



Curacy Handbook

Diocese of Hereford | Initial Ministerial Development

2026–2027

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Glossary

Key terms and abbreviations used in this handbook

Hereford Diocese Curacy Handbook | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This glossary covers the principal terms, abbreviations, and concepts used across the handbook. Where a term is explained in greater depth in a particular chapter or appendix, a reference is given.

Term or abbreviation	Meaning and handbook reference
360 feedback	A structured process in which a curate gathers reflective responses from those they minister alongside (parishioners, colleagues, and others) to inform formation. In Hereford, 360 takes the form of direct conversations rather than written forms. See Chapter 11.
Ambassadorial role	The curate's representative function: speaking and acting on behalf of the whole Church rather than from personal conviction alone, particularly in contexts of contested national questions. See Appendix G.
Banding	A national descriptive framework used at the Final Assessment to describe formation maturity across a spectrum from emerging to established. Banding describes development, not performance grades. See Chapter 11 and Appendix A.
Being with	A theology of presence foundational to Hereford's approach to curacy: arriving without mastery, listening before acting, and offering faithful presence in contexts where the curate is not in charge. See Chapter 1.
Benefice	A Church of England unit of ministry, typically comprising one or more parishes held together under a single incumbent or priest-in-charge.
CDP Curate Development Plan	The primary formation document of curacy: a small number of focused priorities linked to the Formation Qualities and Domains, reviewed regularly in supervision and central to all three assessments. See Chapter 10.
CMD Continuing Ministerial Development	The ongoing formation and development that follows curacy, beginning with the handover from the Final Assessment panel. Curacy formation is designed to flow into CMD without reset. See Chapters 11 and 15.
Core Skills Framework	A practical coverage tool used in supervision to track which ministerial competencies have been practised, which are developing, and which are not yet in scope. Used alongside the CDP, not instead of it. See Chapter 10.

Curate	An ordained minister in the Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) phase of ministry, serving in a title post under the oversight of a Training Incumbent. May be stipendiary (full-time or part-time) or self-supporting.
Curate Development Plan	See CDP.
Distinctive Deacon	A curate ordained specifically to the diaconate as a permanent vocation, rather than as a transitional stage before priestly ordination. Formation emphasises service, advocacy, and community-facing ministry. See Chapter 15 and Appendix D.
Domains (Four Domains)	The four arenas in which the Formation Qualities become visible: Christ (prayer and holiness), Church (ecclesial leadership and collaboration), World (mission and public witness), and Self (self-awareness, boundaries, and sustainability). See Chapter 3 and Appendix A.
DSO Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	The designated officer to whom safeguarding concerns must be promptly reported. The DSO is the primary escalation route for all safeguarding matters. See Chapter 13 and Appendix C.
Dual Duty	The simultaneous obligation to offer pastoral presence and discharge procedural responsibilities particularly in safeguarding disclosures held together rather than at the expense of one another. See Appendix G.
EMDL Extended Ministerial Development Leave	A period of extended leave for formation and development, available to ordained ministers in certain circumstances. Referenced in diocesan policy documentation.
Fitness to practise	The overarching standard by which a curate's readiness for public ministry is assessed: safe, accountable, reliable practice that protects those in the curate's pastoral care. Trustworthiness is its integrative Formation Quality. See Chapters 11 and 13.
Formation Framework	The national IMD framework of Seven Formation Qualities across Four Domains, used consistently throughout Hereford's curacy programme as a shared language for formation, supervision, and assessment. See Chapter 3 and Appendix A.
Formation Qualities	The seven qualities assessed across curacy: Love for God, Call to Ministry, Love for People, Wisdom, Fruitfulness, Potential, and Trustworthiness. See Chapter 3 and Appendix A.
FPPR First Post of Primary Responsibility	The role a newly signed-off incumbent pathway curate moves into after curacy. FPPR guidance shapes the transition from IMD into the first incumbent or licensed post. See Appendix B.
Holy silence	The deliberate, attentive refraining from words in a difficult conversation - a form of Wisdom that reads what a situation needs rather than importing a predetermined response. See Appendix G.

IMD Initial Ministerial Development	The national framework for the early formation of ordained ministers, covering the period of curacy (previously referred to as IME2). Hereford uses IMD throughout this handbook.
IME2	Initial Ministerial Education, Stage 2: the former designation for the curacy phase of formation, now referred to as IMD in Hereford. The terms are used interchangeably in some national documents.
Inner condition	A concept drawn from Rowland's leadership research, describing the internal state - spiritual, emotional, and relational - that shapes how a minister acts outwardly. Referenced in Chapters 1 and Appendix G.
LMA Learning and Ministry Agreement	The covenant document that holds the curacy: naming scope, boundaries, supervision rhythm, rest, and what is not yet in scope. Agreed with the Training Incumbent and revisited at each assessment point. See Chapter 9.
MDO Ministry Development Officer	The diocesan officer responsible for overseeing curate formation and development in Hereford, supporting both curates and Training Incumbents throughout IMD.
Mixed ecology	The Church of England's recognition that Christian community takes multiple forms inherited parish church, fresh expressions, chaplaincy, pioneer, and others and that formation must equip ministers to work across these varied contexts. See Chapter 2.
No-surprises principle	The commitment that concerns relevant to a curate's formation or fitness to practise are named in supervision as they arise, not held back and disclosed for the first time at assessment panels. See Chapter 4.
Panel	A formal gathering including the Training Incumbent, the MDO, and others as appropriate that considers the evidence of formation at each Assessment of curacy and makes a recommendation to the Bishop regarding end-of-curacy outcome. See Chapter 11.
Pattern of life	The named, realistic rhythm of ministry, rest, prayer, and personal life that a curate commits to in the LMA. Naming a sustainable pattern of life is a formation and safeguarding discipline. See Chapters 8, 9, and 15.
Pioneer pathway	A curate whose formation context is primarily mission-shaped, fresh expression, or new community, rather than an inherited parish setting. Formation emphasises listening, co-creation, and small repeatable experiments. See Chapter 15 and Appendix D.
Portfolio	A curate's small, carefully selected body of anonymised reflections and learning notes, gathered to show formation patterns over time. The portfolio is testimony, not a target: depth and integrity matter more than volume. See Chapter 6.
RPG Reflective Practice Group	A small peer group of curates meeting regularly for shared theological reflection and mutual formation, distinct from

	supervision. RPGs are part of the standard curacy pattern in Hereford. See Chapter 5.
Rupture and repair	The process by which a supervisory or collegial relationship that has been strained or damaged is honestly named and restored. Repair is a formation discipline, not merely a pastoral nicety. See Chapter 4.
Sabbath	The protected day of rest and renewal to which every curate is entitled and which must be named in the LMA. Sabbath is a formation and sustainability discipline, not a discretionary preference. See Chapters 8 and 9.
Safeguarding	The set of practices, policies, and obligations that protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm. In Hereford's framework, safeguarding is understood as a foundational expression of Love for People and Trustworthiness, and a core requirement of fitness to practise. See Chapter 13 and Appendix C.
SharePoint	The diocesan online document management system where all working templates, logs, and operational paperwork for curacy are held. See Appendix F.
Sign-off	The end-of-curacy outcome in which a curate's readiness for next-stage licensed public ministry is affirmed by the panel and the Bishop. See Chapter 11 and Appendix A.
SSM Self-Supporting Minister	A curate who serves without stipend, typically alongside paid employment, or other commitments. SSM curacies are planned around a realistic pattern of life that is explicitly named in the LMA. See Chapter 15.
TDP Targeted Development Plan	A time-limited, focused formation plan used when a specific gap or concern requires concentrated attention between assessments. See Chapter 10.
TI Training Incumbent	The incumbent or priest-in-charge who holds primary supervisory and formation responsibility for a curate in their title post. The TI holds both the pastoral and the accountability dimensions of the formation relationship. See Chapter 4.
Title post	The parish or benefice in which a curate serves during IMD, under the oversight of a Training Incumbent.
Trustworthiness	The integrative Formation Quality of fitness to practise: safe, accountable, and reliable practice that holds boundaries, follows safeguarding procedure, and can be trusted by those in the curate's pastoral care. Carries weight at the Final Assessment. See Chapters 3 and 11.

Curacy as Formation: Character and Presence

Accompaniment and Accountability

Chapter 1 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Curacy is a season of formation in public office. Competence will grow and tasks will be undertaken, yet the deeper labour is the shaping of a minister who can carry the cure of souls with steadiness and joy.

The question is not only what you can do. It is who you are becoming while you do it. What forms here is the settled pattern of character and practice by which ministry becomes a way of life - what the tradition calls *habitus*. Character, not personality, tempered over time: prayerful, truthful, safe, and kind.

Curacy formation is held in the open. It takes shape through the Church's ordinary disciplines: worship and prayer, supervision, reflective practice, clear agreements about scope and boundaries, and evidence gathered with integrity. These practices protect parishioners, protect the curate's sustainability, and make fair discernment possible.

Being before doing

Contemporary research into change leadership points to the same insight from a different direction. Deborah Rowland's rigorous work on how leaders navigate large, complex change - summarised in her book *Still Moving* - found that what consistently distinguished leaders who sustained change from those who did not was neither technique nor strategy. It was the quality of their inner condition. Stillness, she argues, is what enables movement: the capacity to act well depends on the capacity to attend well. Being must precede doing.

This resonates directly with what the Christian tradition has always known about formation. *Habitus* is not a skill set. It is the settled orientation of a person: the way of seeing, responding, and holding oneself that becomes, over time, second nature in public office. The minister who has learnt to stay present when things are difficult, to respond from intention rather than reflex, and to read what a situation or a community needs rather than importing a predetermined answer, is the minister whose ministry becomes trustworthy over time.

