (see regulation 5.6))*)

**Diocesan Support and Training.**

Newly licensed Readers take part in the 'Next' programme and sufficient time will be allocated for the Reader to participate fully in this. Diocesan sessions for Continuing Ministerial Training are organised by the Diocesan Readers' Association in conjunction with the Bishop's Advisor for Lay Education and Training, including Safeguarding Training. [Currently, all Readers are required to have undertaken SG2 and refresher training every three years after that. It will be important to note here when a Disclosure and Barring Service check was last made – this is done through Mary Rose at Bishop's Croft and should be renewed every 5 years. Details of training received and when must also be recorded here.] Other opportunities for further training may be suggested by the incumbent or in consultation with the Bishop's Advisor or the Warden of Readers. There is money available to support Readers with training and ministerial development from the Birmingham Readers Association. Applications can be made to the Warden of Readers.

**Opportunities for regular planning meetings, and meetings for study and reflection.**

In addition to planning meetings there will be regular opportunities to reflect on work that is carried out and to focus in particular on areas where particular help and support might be needed. These meetings will take place twice a year/ quarterly / every other month.

The incumbent/senior chaplain/or ? will encourage the Reader to continue in training, study and reading.

### **Responsibilities beyond the parish or chaplaincy, including secondment**

(The Reader may wish to specify responsibilities held on, say, Diocesan committees, work with the Readers' Association, or in other ministry not within parish or chaplaincy. This may also entail a discussion about, and specific plans for ministry in another parish, either on a temporary basis during a vacancy or for a longer period)

### **Review**

It is recommended for newly licensed Readers that the working and learning agreement is first reviewed after six months of licensed ministry and thereafter it will be reviewed annually on the occasion of completing the Annual Return, which every Reader completes in January.

### **Use of time**

The Reader is encouraged to establish a careful balance between work, leisure and ministry, and to reflect on the different contexts of ministry e.g. place of work and/or parish/chaplaincy etc. The incumbent will encourage this as good practice for fruitful discipleship and ministry...

### **Expenses**

Expenses, (e.g. stationery, use of telephone, travel), incurred as a consequence of ministerial work in parish or chaplaincy are to be paid in full, following the submission of a form to the Treasurer (frequency). Expenses of travel to conduct services outside the parish are to be paid by that parish according to the Diocesan rate. (at present 45p per mile within the Diocese and 30p per mile for journeys outside the Diocese)

### **Grievance procedure**

In the event of difficulties arising in the working relationship which cannot readily be resolved we shall jointly or individually enter into discussions with the Warden of Readers. If either of us initiates this step individually, we will advise the other that we are doing so.

Signed

Reader .....

Incumbent.....

Date.....

(Draft form revised November 2015)