



## Policy on the payment of expenses to Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs)<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

Licensed Lay Ministers make a vital contribution within the Diocese, particularly at parish level, that is highly appreciated by most people who benefit from it. The value placed on this contribution needs to be properly reflected in the payment of appropriate expenses.

### 2. Summary of recommended payable expenses

The table below summarises the expenses that LLMs may expect to be able to claim in respect of their authorised ministry, cross-referenced in brackets to the more detailed paragraphs in the policy.

<b>Type of expense</b>	<b>Recommended amount<sup>2</sup></b>
Travel expenses (6.1)	Diocesan mileage rate
Continuing ministerial development: - courses, events, 'quiet day' and similar developmental activities (6.2) - books and subscriptions, including preaching resources (6.2, 6.3)	£120 per annum £50 per annum
Robes (6.4)	At least 50%
Hospitality (6.5)	As agreed by PCC
Stationery (including printer consumables), postage, telephone (6.5)	£30 per annum

### 3. Background

There is a well-recognised general statement of policy regarding Licensed Lay Ministers expenses, drawn from the Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry:

*Readers are voluntary and unpaid and should not accept a fee for their services. However, they should be reimbursed for travelling and other expenses, including loss of earnings, incurred through the performance of their duties, especially outside their Parish. Car mileage may be reimbursed at the current diocesan rate as appropriate for those undertaking occasional duties.*

It appears quite straightforward, but once the details of its application in practice are probed, a more complex picture emerges. This can cause confusion for both LLMs and parishes, with the result that some LLMs have had expenses refused by incumbents and/or PCCs.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy relates to Licensed Lay Ministers ('Readers') only. It does not apply to those in pre-licensing training.

<sup>2</sup> Note that these are **expenses** to be paid in respect of legitimate costs incurred, not grants that may be claimed irrespective of actual costs or activities. Recommended amounts as at September 2009.

Part of this complexity is due to the way in which LLMs may be seen to have a foot in two camps:

- As Licensed Ministers, they should be entitled to claim expenses on broadly the same basis as any other licensed ministry—lay or ordained; there should be no difference in this regard between LLMs and Self-Supporting Ministers (SSMs), unless there is specific justification for it.
- As Lay persons, they will on occasions do things that other lay members of the church also do. So, for example, is it clear when it would be appropriate for an LLM to be paid mileage expenses for visiting a member of the congregation in hospital, given that if said LLM's spouse visited instead it would be at his or her own cost?

One particularly difficult area relates to **funerals**, where there is a risk that payment and expenses become confused. This is considered to be a separate issue, **outside the scope** of this policy.

Also a separate issue is the general costs of LLM ministry. This includes the fee payable on licensing, the annual capitation fees, insurance, the subscription costs of 'The Reader' magazine, and the costs incurred by the Warden of Readers and the Council for Licensed Lay Ministry (formerly known as the Readers' Council). Some dioceses raise a levy from parishes that have one or more Readers: from the parish perspective, this becomes a part of the "expense" associated with this ministry. However, within the Diocese of Bristol, these costs are met from the Diocesan Ministry Development budget.

#### 4. The importance of claiming

It is recognised that some LLMs see the non-claiming of expenses as part of their giving to the Church. As laudable as this is, it sets a precedent which other LLMs may not be able to match, and gives PCCs a false idea about the costs they are responsible for meeting. The church may never know the true 'cost' of ministry in terms of the time voluntarily given, but it should know the cost of the expenses incurred.

**LLMs are strongly encouraged claim their expenses.** They are, of course, at liberty to increase their giving to the Church by equivalent sum, and are reminded that where such giving may legitimately be done by way of Gift Aid, it actually increases its value.

#### 5. Parish policies

Fundamental to any consideration of this issue is that expenses are not a payment ("fee") for ministry: they are reimbursement of costs incurred in giving ministry. Parishes have an obligation to pay them. There should be a clear understanding of the expenses that an LLM may claim routinely, and the procedure to be followed. This may include an indication of how often and how promptly claims should be submitted. It is recommended that this is at least quarterly, and that the right to claim should lapse after one year (other than in exceptional circumstances). This should be formally **approved by the PCC**, and LLMs, Incumbents and PCCs should ensure that this is **clearly described in the LLM's work agreement**.

Both the policy and supporting procedures should be as simple as possible. Recommended good practice is for a responsible person, separate from the Treasurer who makes the payment, to authorise any expenses claim. This would typically be the Incumbent, but it is recommended that others are authorised to do so in the Incumbent's absence, e.g., the churchwardens.

Note that routine expenses claims that fall within an agreed policy should be payable without further reference to the PCC. However, parishes may choose to set limits beyond which further expenses do need to be referred back to the PCC, and to identify items that will require prior approval (e.g., conferences).

Benefice Treasurers will need documentation, for their accounts, of any payment made and therefore readers are advised to **keep receipts and appropriate records** where possible. In particular, receipts should normally be presented with the claims for items purchased and for registration/ accommodation fees. (Examples of model claim forms are appended to this document.)