INNER CONDITION AND OUTER PRACTICE

*Rowland's central finding is that the inner capacities of a leader - the quality of their attention, their capacity to respond with intention rather than on autopilot, their ability to read the system they inhabit - shape their outer practices directly. This is not a business insight applied loosely to ministry. It is a description of what formation in the tradition of *habitus* has always aimed at. Curacy is the season in which that inner condition begins to be cultivated deliberately.*

In practical terms, this means that curacy formation is as much about noticing your own repeating patterns under pressure as it is about learning new skills. When you notice yourself rushing to fix, performing confidence you do not feel, withdrawing when things become uncomfortable, or acting from anxiety rather than from prayer, that is formative material. Supervision, reflective practice, and journaling are the disciplines by which such patterns come into the light where they can be attended to with honesty.

A practical lens used lightly

This handbook uses a simple reading lens - **Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing** - to keep formation practical: who you are becoming, what you are practising, what you are learning to understand, and what needs strengthening next. Use it as a reading aid, not an additional framework, and never let it become a parallel set of tasks.

Rowland's being-before-doing argument is an invitation to return to this lens seriously rather than treating it as a summary device. The Being strand is not warm-up. It is the ground from which Doing, Knowing, and Growing receive their character. A curate who attends carefully to who they are becoming will practise better, learn more honestly, and grow more sustainably than one who begins with doing and circles back to being only when something has gone wrong.

A theology of presence

These pages are held within a theology of being with. You are invited to abide with God so that you may be truly with the People of God. You are invited to remain with parishioners in joy and grief, to stay with the realities of a place without haste or contempt, and to attend to your own interior life without concealment.

Presence is not a soft option. It is disciplined. It refuses the rush to fix, perform, or withdraw. It takes courage to stay with what is real: in worship when things go wrong; in pastoral care when pain is not resolved; in meetings when fear and power are present; and in your own heart when you are tempted to manage your image rather than seek truth.

Over time, a minister is made through repeated practices held faithfully: worship, supervision, shared reflection, a truthful pattern of life, and the ordinary decisions by which boundaries are kept and love is made safe.

You are arriving as a learner

Many curates come to ordination with substantial prior expertise and a settled professional identity. Curacy places that expertise in a new context and asks for something harder than competence: the willingness to be formed. This transition - from expert to learner - is among the most demanding aspects of the curacy season, and it is underestimated by everyone who passes through it.

Curates arrive with different orientations to learning. Some process most effectively through action: they need to try something before they can reflect on it usefully. Others need space to reflect before they can engage fully. Some find conceptual frameworks energising; others need to see how something works in practice before they can make sense of the theory. These differences are not deficiencies. They are the grain of each person's learning, and formation goes better when both curate and Training Incumbent understand it.

Chapter 4 includes guidance for curates and Training Incumbents on identifying learning orientations and using that understanding to shape supervision well. The question to hold here is simply: how do you know when you are learning? And how do you know when you are merely performing?

The temptation for many curates is to manage the experience of not-yet-knowing: to project competence before it is established, to produce activity as a substitute for formation, or to avoid the areas in which growth is most needed. Curacy is a protected season precisely because these

temptations are predictable. The formation container - supervision, reflective practice, the Learning and Ministry Agreement - exists to create the conditions in which genuine learning is possible rather than managed appearance.

The Formation Qualities can mislead by their grammar. They are nouns: love for God, love for people, wisdom, fruitfulness, call to ministry, potential, trustworthiness. Nouns invite the question "do I have it yet?", and that question, taken seriously, drives the work into evidence-gathering. A curate who treats the Qualities as targets to be achieved has misunderstood what the Qualities are pointing at.

The Qualities are not states to be reached. They are habits of character being formed in you, slowly, under the pressure of real ministry. None of them is acquired. All of them are being inhabited, in the sense that you grow into them as into a borrowed coat, and the fit changes as you change.

- To inhabit Wisdom is not to be wise. It is to be the kind of person who, often, is willing to sit with what they do not understand rather than reach prematurely for an answer.
- To inhabit Love for People is not to love everyone equally. It is to be the kind of person whose attention is drawn, slowly, toward the people their nature would otherwise overlook.

The Qualities are descriptions of who you are becoming, named with theological intent. They are not the diocese's checklist; they are the diocese's attempt to point at something the tradition has always called holiness.

This shifts what is being asked of you in curacy. You are not being asked to demonstrate that you have the Qualities. You are being asked to attend honestly to how they are being formed in you, including where they are being formed slowly, where they are being resisted, where you do not yet know what they require. The writing you do in this handbook's portfolio and reflections is the fruit of that attention, not a substitute for it. The work the writing catches happens elsewhere, in supervision, in the reflective practice group, in prayer, and in the slow daily attention of life lived as a minister of the Church.

The conditions in which character is cultivated

Accompaniment

Ministry is carried with others. Your Training Incumbent, peers, and diocesan companions stand with you. Supervision and reflective practice are part of the Church's care for you. They also protect parishioners by bringing ministry into the light, where it can be reflected upon, tested, and held accountable.

Discernment and assessment

Formation includes judgement and direction. In the Church's life, assessment arises from discernment and is exercised through it: transparently, pastorally, and with steady regard for the trust the Church holds on behalf of the People of God. Discernment attends to pattern over time, and assessment names what that pattern shows at appointed moments.

Truthful sustainability

Curacy is lived within the ordinary conditions of life: work, family, health, travel, geography, and limits that cannot be wished away. A realistic pattern of life is a matter of honesty. It belongs to Wisdom, and it belongs to Trustworthiness.

A curacy that cannot be lived will not form anyone well.

Training Incumbents

Training Incumbents hold the formation container on behalf of the Church: making supervision regular and protected, offering timely feedback, and holding support and accountability together. This is oversight exercised with kindness, clarity, and restraint so that formation is safe, truthful, and sustainable.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Chapter 1 sets the theological register for everything that follows. It is worth reading with the curate in early supervision, not as a briefing document but as a shared conversation about what both of you are being asked to do. The formation container you provide is itself a form of ministry, and it will be shaped by your own inner condition as much as by your technique. What is it that you are becoming through the experience of accompanying this curate? That question belongs to your formation too.

The responsibilities of public ministry

Curacy forms you for the responsibilities of public ministry. Trust is often granted before it is earned. People will meet the Church through you: through your steadiness, your restraint, your handling of power, and your willingness to be accountable.

Representative weight is responsibility, not status. In worship, pastoral care, schools, civic life, and digital spaces, you are seen and interpreted. You may be entrusted with vulnerability sooner than is wise. Your manner matters. Your boundaries matter. Your record-keeping matters. Your speech matters. Your capacity to seek advice matters.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding, professional boundaries, and consent-aware practice belong at the centre of ministry from the beginning. They are Love for People made concrete, and they are the most direct expression of Trustworthiness in public office. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the correct action is prompt escalation through diocesan safeguarding routes. Chapter 13 and Appendix C hold the full guidance.

A working summary

Curacy is the disciplined practice of becoming: a pilgrimage of formation in which you learn to remain present, to pray truthfully, to think theologically, to act with proportion and restraint, to love concretely, to lead without grasping.

The work is often quiet. It will be noticed most in small moments: how you arrive; how you listen; how you speak when tired; how you handle confidentiality; how you keep your rest; how you repair when you have misjudged; how you return to God again and again.

This will be harder than you expected

This is worth saying plainly, because every curate discovers it and almost no formation document names it.

Curacy asks you to hold significant public responsibility at the very moment when your sense of ministerial identity is most uncertain. You will be seen before you feel ready to be seen. You will be trusted with other people's vulnerability before you have learnt how to hold your own with steadiness. You will encounter the weight of the cure of souls - the grief of parishioners, the complexity of parish dynamics, the loneliness of public office - while you are still finding your feet in the most basic disciplines of ministry.

You may find yourself performing a confidence you do not feel, saying yes to things you cannot sustain, sitting with self-doubt that seems incompatible with the collar you are wearing. You may feel isolated even in a busy parish - the loneliness of being simultaneously visible and unknown. You may find that the gap between the minister you hoped to become and the minister you are discovering yourself to be is wider, and stranger, than you anticipated.

None of this is evidence of unsuitability. It is evidence of formation. It is what arriving as a learner in public office feels like, and it is the ordinary experience of most curates who are honest about it.

The Church knows this. Hereford knows this. The disciplines in this handbook - supervision, reflective practice, the Learning and Ministry Agreement, the portfolio - are not administrative requirements added on top of the real work. They are the Church's primary means of making sure you are not carrying this alone. They are the form that accompaniment takes in a structured season of formation.

Supervision is where difficulty is brought into the light, not only success. Reflective practice is where the gap between aspiration and reality becomes formative material rather than a source of private shame. The Learning and Ministry Agreement is where the institution commits, in writing, to protecting the conditions in which you can be formed without being eroded. None of this works well if the formation it is meant to hold stays hidden.

The diocese's commitment to you

The diocese is committed to accompanying you through what is hard, not only to assessing you through what is required. That commitment is real, and it has a practical shape.

Your Training Incumbent is not only your assessor and supervisor. They are also, within the appropriate limits of the role, someone the diocese asks to care for you - to notice when you are struggling, to name it early rather than waiting for a formal review, and to ensure that the formation space is genuinely safe enough for you to bring what is real.

