



DIGNITY
IN CHURCH LIFE

**Clergy
Illness
Policy**

Clergy Illness Policy

1. Our Policy

The health and well-being of members of the clergy is a priority for the Church of Ireland. The purpose of this policy is to promote the well-being of members of the clergy and to describe clearly the procedures of the Church of Ireland in assisting members of the clergy and parishes where a member of the clergy is unable to fulfil the duties of his or her office for a prolonged period of time due to illness. In dealing with incidences of long-term illness, the Church must balance the need to support the individual member of the clergy while also ensuring that normal ministry continues for the duration of absence. The policy also aims to: deal with issues of long-term illness in a consistent and fair manner; provide support to members of clergy who are unable to perform the duties of office due to illness with a view to assisting a return to such duties as soon as they are fit and able; support the management of incidences of permanent incapacity; reduce the re-occurrence of short-term and long-term illness.

2. To Whom Does the Policy Apply?

This policy applies to all stipendiary members of the clergy and for the purposes of this policy the definition of stipendiary members of the clergy shall include an archbishop or bishop.

Note: If a member of the clergy is employed under a Contract of Employment or a Contract for Services, the long-term illness procedure under that Contract shall be used.

3. What is Long Term Illness?

For the purposes of this policy, long-term illness is defined as an absence from carrying out duties of office due to illness for a period of four weeks or more in a single occurrence or an absence of four weeks over a three month period.

4. Procedures While on Long-Term Illness Leave

When an absence due to illness becomes long-term as defined above, the following procedures shall be followed:

i. Notification

A member of clergy who is absent on long-term illness shall notify their diocesan secretary. The diocesan secretary will then inform the archdeacon of the absence. Notifications of illness, including accidents arising while carrying out duties of office, shall be accompanied by a medical certificate detailing the nature and likely duration of the absence. Further medical certificates shall be submitted for each subsequent week of absence or at such intervals as may be agreed with the archdeacon.

ii. Role of Archdeacon or 'Nominated Other'

It is important that regular communications are maintained during a period of long-term illness. The archdeacon or other designated person ('nominated other') shall maintain regular contact with the member of the clergy who is absent from office due to a long-term illness. The archdeacon / nominated other shall arrange appropriate ongoing pastoral support for the member of the clergy for the duration of the illness and shall organise any cover required in the parish during the absence.

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The archdeacon/nominated other and the member of the clergy on long-term sick leave may at all times seek guidance and advice on the management of the absence from Central HR who has been appointed centrally by the Church to act as advisor in the implementation of this policy.

iii. Occupational Health Advisor

A member of the clergy who is absent from office due to a long-term illness may be referred to an Occupational Health Advisor nominated by the Church. The role of the Occupational Health Advisor is to provide medical advice and assistance to the Church in ascertaining how best to support the member of the clergy who is absent from office due to a long-term illness and also regarding his or her rehabilitation.

5. Payment of Stipend and allowances during a period of long-term illness

i. Stipend

Members of the clergy who are absent from office due to a long-term illness shall be paid their full stipend for a period of 12 months while they are unable to perform the duties of office. Thereafter, the member of the clergy may receive payment based on Permanent Health Insurance (PHI) and/or membership of the Clergy Pensions Fund.

ii. State or Other Benefit

If a member of the clergy receives or is entitled to receive any State Sickness/Disability Benefit or any payment by way of compensation for loss of earnings from a third party, or under any health insurance scheme, in respect of any period of absence from office during which stipend payments are being made, there shall be a corresponding reduction in the stipend payment.

iii. Locomotory and Office Allowances

Locomotory and Office Allowances shall be paid for a period of 6 months, after which the allowances shall be withdrawn. In certain circumstances an Assistance Scheme may be utilised to supplement reasonable expenses incurred during the period of the illness.

iv. Housing

A member of the clergy who is unable to perform the duties of his or her office due to long-term illness may continue to occupy the Glebe or other housing provided by the Church for a period of 12 months. After this period, the Church will begin reviewing the housing arrangements taking into account the needs of the member of clergy and his or her family. The Church will undertake to assist the member of the clergy in the identification of adequate alternative accommodation where requested.

v. Notification Requirements

The entitlement to payment of a stipend and allowances during a period of illness is dependent upon the member of the clergy fulfilling the notification requirements set out in clause 4.1 above, while absent from office due to a long-term illness.

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6. Return to ministry procedures

Where a member of clergy has recovered from his or her illness and/or feels well enough to return to his or her duties of office, the following procedures shall be followed:

i. Certified Fit

The member of the clergy shall be certified fit by their doctor to return to duties. The member of the clergy may also be required to visit the Church's Occupational Health Advisor or other nominated doctor in advance of returning to office for the purpose of obtaining confirmation that the member of the clergy is fit to return to duties.

ii. Joint Planning

The member of clergy shall meet with his or her archdeacon/nominated other to prepare a plan for his or her return to office. This may include making such reasonable special provisions as may be necessary in relation to duties to be undertaken and/or reasonable adjustments to support a smooth transition back to the duties of office.

7. Procedure where long-term illness prevents a member of the clergy from returning to ministry

In the unfortunate circumstance where a member of the clergy is unable to return to office due to incapacity, he or she may be required to vacate their office in accordance with the procedures in that regard as set out in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland. In these circumstances, the Church will ensure that the member of the clergy continues to receive pastoral care and will assist in the identification of alternative housing arrangements where requested. The Church may also, where appropriate, provide ongoing financial support.

The Church of Ireland will endeavour to provide every reasonable support to a member of clergy and their family during a period of long-term illness.

8. Ongoing Health and Well-Being

A key objective of this policy is to promote the health and well-being of members of the clergy. Prevention is the best form of treatment and it is therefore important to monitor patterns of short-term illness. Early intervention in treating illness is important in avoiding and/or reducing a period of long-term illness. This should be combined with a focus on health promotion and prioritising the physical, emotional and psychological health and well-being of members of the clergy.

9. Useful Contacts

For further explanation on the implementation of this policy, see 'Guidelines on the Long-Term Illness of Members of the Clergy Policy'.

If you have any queries regarding the implementation of this policy please contact Central HR as outlined below.

Telephone: +353 (1) 4125 655

Email: hr@ireland.anglican.org

This policy will be subject to review on a regular basis.