Parishes may choose to make gifts of appreciation, but such gifts should not be confused with meeting the obligation to pay expenses.

## 6. LLM expenses to be met by parishes

### 6.1 Travelling expenses

All allowable car mileage should be reimbursed at the full published diocesan rate<sup>3</sup>. If public transport is used, the cheapest available fare (that is reasonable in the circumstances<sup>4</sup>) should be reimbursed. Taxis/minicabs should not be used other than by prior agreement.

It is recommended that each LLM has a recognised 'home' congregation. Travel from home to this location for services that the LLM might reasonably be expected to attend as a member of the congregation is not normally reimbursable, even if the LLM is taking an active role in the service. Conversely, should the LLM be asked to participate in a service outside the normal pattern for that congregation, e.g., pram service, parade service, etc, it should be open to the LLM to claim travel costs, if incurred.

When preaching or taking services in churches outside their 'home' congregation, LLMs should claim travel costs. LLMs should aim to claim only such mileage as is in excess of that which they would otherwise have incurred<sup>5</sup>. It is the visited church's responsibility to meet the expenses (though if it is within the same parish, the LLM may be expected to include it within their normal claim). When visiting another church, LLMs must not accept cash from the collection plate as payment for expenses—the church is required to bank all such monies intact. If there is a genuine need for a cash payment, the relevant treasurer should be contacted in advance of the engagement.

This approach will hopefully be applicable in situations where the LLM's 'ministry unit'—however it is legally constituted—comprises multiple churches. (However, see also paragraph 7 concerning Deployment issues.)

LLMs, Incumbents and PCCs should ensure that the work agreement clearly indicates if the LLM is to have recognised pastoral responsibilities, and that a process is in place for agreeing when travel expenses will be payable for pastoral visits.

### 6.2 Ministerial Development

All LLMs are required to undertake Continuing Ministerial Development. Parishes should expect to be reimbursing part of the costs associated with such activity on a regular basis. (If they are not, questions should be asked of the LLM in the course of reviewing the work agreement!)

LLMs should be supported to attend any events organised specifically for LLMs<sup>6</sup> by the Diocesan Ministry Development Team, the Diocesan Readers Council or the Deanery

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<sup>3</sup> As at 1 September 2009: Cars (any cc) 40p per mile; motorcycles 24p per mile; cycles 20p per mile.

<sup>4</sup> For example, being asked to travel up to ½ hour earlier or later than is most convenient to benefit from a significantly lower fare might be reasonable for some individuals; being asked to wait an extra 2 hours would never be reasonable.

<sup>5</sup> There are many examples when this will be the full mileage, including: an evening service, if one is not held at 'home'; a main service, if the LLM's family make a separate journey to the 'home' congregation.

<sup>6</sup> Note that such events are often run jointly with Methodist Local Preachers

Secretary for LLMs. PCCs should meet full travel expenses, and are encouraged to meet at least 50% of any associated fees.

There are many other developmental activities within and beyond the diocese that may be appropriate for an LLM to pursue, from “Quiet Days” to a Master’s degree. Good judgement needs to be exercised by both the LLM and the PCC as to what activities will be most beneficial, and represent wise investment of time and money. If needed, advice regarding the suitability of a proposed activity may be sought from the Warden of Readers, who may also be able to help identify additional sources of funding. Taken with the previous paragraph, PCC should expect to be meeting an annual cost in the order of **£120** for each LLM.

An LLM’s continuing development will normally include reading quite widely. This will not only include theological and devotional material, but also items that will prompt and inform theological reflection on issues facing Christians in the workplace and more widely in society. Parishes should consider providing a sum annually that can be used to support book purchases. (LLMs should be willing discuss with their incumbent, and if appropriate more widely in the parish, what they have learnt from such reading.) Parishes should expect to reimburse each LLM a minimum of **£50** per year towards the costs of books and subscriptions.

The development needs of individual LLMs and the resources available within each parish vary so widely that it is neither possible nor appropriate to set rules for the amount of support that ought to be given. In particular, in parishes where there is more than one LLM, those LLMs need to be realistic about the demands made on parish finances, in that it is unlikely to be possible to support everyone to do everything they may aspire to every year. Even so, the key message to all parishes is that LLMs are a valuable part of the licensed ministry within the parish and they must expect to invest in their continuing development.

### **6.3 Liturgical and Preaching Resources**

These are the essential ‘tools of the trade’ and LLMs need ready access to them. However, there will be a lot of variation between LLMs as to whether they wish to build up their own library of resources, or are content to use, with local agreement, resources owned by the PCC (or ministerial colleagues). Some items—a Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, Common Worship (main volume)—it would be normal for an LLM to own. Other liturgical material, books of prayers, commentaries and other preaching resources are more a matter for individual choice and local decision.