Where the pastoral support a curate needs lies beyond the supervisory relationship - where the struggle is with mental health, with a crisis in faith, with a circumstance in personal life that the curacy cannot contain - the diocese expects that appropriate support is found and will work with you to find it. There is no shame in needing more than supervision provides. There is wisdom in knowing what you need and asking for it.

If you are struggling and have not yet said so, the next faithful step is to name it: in supervision, with the MDO, with a trusted colleague, or through whatever pastoral route is available to you. Carrying difficulty alone, and performing wellness to those around you, is among the most common ways curates arrive at a crisis point that could have been addressed far earlier. The formation disciplines in this handbook exist precisely so that does not happen to you.

You do not need to be well before you can be formed. You need to be honest about where you are. From that honesty, formation proceeds.

What the working summary means when things are hard

The words offered in the working summary above - present, prayerful, thoughtful, proportionate, restrained, loving, leading without grasping - describe what formation is moving towards, not what is expected on arrival. In the seasons of curacy when steadiness is genuinely difficult, when prayer feels thin, when restraint requires more than you currently have, those words are not a verdict on where you are. They are a description of where the disciplines are taking you if you remain honest and present to the process.

Curacy is a season of becoming. Becoming is rarely comfortable. The discomfort is not a signal to perform harder. It is an invitation to bring what is real into the light and let it be attended to.

Discernment and assessment

Curacy involves assessment. The Church must make clear judgements about readiness and fitness to practise for the sake of the gospel and those in its care.

In Hereford, assessment is exercised through discernment over time, drawing on supervision, reflective practice, and portfolio evidence. Assessments and panels are structured conversations that name what is emerging, what needs attention, and what is next. Episcopal decision-making is explicit and accountable, and the process aims to be fair, cumulative, and proportionate across different patterns of curacy.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Where are the responsibilities of public ministry landing most sharply for me now?

What one boundary would make ministry safer and steadier over the next month?

What one practice will I repeat weekly to keep ministry in the light - for example supervision preparation, record-keeping, or a digital boundary?

What needs naming now in the Learning and Ministry Agreement so that curacy remains sustainable?

When I act on autopilot rather than from intention in ministry, what is usually happening inside me?

What would it take to pause and choose differently?

What does being present feel like for me, as distinct from performing presence? Where do I notice the difference most sharply?

Is there something I am carrying in curacy that I have not yet brought into the light? What is the first small step towards naming it?

The Mixed Ecology: Context, Vision, and Faithful Presence

Chapter 2 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Ministry is always shaped by place. Curacy takes shape among real parishes and neighbourhoods: histories, habits, hopes, and wounds. In Hereford, this includes rural parishes and market towns, borderlands and cathedral life, and small communities where memory is long and trust is earned slowly through steadiness.

Presence matters. Listening matters. The capacity to notice what is fragile or overlooked, and to draw out the gifts of others, lies near the heart of faithful ministry.

A practical lens used lightly

As you read this chapter, keep one simple question in mind: what is this place asking of my presence, practice, understanding, and sustainability? The Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing lens can help with that, but it should remain light touch.

Being - posture and character in context. Doing - concrete practices that build trust and keep people safe. Knowing - how this place works and how the Church is heard here. Growing - a pattern of life that can be lived, without hidden overload.

Keeping this in view helps resist two common errors: treating context as a problem to solve or treating context as an excuse not to be formed.

A mixed ecology, lived rather than theorised

A mixed ecology names the Church's life as it is: inherited patterns of parish worship and pastoral care held alongside other expressions of mission and presence, including schools, chaplaincies, cathedrals, and community partnerships, all held within the Church's accountability.

In such a landscape, curacy forms a particular posture. Four qualities matter above all.

Attentiveness to place

A reverent curiosity about what is already here: the stories people tell, the griefs still carried, the quiet faithfulness that may not announce itself. Deborah Rowland's research into change leadership names this as one of the most consequential capacities a leader can develop - the ability to tune into the system you inhabit rather than projecting onto it. In ministry, this means resisting the temptation to arrive with answers. It means learning to read what a community needs, including what it cannot yet name, before you begin to act.

Relational maturity

Patience with the tempo of trust. Restraint when asked for instant answers. A willingness to remain with complexity without reaching for control. This is not passivity. It is the active discipline of presence: staying with what is real without hurrying to resolve it.

Shared ministry and working well with others

A habit of collaboration with lay leaders and colleagues is not an optional extra in ordained ministry. It is central to it. Cultivating the ministries of others rather than gathering everything into yourself is one of the clearest marks of Fruitfulness in a curate - and one of the most challenging things to learn in a season when you are still establishing your own competence.

Teams in ministry settings are not naturally efficient or harmonious. Patrick Lencioni's research into team dysfunction identifies five predictable failure modes that appear in any team where trust is underdeveloped: an absence of honest trust, a reluctance to engage in productive conflict, a lack of genuine commitment to shared decisions, an avoidance of holding one another accountable, and a drift away from collective outcomes towards individual concerns. These dynamics are not unique to dysfunctional teams. They surface in most ministry teams, most of the time, and a curate who can read them without being overwhelmed by them is considerably better equipped.

The question worth holding early in curacy is not only what does this team do? but what does this team need from me to function better? That second question requires a different kind of attention - and a willingness to contribute without either taking over or staying safely uninvolved.

Working well with Church Wardens, licensed and commissioned lay ministers, team colleagues, and volunteers requires clarity about role, a willingness to name difficulty early, and a capacity to stay in relationship when there is disagreement. These are formation priorities, not peripheral skills.

Humility across cultures

Church and community do not always share language, expectations, or assumptions. Learning to translate faithfully, and to listen without defensiveness, is part of what it means to carry public office with integrity. This applies across generational, socioeconomic, and cultural difference, and it is as relevant in a rural Herefordshire parish as anywhere else.

Over time, these practices shape the settled pattern of character by which ministry becomes a way of life.

The diocesan vision as a pattern of life

The diocesan vision is to proclaim Christ and grow disciples. It is lived through being prayerful, Christlike, and engaged, with commitments to discipleship, leadership development, intergenerational growth, sustainability, and wise stewardship of buildings and resources.

Curacy serves this vision by forming ministers who can carry public office without anxiety and without self-importance: ministers rooted in prayer, able to work well with others, attentive to local culture and community.

The work is to discern how Christ's call is being heard in this place, among these people, at this time, and to join what God is already doing with steadiness and care.

Faithful presence under the responsibilities of public ministry

In many settings, clergy are seen before they are known. People may trust you or mistrust you before they have heard you preach or watched you pray. The way you arrive, speak, dress, and handle disagreement is already a form of witness.

Curacy therefore attends to the formation of public office from the outset: responsibility carried for the sake of the People of God and the wider community, not status. Four commitments mark faithful presence.

Truthfulness

Speech that is careful and fair. Promises kept. Admissions made without evasion. Differences handled without caricature.

Restraint

Boundaries held kindly. The capacity to decline what cannot be carried. A refusal of harmful secrecy. A habit of seeking counsel early.

Gentle authority

Leadership that does not grasp. Decisions made with prayer and consultation. A steadiness that makes room for others' agency and gifts. Gentle authority in a team context means knowing when to lead, when to follow, and when to create the conditions for someone else to lead.

Safeguarding discipline

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Attentiveness to risk, power, consent, and record-keeping - including in digital communication - and an instinct to act promptly and transparently when concerns arise. These are among the most concrete expressions of Love for People and Trustworthiness in public office. Chapter 13 and Appendix C hold the full guidance.

These commitments together are among the ways Love for People and Trustworthiness become visible in daily ministry.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Training Incumbents share responsibility for helping curates read context truthfully: naming risks and limits early and supporting a sustainable pattern without rescuing or controlling. This includes helping the curate read the team they are joining - lay leadership, staff colleagues, wardens - not only the parish at large. A curate who understands the team's history, its health, and its default patterns is better placed to contribute well. Where the team has significant dysfunction, name it early and give the curate language and support for navigating it rather than leaving them to discover it alone.

A realistic pattern of life

Hereford curacy is lived within the ordinary conditions of life. Some curates are self-supporting, holding ministry alongside paid work, caring responsibilities, and community commitments. Others serve within stipendiary patterns with different demands and freedoms. Formation must be lived truthfully, not heroically.

Naming a realistic pattern of life is part of safe formation. In practice this means time protected for supervision, reflective practice, prayer, and rest; expectations agreed early and reviewed often, especially where workload or travel makes pressure harder to see; and evidence gathered with integrity, favouring depth over volume and pattern over isolated moments.

Formation comes through a sustained pattern of life in Christ, held within the Church's common discipline, and tested in the ordinary textures of ministry.

Self-Supporting Ministers and part-time stipendiary curates

The diocese expects a clear pattern of life to be named early, not late. The aim is faithful formation that can be lived, not a replica of a full-time stipendiary rhythm. This requires concrete decisions in the Learning and Ministry Agreement: what is held, what is reduced, what is omitted, and what is protected so that formation practices remain possible. Supervision, reflective practice, rest and sabbath must be sustained.

Pioneer curates

A realistic pattern of life matters equally here, though the pressures may be different. Novelty, visibility, and the desire to justify a new work can draw a curate into restless activity. The way of curacy calls you back to patient presence: listening before leading, small repeatable practices, shared ownership, disciplined boundaries, and prayer that keeps you near Christ rather than near urgency.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

What is this context most asking of my presence right now?

What two practices would build trust here over the next month?

What boundary needs to be clearer so that love is safe?

What needs naming now in the LMA so the pattern remains sustainable?

What is the team I have joined - its health, its history, its default patterns? What does it need from me to function better?

