



CCU Resources 2007

Porvoo clergy

Guidance for Clergy Appointments and Exchanges under the Porvoo Agreement

1. The Porvoo Agreement was finally approved by the General Synod in June 1995, and ratified by an Act of Synod in November 1996. It established communion between the Church of England (together with the Church in Wales, Church of Ireland and the Scottish Episcopal Church) and certain Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches which also signed, namely those of Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden.

2. The Porvoo Agreement provides inter alia, for clergy ordained by bishops of the signatory churches to be invited to minister in a like capacity in the Church of England subject to current regulations. In this respect they are placed in the same position as those ordained by Anglican bishops overseas, i.e. subject to The Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967.

3. It should be noted that the Porvoo Agreement's arrangements for the exchange of ministers does not apply to the small minority of Lutheran clergy who were ordained by a Cathedral Dean not in episcopal orders. Nor do these arrangements apply to a priest (whether male or female) who was ordained by a woman bishop. However, there is no such bar if a priest (male or female) was ordained by a male bishop even though he/she is currently serving under a woman bishop.

4. In practice overseas clergy who are visiting the Provinces of Canterbury and York (including the Diocese in Europe) for less than one month are not normally licensed formally. Under such circumstances they cannot lawfully solemnise a marriage according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, but may be invited to assist at a baptism, marriage or funeral, or to celebrate the eucharist and/or to preach, subject to the usual permission. A letter of commendation should be sought from his/her current bishop to confirm good standing.

5. For an intended stay of longer than one month formal application should be made for the respective Archbishop's Permission to officiate under the 1967 Measure. When an enquiry is received from an interested priest of one of the Porvoo churches, or if arrangements are to be initiated from the English side, it is advisable to check at an early stage whether the Church of England bishop in question (in consultation with

his senior staff) is willing in principle to license such a priest and, if so, to what post, at what stipend and for what period.

6. If it is considered necessary to interview the candidate, this can sometimes be combined with his/her visiting this country for some other purpose at their own expense. Alternatively, the Church of England bishop may arrange for an interview to be conducted in the candidate's country of residence by a suitable Commissary. Suggestions about the name of someone to act in this role could be sought from the Bishop in Europe or from the European Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity.

7. An important consideration at the preliminary stage concerns fluency in English. This needs to be not only good enough to preach and conduct public worship in English without a heavy foreign accent, but a sufficient command of idiomatic English is required to be able to minister pastorally in the local English context. The applicant's competency in this respect needs to be carefully assessed.

8. Where applicants are coming from the Church of Sweden, it is reasonable to enquire whether they have completed the training course organised in Uppsala on ministry in an Anglican setting. In the current absence of similar provision for those coming from the other Porvoo churches, it needs to be asked how familiar the applicant is with Anglican practice and some judgement made as to how much practical induction would be required.

9. The DBF's policy on paying for travel and removals from abroad should be made explicit at an early stage. In cases where a Porvoo priest takes up a permanent or long term appointment (such as Team Vicar), the normal arrangement for paying a moving-in grant may be appropriate and the cost of removals met from the point of entry to the UK. For a temporary appointment lasting only for several months it is not usually feasible for the visiting priests to set up a fully furnished household, and special arrangements may need to be made. What has already worked well in several instances is for the normal moving-in grant to be paid directly to the PCC towards the cost of providing basic furnishings, and any unused balance is available towards reimbursing the cost of travelling to England. Whether the appointment is long or short stay, the incumbent will need to check that the PCC is willing to repay normal working expenses.

10. The following documents need to be provided by the Bishop, and sent to the applicant: (a) parish profile of the vacant post, (b) an application form



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for the respective Archbishop's Permission to officiate obtainable from the Provincial Registrar (see Addresses at the end of this paper), unless the priest concerned already holds the current permission of the respective Archbishop for a further sufficient period, and (c) the normal declaration form relating to Child Protection.

11. The applicant from abroad should then return the following documents to the Church of England Bishop: the completed forms (b) and (c) above, together with (d) a Curriculum Vitae and photograph, (e) certified proof of episcopal ordination, and (f) a formal letter of commendation from his/her current bishop, stipulating that the applicant is a minister in good standing.

12. When the Church of England Bishop has received the completed self-declaration form regarding Child Protection, he should retain this on file. The Department of Health is unable to process the particulars, since they fall outside the scope of the British system. If the Bishop is content, a formal written offer of appointment may then be extended, subject to the grant of the respective Archbishop's Permission, setting out the stipend and other financial arrangements (including the assignation of fees) together with requirements regarding Declaration and Oaths. (The oath of allegiance can be dispensed for those of non-British nationality).

13. When the applicant accepts the post, the Bishop then forwards the application to the Provincial Registrar, accompanied by a letter indicating his own willingness to license the priest concerned to the post in question, and indicating the intended duration.

14. When the respective Archbishop's Permission is received at the Diocesan Registry, arrangements for the licensing and welcome can go ahead in the normal way.

15. The question of pension arrangements needs to be carefully discussed with the DBF and Pensions Board. Normally clergy in a stipendiary post are included in the Church of England Pensions Board pensions scheme. However, where the stay is under 24 months no pension entitlement will accrue and, if single, the only benefit in the event of death during their stay would be life assurance cover. If married, a spouse's pension would be paid. It is not possible for the Pensions Board to give a reduced rate of contribution in cases where the only benefit is life assurance. The dates of birth and ordination need to be notified to the Pensions Board. There is generally every

advantage in a Porvoo priest remaining within his/her own pensions scheme if possible.

16. Information on double taxation may be obtained from the clergy payroll section of the Church Commissioners. Current arrangements allow that if a person is in England for 183 days (six months) or more, then generally UK tax status applies. However, if the person is visiting from a country with which the UK has a 'Double Taxation Agreement' then he/she could apply to pay back tax in that country.

17. When arrangements have been finalised, it is helpful if the Bishop notifies the European Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity who, in turn, can then keep the Porvoo Panel and the relevant Lutheran chaplains in London informed.

18. The Diocese in Europe's normal appointments procedure would be followed — including application under the 1967 Measure — where a licence is required for ministry in a wholly Church of England context, or in conjunction with ministry in one of the Nordic-Baltic Churches or any of their diaspora congregations elsewhere in Continental Europe.

The completed self-declaration form relating to Child Protection must be supported by a document indicating no criminal record, or a transcript of criminal record, or a Certificate of Good Conduct which will normally be available on application to local police or other official authority.

The Bishop in Europe's senior staff would review to what extent sections 15-17 of these Guidelines are relevant to the circumstances of the particular appointment.

Registrar's Addresses

Where the diocese in question is in the Province of Canterbury – The Provincial Registrar, The Legal Office, Church House, Great Smith Street, LONDON SW1P 3AZ

Where the diocese in question is in the Province of York: The Provincial Registrar, The Registry, Stamford House, Piccadilly, YORK YO1 9PP