Anything a parish considers that it owns should be paid for in full by the parish, even if it is expected normally to be in the possession of a particular LLM. If an LLM is expected to purchase an item that an ‘ordinary’ member of the congregation would not normally own, the parish should expect to contribute to the cost. This is likely to leave many items that an LLM chooses to purchase because they will be of benefit to their ministry, to meet an immediate need and over the coming years. Parishes are encouraged to recognise the benefit to themselves and the wider Church, and to contribute accordingly. The sum for books identified in 6.2 above may be used for these purposes as well.

### **6.4 Robes**

An LLM is required and entitled only to possess a cassock, surplice and scarf.

PCCs are expected to apply the same policy to providing assistance with the upkeep and replacement of LLM robes as they do to the cassock, surplice and stole of clergy licensed to the parish, save that this may reasonably be varied to reflect differences in the expected frequency of use. This policy should be notified to the LLM when they are first licensed to the parish, and they must be notified of any changes to the policy. PCCs are encouraged to contribute at least 50% of the cost when robes need to be replaced. Any cost associated with academic hoods falls entirely on the LLM.

## 6.5 Other expenses

A PCC may agree to pay expenses in relation to **hospitality** if the LLM has a significant pastoral ministry. However, LLMs should not assume this to be the case unless it has been discussed and approved by the PCC. PCCs should ensure that the LLM is given clear guidance on what claims will be considered.

An LLM is entitled to claim the cost of **telephone calls, stationery and postage** where incurred in the course of their duties. For some LLMs, this may include a significant sum spent on **printer consumables**. However, LLMs and PCCs should seek to ensure that there is an equitable policy within the parish that does not benefit LLMs at the expense of other lay people active in the life of the parish.

## 6.6 Loss of earnings

The Bishops' Regulations indicate that Readers may be reimbursed for loss of earnings. This might conceivably arise as an issue in relation to conducting funerals but, as previously stated, that falls beyond the remit of this policy. LLMs and parishes should together aim to avoid situations that would involve any loss of earnings. LLMs should not expect to claim for such unless this has been agreed in advance.

## 7. Deployment Issues

Proposals regarding the deployment of LLMs were approved by the Council for Licensed Lay Ministry (Readers' Council) in March 2009 and endorsed by the Bishop's Council in September 2009. This report identifies five different ways in which an LLM may be deployed, and is careful to identify for each model where the oversight of the LLM's ministry will lie.

The first two are the 'traditional' models: (1) an LLM licensed to a parish or benefice; and (2) an LLM providing occasional/ad hoc mutual help across benefice boundaries. This expenses policy applies directly to these models.

In the secondment model (3) there is a delegation of oversight to the 'receiving' priest. In this model, the concept of 'home' congregation (see paragraph 6.1) will need to be modified during the period of secondment. It has clearly changed in terms of ministry, and by default the receiving parish should assume responsibility for the LLM's expenses whilst seconded. It is recommended that for travel expenses the receiving parish should undertake to pay any excess mileage that is incurred – in effect, for this element continuing to be treated as 'another church' being visited. (On occasions, the sending parish may volunteer to continue to meet the LLM's expenses as part of their commitment to mission; this should be agreed in advance, and the LLM should be left in no doubt about from whom expenses should be claimed.)

In the full redeployment model (4), oversight transfer to the new priest, and responsibility for expenses to the new parish. The designation of 'home' congregation will also transfer, and as such there would normally be no entitlement to excess mileage (unlike model 3). The LLM should be made aware of this when full redeployment is being proposed.

The final model is that of specialism (5). The LLM works for an agreed proportion of their time (up to 100%) on special projects, e.g., evangelism, youth work, care home ministry. This will need to be defined in a work agreement, and it is essential that responsibility for expenses is clearly defined in that agreement. In these cases, there may be third parties to the agreement (e.g., a deanery). All parties share the responsibility for ensuring that prior to formally recognising an LLM's deployment to a specialist ministry, explicit provisions for (and the processes for claiming) expenses has been agreed.



## Licensed Lay Ministers: Expenses claim Form A (for taking a service away from 'home' congregation)

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Name of LLM: .....

Address: .....  
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Contact telephone  
and/or email: .....

Date, time & place  
of service: .....

Details of journey: .....  
(Start – destination – home/end point)

Mode of transport: .....

Miles claimed: ..... @ £0. \* per mile = £.....

(\* insert current Diocesan mileage rate: Cars (any cc) 40p per mile; motorcycles 24p per mile; cycles 20p per mile)

*(LLMs are encouraged to claim only for mileage that is in excess of what they would have incurred normally)*

OR

Fares paid: £.....

*(LLMs should always obtain receipts, as they may be needed for audit purposes.)*



### Licensed Lay Ministers: Expenses claim Form B (for expenses to be claimed from 'home' PCC)

Name of LLM: .....

Address: .....  
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Contact phone  
and/or email: .....

Nature/details of expense (include date(s) as appropriate)	Amount claimed
Please ensure all relevant receipts are attached	<b>Total:</b>

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Checked and approved: ..... Date: .....