Where am I arriving with answers before I have listened well enough to know what the question is?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 2

Formation Framework

Seven Qualities across Four Domains

Chapter 3 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

The national IMD Formation Framework gives a shared language for curacy formation. It helps curates and Training Incumbents attend to pattern over time, integration across life, and evidence with integrity. Use it as a framework, not a checklist.

This chapter is a quick reference to the Domains and Qualities, and a short guide to how they are used in supervision, the portfolio, and assessments.

Quick reference

The Four Domains

Domains are the arenas in which formation becomes visible.

Christ: prayer, worship, scripture, holiness of life

Church: ecclesial leadership, collaboration, governance, forming disciples

World: mission, public witness, community relationships, justice

Self: self-awareness, maturity, boundaries, wellbeing, sustainable patterns

The Seven Formation Qualities

Qualities describe what mature formation looks like over time.

1. Love for God
2. Call to Ministry
3. Love for People
4. Wisdom
5. Fruitfulness
6. Potential
7. Trustworthiness

In practice, Domains help you ask, "where is this showing up?" and Qualities help you ask, "what is being formed here?"

Trustworthiness in curacy: why it is named explicitly

Curates are recommended for training through discernment and are formed through the Formation Qualities throughout. In IMD, the Church makes explicit a further question: can this person be trusted with the responsibilities and risks of licensed public ministry, over time, in real contexts?

Trustworthiness is the integrative Quality that draws together what the Church must be able to rely upon in public office. It is woven throughout all seven Qualities and carries weight in curacy as the primary expression of fitness to practise. It includes:

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Trustworthiness is the Quality most directly tested by safeguarding discipline. Safeguarding practice is not assessed separately from character: it is one of the clearest windows into whether a minister is becoming safe, stable, and dependable. Chapter 13 and Appendix C hold the full guidance.

- safeguarding discipline and judgement
- stable boundaries and consent-aware practice
- reliability, accountability, and truthful record-keeping
- appropriate use of power, including in digital spaces
- responsiveness to feedback and oversight, without evasion or defensiveness

Trustworthiness works alongside the other Qualities, drawing them together around the central curacy question: whether formation is becoming safe, stable, and dependable under the ordinary pressures of ministry.

Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing as a practical reading lens

Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing is a Hereford reading lens for the national Formation Framework. It offers a practical way of engaging the Domains and Qualities in day-to-day formation work without replacing them. It serves the Framework; it does not compete with it. The national framework remains the primary language for supervision records, portfolio mapping, assessment evidence, and panel discernment. Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing is a day-to-day orientation tool that makes working with the Framework more tractable in conversation.

The four strands map directly onto the national framework. Being corresponds most closely to what the national framework calls interior life and character - the formational ground from which outer practice grows. Doing corresponds to observable ministry practice across the Church and World Domains. Knowing corresponds to the integration of learning and theological understanding that the framework attends to across all four Domains. Growing corresponds to the Potential Quality and to the question of whether formation is developing sustainably over time. None of these strands stands outside the national framework; all of them work within it. Using them in supervision is not a departure from national expectations: it is a way of making those expectations accessible in real ministry conversations.

INNER CONDITION AND THE BDKG LENS

Deborah Rowland's research into change leadership found that the inner capacities of a leader - their quality of attention, their capacity to respond with intention rather than on autopilot - precede and shape their outer practices. The BDKG lens reflects the same logic: Being is not a warm-up exercise before the real work of Doing. It is the ground from which Doing, Knowing, and Growing receive their character. Formation that neglects Being will produce ministers who are busy but not yet trustworthy, active but not yet wise.

Being

Who you are becoming in public office. Often most visible in Self and Christ. Commonly related to Trustworthiness, Love for People, Love for God, and Call to Ministry.

Doing

What you do reliably in public ministry. Often most visible in Church and World. Commonly related to Fruitfulness and Wisdom, held within Trustworthiness.

Knowing

What you are learning that informs judgement. Seen across Christ, Church, and World. Commonly related to Wisdom, Love for God, and Call to Ministry.

Growing

How development is sustained over time. Seen across all Domains. Commonly related to Potential, with Wisdom and Trustworthiness guarding sustainability.

Curates will have different natural entry points into this lens. Some will find it easiest to begin with Doing - a concrete episode of ministry - and work back towards Being. Others will arrive first at Knowing, through reading or reflection, before they can engage Doing with confidence. Neither is wrong. The question is whether, over time, all four strands are being attended to, and whether Being is receiving the serious attention it deserves.

How the Formation Framework is used in Hereford

In supervision

Use the Framework to keep supervision formational as well as operational. A simple rhythm works well in most sessions:

- Name the live issue: what happened, what is at stake.
- Locate it in one or two Domains: where is this showing up?
- Attend to one or two Qualities: what is being formed, tested, or strengthened?
- Agree one practice change for the next few weeks: small, observable, sustainable.

Supervision logs record themes and learning. Pastoral detail stays out of the written record.

In the portfolio

The portfolio is evidence of pattern, learning, and integration. Use the Framework to curate evidence that is anonymised and confidentiality-safe, mapped lightly to relevant Domains and Qualities, and weighted towards reflection and practice change. Fewer items, better chosen, with clear learning.

In assessments

Assessments use the Framework to support fair discernment about formation in public office.

The First Assessment attends to foundations, sustainability, safe practice, and early patterns. The Second Assessment looks for emerging breadth, feedback including 360 where used, and integration across Domains. The Final Assessment attends to readiness for next-stage public ministry, with explicit attention to Trustworthiness as the integrative Quality of safe, accountable public office, alongside sustained practice over time.

Across all three, the question is not only what has been done, but what patterns are forming, and how learning is being converted into practice.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

The Formation Framework is a shared language, not a scoring system. Its value in supervision comes from using it as a set of lenses that help curate and name what is happening in formation - what is strengthening, what remains uneven, what needs time. The Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing lens is most useful as a quick orientation at the start of a supervision conversation. Noting which strand has been neglected recently, and why, is often more revealing than reviewing all four systematically.

Quick practice tip

When things feel complex, reduce to a single sentence: "In this situation, the primary Domain is ____, and the Quality we most need to attend to is ____." That sentence will usually clarify what belongs in supervision, what belongs in the portfolio, and what needs time and evidence before it can be judged.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Which of the Seven Qualities is receiving the most attention in my formation now - and which is being quietly avoided?

Which Domain feels most alive in my ministry right now? Which feels thin or neglected?

Am I spending more time in Doing than in Being? What would it take to reverse that for one week?

Where has learning this week stayed in Knowing without yet moving into Doing? What is the small next step?

When I bring a ministry episode to supervision, which strand of Being, Doing, Knowing, Growing do I naturally reach for first? What does that tell me about how I learn?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 3

Supervision

Accompaniment and Accountability

Chapter 4 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Supervision is one of the Church's ordinary means of care. It is where ministry is brought into the light, where learning is shaped into practice, and where the responsibilities of public ministry are carried with others rather than alone.

In Hereford, supervision is expected for every curate and every Training Incumbent. It is distinct from staff meetings and operational planning. It is protected time in which formation, safeguarding discipline, and sustainable patterns of life are tended with steadiness and truth.

What supervision is for

Good supervision holds three functions together. These are complementary strands of one ministry of oversight, not competing roles.

- **Educational:** developing ministerial practice through feedback, reflection, and theological integration.
- **Supportive:** a boundaried space to bring the pressures, confusions, and emotional demands of ministry.
- **Managerial:** clarity about what is expected, what is in scope, and how standards and accountability are held.

A healthy curacy depends on all three. When one strand is missing, formation becomes distorted: learning becomes performance, support becomes drift, or accountability becomes anxiety.

Supervision is distinct from counselling and spiritual direction. Where additional support is needed, it should be named and sought appropriately alongside supervision.

The three functions of supervision (educational, supportive, managerial) describe what supervision does. They do not by themselves describe what supervision is for. Underneath the functions is a single formative purpose: the slow attending to who the curate is becoming through the practice of ministry.

Supervision is the place where claims to competence are tested and where the Qualities, treated as habits being formed rather than achievements being banked, are brought into conversation with what has happened in the curate's week. A supervision conversation that operates entirely within the three functions, without ever surfacing the question of who the curate is becoming, has lost contact with what supervision is for. The single most useful question a TI can hold in supervision is not "what have you done this week?" but "what has the doing of it been forming in you?"

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Curates can become quite skilled at producing the supervision conversation they think their TI wants. The signs are subtle: tidied accounts of difficult encounters, ready answers to reflective questions, an absence of confusion. Supervision works best when it is the place curates bring what they would rather not bring: where they are stuck, where they were not at their best, where they do not yet know what to do. A TI's most important question is sometimes the slowest one: "what else?" The space for what else is where formation happens.

The supervisory relationship

Power, mutuality, and office

The Training Incumbent holds real authority in the curate's day-to-day ministry, development, and assessment processes. In many curacies there are also practical dependencies - housing, workload allocation, and local reputation. Name these dynamics plainly and handle them with care.

Supervision works best when approached as covenant: a committed relationship of grace and accountability in the service of Christ and the People of God, rather than friendship or inspection.

The Training Incumbent's supervisory role is one expression of *episkope*, exercised with kindness, clarity, and restraint. Oversight serves formation: it is a form of bounded love that keeps ministry safe, truthful, and sustainable.

Mutuality matters. The curate also has responsibility for the health of supervision: showing up, bringing real material, receiving feedback, and raising issues early rather than letting them harden into avoidance or resentment.

The dual role: companion and assessor

Training Incumbents are asked to hold two roles at once: the person a curate can trust most fully with the struggles of formation, and the person who will write about them for panels and episcopal discernment. This tension is real. It cannot be dissolved, but it can be named and held honestly.

The most important safeguard is transparency: making the dual role explicit from the outset, so that neither curate nor TI has to pretend it does not exist. A curate who understands that their TI holds both care and accountability is better placed to use supervision well than one who discovers the assessment function only when it matters. The working agreement is one place to name this plainly.

The goal is not to eliminate the tension but to inhabit it honestly. A TI who can say "I am both for you and accountable for what I see" is modelling precisely the kind of truthful, non-anxious presence the curate is being formed to offer others.

INNER CONDITION IN SUPERVISION

Deborah Rowland's research identifies four inner capacities that distinguish effective leaders of change: staying present to what is happening; responding with curiosity and intention rather than reflex; tuning into the system you inhabit; and acknowledging the whole picture rather than only the most recent episode. These are not additions to the supervisory task. They describe what good supervision already is. A TI who can attend to what is happening in the room - rather than to their own formational agenda or anxiety about the curate's progress - is practising exactly what Rowland means by inner condition shaping outer practice.

The Training Incumbent's own formation needs

The dual role description above is honest about what Training Incumbents are asked to hold. It is worth being equally honest about the cost.

Accompanying a curate is demanding work. It requires steady, generous attention sustained over months and years. It asks TIs to hold care and accountability simultaneously, to offer honest feedback in a relationship where power is unequal, to notice difficulty early and name it before it hardens, and

to model the kind of non-anxious presence that the curate is being formed to offer. That is a significant ask, on top of the ordinary demands of ministry.

TIs are not immune to the pressures that affect curates. They can over-function and exhaust themselves in the formation role. They can find the dual role genuinely destabilising - particularly when a curate is struggling, when concerns need to be named formally, or when the training relationship itself becomes strained. They can feel isolated in holding responsibility that the parish cannot see and the diocese can only partially share.

The emotional weight of a curacy that is not going well - one in which trust has broken down, in which concerns are escalating, or in which a curate's wellbeing is giving cause for anxiety - is real, and it is not primarily a professional challenge to be managed. It is a pastoral reality to be held with honesty and appropriate support.

What the diocese offers Training Incumbents

Training Incumbents are not expected to carry the formation task alone. The diocese is responsible for supporting TIs as well as curates, and that responsibility has a practical shape.

The MDO and IMD team are available to TIs as well as curates. Where the training relationship is under strain, where concerns are escalating, or where a TI is uncertain how to proceed, the right response is to contact the MDO early - not as a last resort, but as a normal use of the support structure the diocese provides. Early contact is not a sign of failure in the formation role. It is exactly the kind of prompt, transparent action that the handbook asks of curates in relation to safeguarding and pastoral concerns.

Where a curate is experiencing significant difficulty - mental health concerns, a pastoral crisis, a circumstance affecting their capacity to engage formation - TIs are not expected to address this alone through the supervisory relationship. They are expected to name it, seek advice through the MDO route, and support the curate in accessing whatever additional care is needed. The supervisory relationship is one resource among several, not the whole of the institution's responsibility.

TIs who find the formation role genuinely costly - whose own wellbeing is affected by the demands of accompanying a curate through difficulty - are encouraged to name that too, with the MDO or with their own pastoral support. The Church's expectation is that formation be carried with steadiness and truth, which requires that TIs are sustained as well as capable.

Formation through the formation role

The TI role is not only a service given to the curate. It is itself a season of formation. The question in the For Training Incumbents box at the close of Chapter 1 is worth returning to throughout the curacy: what is it that you are becoming through the experience of accompanying this person?

TIs who bring that question into their own reflective practice - whether through their own supervision, peer support, or spiritual direction - tend to find the role more sustainable and more enriching than those who treat it as a purely professional responsibility. The MDO can advise on what is available to Training Incumbents in the diocese. The formation of the curate and the formation of the TI are not separate processes. They are, at their best, mutually sustaining.

Learning dispositions and how to use them

Curates and Training Incumbents arrive with different tendencies in how they engage with learning. Supervision that is attentive to those tendencies is more effective than supervision that assumes

everyone engages in the same way. Understanding this early in curacy saves a great deal of misread effort on both sides.

Research into adult learning has identified patterns in how people tend to engage with new experience. These patterns are not fixed types, and the evidence does not support treating them as stable, determinative preferences that predict how someone will always learn. What the research does support is that people have characteristic tendencies in how they initially approach learning, and that those tendencies can either be worked with or inadvertently worked against in supervision. The question is not "what type of learner is this curate?" but "how is this curate engaging with learning right now, and what would help them go deeper?"

Underpinning all these tendencies is a more fundamental disposition: the orientation towards formation itself as open and possible. A curate who can receive difficult feedback as information rather than verdict, who can tolerate not-yet-knowing without immediately filling the gap with activity or theory, and who can stay with discomfort long enough for it to become formative, is operating from a growth orientation. That is the disposition the formation disciplines in this handbook are designed to cultivate. The tendencies described below are expressions of how different people engage on the way to that deeper orientation.

The doing tendency

Some curates engage most readily through action. They bring plenty of live material to supervision, are energised by challenge, and tend to act first and reflect later. The most useful supervisory move is to slow things down gently: "What happened inside you at that moment?" The formational risk is premature closure: moving to the next thing before the current thing has been fully attended to.

The reflecting tendency

Some curates engage most readily through observation and sustained thinking. They tend to stand back, gather their thoughts, and reflect carefully before drawing conclusions. They may bring well-processed material to supervision but struggle with the question of what to do next. The most useful supervisory move is to help them land: "Given everything you have noticed, what is one small thing you will try this week?" The formational risk is using reflection as a way of deferring action indefinitely.

The conceptual tendency

Some curates engage most readily through frameworks, principles, and underlying ideas. They want to understand why as well as what and are energised by connecting experience to a larger pattern of meaning. In supervision they may be drawn to the Formation Framework and the theology of ministry and may find purely practical feedback unsatisfying. The most useful supervisory move is to keep the conceptual close to the concrete: "How does that play out in what happened last Tuesday?" The formational risk is abstraction as avoidance.

The practical tendency

Some curates engage most readily by testing ideas in action. They are energised by application and want to know whether something works. They may be impatient with extended reflection and want to move quickly to what they will do differently. The most useful supervisory move is to ensure reflection is genuinely feeding the experiment: "Before we agree what to try, what does this tell you about the pattern?" The formational risk is skipping formation depth in favour of activity.

Most people show more than one of these tendencies, and tendencies shift with context, confidence, and the stage of curacy. A curate who arrives as a strong doer may become more reflective under sustained pressure. A reflector may find their action capacity grows as curacy deepens. The tendencies are starting observations, not settled descriptions.

The question worth holding alongside any observation about tendency is whether the supervisory relationship is serving the curate's actual grain of learning, or whether both parties are unconsciously defaulting to the TI's own preferred way of engaging.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

In the first supervision conversation it is worth noticing how the curate engages with learning, rather than asking them to identify their type. A simple question opens this well: "When do you know that you have learned something, rather than just encountered it?" The answer will usually reveal the dominant tendency. From that point you can adapt your approach: slowing down for those who lead with action, energising those who reflect towards a next step, grounding those who reach for theory, and deepening those who move quickly to practice. This is not a technique to perform. It is an act of attentiveness to the person you are accompanying.

The deeper question to hold throughout curacy is whether the curate is developing the capacity to engage formation openly and honestly, receiving feedback without defensiveness and staying with difficulty long enough for it to do its work. That growth in orientation matters more than any tendency.

Before your curate arrives, the practical checklist in Appendix H covers what to have in place in the first weeks. It is also available as a standalone document in the Common Curacy Documents folder on SharePoint.

What good supervision looks like in practice

A clear working agreement from the outset

Early in curacy, the Training Incumbent and curate should agree in writing the basics of how ministry will be lived. In Hereford this sits within the Learning and Ministry Agreement and is revisited at assessment points. The working agreement should state plainly:

- supervision frequency, length, and protected time
- where supervision happens, private and not overheard
- how agenda items are brought and prioritised
- expectations about rest day, sabbath time, and annual leave
- availability and digital communication windows
- study time and diocesan IMD commitments

- what is in scope now, and what is not yet in scope
- how concerns are raised and what happens next

A protected rhythm

As a norm: stipendiary curates meet weekly in the early months, then by agreement; self-supporting and part-time curates agree a rhythm that is viable and faithful, established early and kept steady.

Planned dates should be honoured and only rearranged in exceptional circumstances. Frequent rearrangement quickly becomes a pattern of not meeting, which harms learning and strains the relationship.

Supervision is distinct from staff meetings. Staff meetings coordinate work. Supervision attends to formation, support, and accountability in public ministry.

A simple session structure, with an agreed agenda

A workable standing agenda:

- opening prayer
- checking-in, including the working relationship if needed
- learning: one or two real ministry episodes, reflection, and feedback
- support: pressures, discouragement, and what helps steadiness and repair
- management: scope, time-use, progress on LMA and CDP, risks, reporting deadlines
- agreements summarised: actions, boundaries, safeguarding steps, follow-up
- closing prayer

Brief record-keeping that serves clarity and fairness

A short, agreed note of each session protects both curate and Training Incumbent. It reduces later misunderstanding and supports evidence over time. Records should be:

- brief, factual, and focused on themes and agreed actions
- free of identifiable pastoral detail
- agreed within a few days
- kept by both parties in line with diocesan confidentiality guidance
- available, if needed, to support formal assessment processes

A fairness norm: significant concerns should not appear for the first time in written reports. Raise them in supervision, record them as a theme, and revisit them with time for learning and change, unless the issue is an urgent safeguarding or serious-risk concern requiring immediate escalation.

Naming concerns and having the honest conversation

The no-surprises principle is one of the most important commitments in curacy formation: if a concern is serious enough to appear in an assessment report, it should already have been named in supervision. But naming a concern requires courage on both sides, and the handbook's expectation of early naming is only as useful as the support behind it.

Most hard conversations in supervision go badly not because the content is too difficult, but because the conversation carries too many things at once. Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, in their research into what makes difficult conversations difficult, identify three conversations that routinely get tangled together: what happened and who is responsible; how each person feels about it; and what it means about who they are. Separating these three threads is the most practical thing either party can do before raising something hard. The sections below apply this thinking to both sides of the supervisory relationship.

For the curate: raising a concern with your Training Incumbent

Raising a concern with the person who holds authority over your formation and assessment is genuinely difficult. The temptation is either to minimise it until it is no longer bearable, or to escalate before the conversation has been attempted. Neither serves you or the relationship well.

A useful starting place is to describe what you have noticed, without yet interpreting it. "I've noticed that our supervision sessions have been shortened a few times recently, and I'm finding it hard to bring the material I need to bring." This opens the conversation from observation rather than accusation and gives the TI room to respond without defending. Most concerns that feel very large in anticipation become manageable once they are named plainly.

If the direct conversation has been attempted and the concern remains, escalation to the MDO or IMD lead is the right next step - not a failure of the relationship but a proper use of the support structure the diocese provides.

For the Training Incumbent: naming a concern with your curate

A concern observed in supervision should be named there by the Training Incumbent, clearly, with concrete examples, and without waiting until it has become a pattern significant enough to justify formal action. The instinct to protect the curate from difficult feedback is understandable but unkind: a curate who does not know that something needs to change cannot change it.

The most useful framing separates impact from intent: "When you did X, the effect on the team was Y. I don't think you intended that, but I want us to look at it together." This keeps the conversation formational rather than accusatory and makes room for the curate to engage rather than defend.

Where a concern involves safeguarding, boundary slippage, or fitness to practise, the Training Incumbent should name it promptly, record it clearly, and - where it meets the threshold - escalate it through diocesan procedure without delay.

Rupture and repair

Every training relationship will experience some degree of rupture: misunderstanding, disappointment, a conversation that landed harder than intended, or a period in which trust has worn thin. This is not a sign that the relationship has failed. It is an ordinary feature of any significant human relationship, and how rupture is handled is itself formative material.

A repair that is attempted honestly - naming what happened, taking appropriate responsibility, and agreeing what needs to change - does more for the formation of trustworthiness in a curate than a curacy in which difficulty is always managed rather than engaged. The Formation Qualities of Wisdom, Love for People, and Trustworthiness are tested most sharply not when things are going well, but in the quality of repair when they have gone wrong.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Repair requires the TI to model exactly what the curate is being asked to form: the capacity to acknowledge what went wrong without defensiveness, to stay in relationship through discomfort, and to act from intention rather than reflex. A TI who can do this - who can say "I think I handled that badly and I want to say so" - gives the curate permission to do the same. This is formation in action, not a departure from the supervisory task.

Safeguarding and risk

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Supervision is one of the main places where safeguarding discipline becomes ordinary practice: noticing risk, naming power dynamics, keeping records, and acting promptly. When a safeguarding concern arises, follow diocesan safeguarding procedure. Record and report. Seek advice through the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Supervision works alongside reporting routes; it does not replace them.

How the Formation Framework is used

In supervision

Use the Domains to keep formation integrated. Use the Qualities to name what is emerging, what is fragile, and what needs attention. Treat the Framework as a set of lenses, not a checklist.

In the portfolio

The portfolio holds selected evidence that shows pattern and learning over time. Map lightly to Domains and Qualities where helpful. Depth matters more than volume. Anonymisation is essential.

In assessments

Assessments draw on evidence across time: supervision themes, portfolio material, feedback including 360 where used, and observed practice. The Framework supports fair discernment about what is maturing, what remains uneven, and what needs clearer agreement or a development plan.

When supervision is not working

Name it early. Common warning signs include:

- supervision repeatedly cancelled or displaced by busyness
- supervision becoming only task management or only emotional support
- fear of raising concerns, or chronic defensiveness on either side
- unclear scope, escalating resentment, or persistent misunderstanding
- boundaries, rest, or safeguarding repeatedly slipping without repair

When these patterns appear, the next faithful step is to name the difficulty directly in supervision first, then - if that has not resolved it - to escalate through the usual diocesan route, typically via the MDO or IMD lead, with clarity about what needs to change.

Escalation is not failure. It is the proper use of the structure the diocese provides to hold both curate and Training Incumbent accountable. A curacy that is not working is not serving anyone well, and addressing it promptly is an act of care for the curate, the TI, and the parishioners in their keeping.

Diocesan support: who to contact and when

Training Incumbents and curates both have access to diocesan support throughout curacy. This is not a safety net for when things go seriously wrong. It is an active support structure that is designed to be used ordinarily and used early. The following is a consolidated account of what the diocese offers, to whom, and for what.

The Ministry Development Officer (MDO)

The MDO is the primary diocesan contact for formation support for both curates and Training Incumbents. Contact the MDO when:

- you are uncertain how to handle a formation concern and want to think it through with someone who knows the framework
- the supervisory relationship is under strain, and the difficulty has not resolved through direct conversation
- a curate's development is giving cause for concern, and you are considering a Targeted Development Plan
- a curate is struggling significantly with wellbeing, and the pastoral support available within the relationship is not sufficient
- you are a TI finding the formation role genuinely costly and need support yourself
- you are approaching a panel or assessment and want to check that your written input is appropriately framed
- anything has escalated, or you think it may be about to escalate, and you want advice before it does

Early contact with the MDO is always right. It is not a sign that the curacy has failed or that the training relationship is broken. It is a sign that the structure is being used as the diocese intends.

The IMD lead and IMD team

The IMD (Initial Ministerial Development) team holds the broader pattern of curacy formation across the diocese: cohort learning, Reflective Practice Groups, placement coordination, and the shared rhythm of formation events. Contact the IMD lead when:

- a curate is not engaging with diocesan formation commitments such as IMD days or RPG participation, and you need to understand the expectations and escalation route
- questions arise about placement arrangements, timing, or learning goals
- you need clarity on assessment timing, panel process, or formal paperwork expectations

For most day-to-day formation questions, the MDO is the right first contact. The IMD lead is most useful for questions about the structure and rhythm of the programme itself.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Safeguarding concerns are not escalated through the MDO or IMD team. They go directly to the DSO, promptly, in line with diocesan safeguarding procedure. This is true whether the concern arises in supervision, in the portfolio, during a panel, or at any other point. The assessment timeline does not take precedence over a safeguarding response. Chapter 13 and Appendix C hold the full guidance.

The pastoral bishop

Episcopal oversight of curacy is real and active. The bishop receives panel recommendations, makes the final decision on sign-off, and holds pastoral responsibility for the formation of ordained ministers in the diocese. Where a concern is serious - about fitness to practise, about the welfare of a curate, or about a training relationship that cannot be repaired - the bishop or archdeacon may be involved directly, ordinarily through the MDO route.

A note on confidentiality within the support structure

Curates and TIs sometimes hesitate to contact the MDO because they are uncertain what will be shared and with whom. The MDO's role is to support and advise, not to monitor or report. Conversations with the MDO are held with appropriate discretion. Where something said in that conversation has implications for formal processes - a safeguarding concern, a fitness-to-practise question - the MDO will say so clearly and explain what happens next. You will not be surprised by what is shared.

The exception, as always, is safeguarding: a safeguarding concern disclosed in any context goes through the proper route, and confidentiality cannot be promised where risk may be present. That is not a reason to hesitate before contacting the MDO. It is a reason to contact the DSO directly when the concern is specifically a safeguarding one.

A quick guide to who to contact

Formation support, supervision concerns, TDP advice, wellbeing concerns: contact the MDO.

Programme structure, assessment timing, RPG, or placement questions: contact the IMD lead.

Safeguarding concerns: contact the DSO directly, promptly, through diocesan procedure.

Serious fitness-to-practise or welfare concerns: contact the MDO, who will involve the bishop's office where appropriate.

All these routes are available to curates and Training Incumbents. None of them is reserved for emergencies.

Quick reference: supervision essentials

- protected time, private space, free from interruption
- distinct from staff meetings
- holds educational, supportive, and managerial functions together
- clear agreements on scope, boundaries, availability, rest, and study time
- brief notes agreed promptly: themes and actions only, anonymised
- safeguarding concerns handled through diocesan procedure, promptly
- uses the Formation Framework as a lens across time, not a tick-list
- learning orientations identified early and used to shape supervisory approach

- concerns named in supervision before they reach written reports

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

What is my dominant learning orientation, and how is my TI shaping supervision to serve it? Where is the fit strong, and where does it need adjustment?

Is supervision staying in all three functions - educational, supportive, and managerial - or has one strand been quietly dropped?

Is there a concern I have been sitting with rather than naming? What would it take to bring it into supervision this week?

Where has a rupture in a relationship - in ministry or in supervision itself - been left unrepaired? What is the small first step towards repair?

When I act on autopilot in supervision rather than from intention, what is usually happening? What would it take to pause and choose differently?

What is the thing I most need to hear from my TI that I have not yet given them permission to say?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 4

Reflective Practice Groups

Learning the Craft of Discernment Together

Chapter 5 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Reflective Practice Groups are one of the principal ways curates are accompanied in theological reflection, self-awareness, and wise practice. The group provides a shared space in which the craft of discernment is learnt with others: complexity is stayed with rather than hurried, and God's action in ministry is attended to together.

A Reflective Practice Group is distinct from a discussion group and distinct from supervision. It is a disciplined practice of shared reflection on lived ministry. The People of God are served indirectly because the minister is being formed in truthfulness, restraint, and prayerful attention.

What Reflective Practice Groups are for

Reflective Practice Groups help cultivate:

- a reflective, prayerful habit of mind
- discernment of what is happening beneath the surface
- attentiveness to power, emotion, and system dynamics
- theological speech that stays close to lived pastoral reality
- the courage to speak truthfully, with restraint and kindness
- a growing pattern of the Formation Qualities across the Domains

The underlying ethos is being with: remaining present to what is real, without fixing, rescuing, or performing. Over time, the group becomes a small school of patience, where attention is treated as an act of love.

INNER CONDITION AND THE RPG

Deborah Rowland's research found that the capacity to stay present - to attend closely to what is happening, in oneself and in the room, without being distracted or thrown by it - is among the most consequential inner capacities a leader can develop. The Reflective Practice Group is one of the few places in curacy where this capacity is practised deliberately and together. The group trains the quality of attention that Rowland identifies as the foundation of effective, sustainable leadership: not knowing more, but noticing more honestly.

A brief practical lens

Use this lightly. It is offered to keep participation grounded and balanced.

- Bring real ministry, not general opinions.
- Speak truthfully, with restraint.
- Listen for what is happening in you and between people.
- Leave with one clear learning or next step.

Membership and participation

Reflective Practice Groups are normally small groups of curates facilitated within the diocesan IMD pattern. Participation is part of the common discipline shared across a cohort, and the aim is a pattern of life in which formation practices can be sustained.

The group is also one of the places where curates learn what healthy collaborative practice looks like in action: trust built through honest sharing, productive disagreement held with restraint, commitment to one another's formation rather than performance, and accountability carried without blame. These are not incidental features of a well-functioning group. They are formation outcomes in their own right.

The Reflective Practice Group covenant

A covenant protects trust and keeps the work formational. Each group should adopt and revisit a covenant that holds these commitments.

Confidentiality and anonymity

What is shared stays in the group. Pastoral material is anonymised. Identifying details are removed. Other people's stories are not carried out of the room.

Respect and restraint

Speech about others is held with care. Blame, ridicule, and confident certainty about motives have no place here.

Non-triangulation

The group is for reflection on ministry, not for venting about named individuals, recruiting allies, or avoiding direct conversation where that is needed. Where a difficulty with another person needs addressing, the group can help you think about how to have that conversation - not substitute for it.

Permission to be unfinished

Uncertainty, confusion, and failure may be brought without fear of humiliation. The curate is being formed, not performing.

Commitment to reflection, not fixing

The rush to advice is given time to slow down. Attention, curiosity, and theology come first. The temptation to rescue the presenter from their difficulty is one of the most common ways groups lose depth. Staying with the question is usually more valuable than answering it.

Safeguarding clarity

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Where a safeguarding concern arises during group reflection, it must be acted on. Such concerns are not held in confidence by the group. Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer promptly, in line with diocesan procedure. The group can return to the learning once the concern has been escalated appropriately.

How a session normally runs

A simple structure guards depth:

- arriving prayer and brief check-in
- one presenter offers a real incident or ongoing situation
- clarifying questions for understanding, not interrogation
- shared reflection led by the facilitator
- the presenter names what they are taking away
- brief linking to relevant Formation Qualities and Domains
- closing prayer

Facilitators hold the reflective model. Curates are not expected to learn multiple models at once. Model notes are held in diocesan facilitator guidance and on SharePoint.

The group's purpose is not to discuss ministry. It is to form, in each curate, the habits of attention that good ministry requires. The Qualities are nouns, but the group's work is verbal: noticing, staying, attending, refraining from rescue, holding the question, returning. Over time, what is being formed in the group is not knowledge about the Qualities but the capacity to inhabit them.

A curate who has learned to stay with a question they cannot answer is being formed in Wisdom. A curate who has learned to attend to a fellow curate without trying to fix them is being formed in Love for People. A curate who has learned to bring uncomfortable material into the room without tidying it first is being formed in Trustworthiness. The group is not where the Qualities are evidenced. It is where they are practised.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

RPG participation is a diocesan formation commitment, not an optional supplement to supervision. Your role is to protect space for it in the curate's week, to follow up on what they are learning there - without pressing for details that belong inside the group - and to take seriously any concerns about group health or participation that the curate raises with you. Where a curate is finding RPG difficult to engage, that is itself formative material worth exploring in supervision.

What growth looks like in Reflective Practice Groups

Over time, these marks of formation should become visible:

- increased honesty without collapse into self-criticism
- greater tolerance of complexity and ambiguity
- clearer theological language in relation to lived practice
- stronger awareness of boundaries, power, and safeguarding discipline
- a growing capacity to choose small, faithful actions rather than large, anxious ones
- the ability to stay with a question in the group rather than moving quickly to resolution

This is the craft of discernment learnt in company. It is part of the Church's care for those in its pastoral keeping, and part of the curate's becoming, so that public office may be inhabited with steadiness and hope.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these after an RPG session, in journalling, or in supervision. Take one at a time.

What did I notice happening in me during the session - and did I name it, or carry it silently?

Where did I feel the pull to fix or advise rather than stay with the question? What was underneath that?

What is the one thing I am taking away from today's reflection, and what small practice does it point towards?

Is there something I have been reluctant to bring to the group? What would it take to bring it next time?

How is my participation in the group shaping the quality of attention I bring to ministry day to day?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 5

The Portfolio

Evidence with Integrity

Chapter 6 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

The portfolio is an offering of truth: a gathered witness to the pattern of your formation over time, made available for discernment, fair assessment, and a faithful handover into continuing ministerial development.

A portfolio is small and chosen. It shows how the settled pattern of character and practice is forming in you as a minister of the Church: through prayer and worship, supervision and reflective practice, pastoral encounters, and public responsibility carried without hurry or concealment.

Because the Church must speak truthfully about readiness for licensed public ministry, depth is preferred to volume. A few well-chosen pieces can reveal more of Christ's shaping than a large archive.

Core principles

Hold to a few disciplined principles:

- **Depth over volume:** ten thoughtful pieces are better than fifty thin ones.
- **Pattern over isolated events:** repeated practices, learning over time, and integrated change are what assessors are seeking.
- **Judgement over performance:** the portfolio shows growth in reflective maturity and trustworthy practice, not a record of impressive activity.
- **Sustainability matters:** a truthful pattern of life and work should be visible. For self-supporting and part-time curates, a realistic scope and pattern of life should be explicit.
- **Trustworthiness is central:** confidentiality, anonymisation, safeguarding discipline, and accurate record-keeping are themselves evidence of formation.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE WHOLE

Deborah Rowland's research identifies acknowledging the whole as one of the inner capacities most associated with effective, sustainable leadership: the ability to hold the full picture across time rather than reducing it to the most recent episode or the most recent success. The portfolio is the discipline that makes this possible in curacy. It is how the curate - and the Church - can see pattern rather than event, trajectory rather than snapshot. Building it little and often, with honesty, is how that larger picture becomes visible.

Confidentiality and anonymisation

Pastoral material must be anonymised with rigour. This belongs to both Love for People and Trustworthiness.

Minimum standard:

- remove names, locations, dates, and distinctive details
- avoid combinations of facts that could allow identification
- do not include screenshots of messages, emails, or social media content containing personal data
- where consent is relevant, for example for images, obtain it and record it appropriately
- where doubt remains, leave it out and bring the question to supervision

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

The portfolio should show careful regard for the privacy and dignity of others. The Church does not ask you to use another person's story as evidence of your growth. Portfolio material must never compromise confidentiality or identify individuals. Evidence focuses on your learning, judgement, and practice change - not another person's story.

What goes in the portfolio

A balanced portfolio commonly includes:

- supervision notes: themes and learning, not raw pastoral detail
- Reflective Practice Group reflections: anonymised, with clear learning points
- short theological reflections linked to lived ministry
- feedback summaries from Training Incumbent and others, held with discretion
- worship leadership reflections: planning, presiding, preaching, occasional offices
- safeguarding evidence: training completion, reflections on boundaries, power, and consent, reporting discipline
- learning notes from IMD days, placements, and reading, linked to practice
- collaboration and enabling others in ministry
- handling difficulty well: conflict, disappointment, failure, and repair - including what was learned and what changed

The portfolio shows what is being formed, not everything that has been done.

Evidence does not have to take the same form for every curate. A curate with a strongly activist or pragmatist learning orientation may generate their most truthful evidence through action logs, annotated timelines, or brief bullet summaries of what happened and what changed - rather than extended written reflections. What matters is that the evidence is honest, anonymised, and shows pattern over time. Discuss format with your Training Incumbent early and keep it consistent.

Pathway notes

Pioneer pathway

Include documented experiments and adaptations, listening insights, partnerships, and evidence of small repeatable practices. Consent and safeguarding discipline should be shown in forms appropriate to context.

Distinctive Deacons

Include evidence of diaconal visibility and service, advocacy with integrity, and reflections on power and representation in public and civic settings.

Self-supporting and part-time pathways

Include evidence that shows realistic scope, clear boundaries, and a sustainable rhythm of learning and ministry. A realistic scope and rhythm should be explicit.

Mapping evidence to the Formation Framework

Each substantial portfolio item should be mapped to one or two Formation Qualities, sometimes three at most, and to at least one Domain, often two.

This mapping is a discipline of integration, not a paper exercise. Public ministry and interior life are not kept in separate compartments.

A simple portfolio note format

A simple format is usually enough:

- **What this is:** practice or incident, anonymised.
- **Why it matters:** the formational question.
- **Domains:** one or two.
- **Qualities:** one or two.
- **What I learned:** one short paragraph.
- **What changed:** one concrete practice or boundary.
- **What will show it is sustained:** what you will repeat or notice over time.

What assessors look for

When your portfolio is read for assessments and panels, attention is usually given to:

- **Depth:** reflective maturity, theological engagement, honest self-awareness.
- **Pattern:** growth over time, repeated practice, integration across contexts.
- **Judgement:** wise, proportionate decisions, attention to power and safeguarding, capacity to prioritise.
- **Sustainability:** boundaries, rest, realistic scope, resilient practice.
- **Trustworthiness:** confidentiality, anonymisation, record-keeping, reliable follow-through.

Keeping the portfolio manageable

A portfolio becomes liveable when it is built little and often:

- keep a weekly slot, even thirty minutes, for writing and filing
- log supervision and Reflective Practice Group themes promptly and anonymise immediately
- keep a short evidence list agreed in supervision
- review the portfolio quarterly with your Training Incumbent, adjusting as your pattern of life changes

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

The portfolio is a shared discipline, not the curate's administrative burden. Regular brief reviews in supervision - every six to eight weeks is usually enough - keep it honest and manageable. The questions to hold are whether the evidence shows pattern rather than performance, whether the curate's learning orientation is shaping the format sensibly, and whether the anonymisation standard is being maintained rigorously. Where evidence is thin in a particular Domain or Quality, that is formative information worth naming and attending to.

Portfolio structures, prompts, and templates are held on diocesan SharePoint. Appendix F points to where they are held. The handbook holds the discipline and expectations; SharePoint holds the working forms.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

If I looked across my portfolio evidence so far, what pattern would I see - and what would be conspicuously absent?

Am I choosing portfolio items that show genuine learning, or items that present me well? What is the difference in this week's material?

Where has difficulty - conflict, failure, disappointment - been avoided in the portfolio? What would it take to include one honest account of something that went wrong and what I learned from it?

Is the evidence format I am using serving my actual learning orientation, or am I defaulting to a format that feels safer?

What does this month's portfolio material show about the pattern of my formation - and what would I want it to show that it does not yet show?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 6

Journalling

A Private Discipline of Truthfulness

Chapter 7 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Journalling is a quiet practice of formation: a private discipline by which attention is trained and truth is received. In a life of public ministry, where much is seen and much is carried, a small space is kept where the heart may be tended in God's presence.

Journalling supports the development of the settled pattern of character and practice that ministry requires. It strengthens self-awareness, steadiness under pressure, and wise restraint. Over time, it can help you notice what is emerging in you before it spills into ministry as haste, avoidance, over-functioning, or boundary slippage.

A journal is private. What matters is what the writing enables: prayerful attention, honest naming, and a clearer next faithful step.

What journalling is for

A curate's journal can help you:

- notice grace and resistance in the ordinary texture of ministry
- recognise repeating patterns under pressure, including what you avoid and what you grasp
- bring prayer and theology closer to lived experience
- carry the responsibilities of public ministry without hidden strain
- name what needs supervision, support, or rest before it becomes unsafe

INNER CONDITION AND JOURNALLING

Deborah Rowland's research identifies staying present - attending closely to what is happening in oneself and in the room - as one of the most consequential inner capacities a leader can cultivate. Journalling is one of the few practices that develops this capacity deliberately, in private, before it is needed in public. A curate who has learnt to notice their own interior movements on the page is better equipped to notice them in a pastoral encounter, a difficult meeting, or a moment of moral pressure.

Journalling is a practice particularly well-suited to those who process experience through reflection before they can act with confidence. For curates, whose dominant orientation is activist or pragmatist, shorter and more action-linked prompts - or brief spoken notes reviewed later - may serve the same formational purpose more honestly. The goal is truthful attention, not a particular writing style. Discuss the approach with your Training Incumbent early.

A few boundaries held as care

Journalling is a personal practice, and a few boundaries protect both you and those you serve:

- keep it separate from portfolio evidence and from pastoral record-keeping
- focus on your own response, learning, boundaries, and judgement, not another person's story
- bring themes to supervision rather than carrying them alone

- where the practice becomes punitive or compulsive, reduce it, simplify it, or change the prompt
- supervision, safeguarding reporting, and professional support remain their own disciplines alongside journalling

Confidentiality and safeguarding discipline

Clergy carry sensitive knowledge. Journalling therefore needs simple discipline:

- write without names, addresses, or distinctive identifying detail
- keep disclosures and allegations out of a private journal entirely
- where you reflect on a pastoral situation, focus on your own response and learning

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

If a safeguarding concern arises during reflection, act through the proper routes promptly, including contact with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer when required. This belongs to both Love for People and Trustworthiness. Journalling does not substitute for reporting.

A small repeatable rule

The best journalling practice is the one that can be sustained in an ordinary week. Choose one rhythm:

- **Daily:** five minutes, one prompt, stop.
- **Weekly:** twenty minutes, review, one theme, one next step.
- **After supervision or Reflective Practice Group:** ten minutes, one learning, one intention.
- **After a difficult incident:** fifteen minutes, name what happened, name what you will do differently.

Small and repeatable is how it is sustained.

Suggested prompts

Use one prompt only. Keep it short. Write for five minutes. Leave it unedited.

Love for God

Where was I honest in prayer this week, and where was I hiding?

Call to Ministry

Where did I feel the responsibilities of public ministry, and what did it draw out in me?

Love for People

Where did I listen well, and where did I rush to fix or control?

Wisdom

What am I avoiding naming because it feels risky or uncomfortable?

Fruitfulness

What grew quietly through patience and fidelity rather than effort?

Potential

What is one small experiment I could try without needing it to succeed?

Trustworthiness

Which boundary needs strengthening this week so that love is safe?

Bringing journalling into supervision without exposing private material

The journal need not be shared. If it yields something worth bringing, bring only:

- one theme in a single line
- one question you want to explore
- one small next step you will practise

The journal remains private. The fruit is brought into accompaniment. Formation is sustained in the light.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Journalling is a private discipline: do not ask to read a curate's journal or press for its content. Your role is to encourage the practice, ask periodically whether it is proving useful, and attend to what the curate brings from it into supervision. Where a curate finds written journalling uncongenial, help them identify an equivalent practice that suits their learning orientation - brief spoken notes, action logs, or a structured post-incident review. The discipline matters; the format is secondary.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision or after a journalling session. Take one at a time.

Is my current journalling practice helping me attend to my interior life, or has it become another task to complete?

What pattern have I noticed across my journal entries over the last month? Is it a pattern I want to stay with, or one I want to change?

Is there something I have been recording without yet bringing to supervision? What would it take to name it there this week?

If written journalling does not suit my learning orientation, what alternative practice would serve the same formational purpose for me?

Rhythms and Agreements

How curacy is held in Hereford

Chapter 8 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Curacy in Hereford is held through a small number of shared practices. They give public ministry a form that can be lived: prayer protected, supervision protected, evidence gathered with integrity, and safeguarding and boundaries held steadily.

Use this chapter as your map. The detail sits in Chapters 9 to 11 and the appendices.

The shared pattern of curacy

Three threads run through the whole of curacy.

	What it is	Where to find it
Supervision	A protected, regular conversation between Training Incumbent and curate, distinct from staff meetings. It holds formation, support, and accountability together.	<i>Chapter 4</i>
Reflective practice	Disciplined shared theological reflection on lived ministry through Reflective Practice Groups, or an agreed equivalent where a different pattern is required.	<i>Chapter 5</i>
Portfolio	A small, chosen body of testimony showing pattern over time, not volume of activity.	<i>Chapter 6</i>

What happens when

Start of curacy

In the first weeks, put the foundations in place:

- Learning and Ministry Agreement agreed and recorded
- CDP opened with initial priorities
- Core Skills completed at Emerging stage as a transition baseline
- supervision rhythm established and protected in diaries
- RPG participation confirmed
- portfolio structure set up lightly, so it remains usable

First Assessment

Held after sufficient lived practice to see early patterns:

- Learning and Ministry Agreement checked and, where needed, reset
- Core Skills reviewed for early coverage and realistic priorities
- CDP refined

Second Assessment

Held after sufficient breadth of practice to test integration across contexts:

- Core Skills revisited for consolidation and developmental focus
- CDP updated
- 360 feedback where used
- a Targeted Development Plan agreed if growth has stalled or risk is rising

Final Assessment

Held at end-of-curacy stage:

- CDP provides the primary formation narrative
- Core Skills provides supporting evidence of developing practice
- explicit attention to Trustworthiness, sustained practice, and safe judgement
- clear transition planning and CMD handover priorities

Timing is shaped by the lived pattern of each pathway. The aim is fair evidence, not calendar compliance.

Detail: Chapter 11 and Appendix B.

What each document is for

Document	Purpose	Where to find it
Learning and Ministry Agreement	Sets the scope and rhythm of curacy in this place, including rest, boundaries, supervision, and a realistic pattern of life.	<i>Chapter 9</i>
Curate Development Plan	The primary formation narrative. Holds formation priorities and reflection across the Formation Qualities and Domains, grounded in evidence over time.	<i>Chapter 10</i>
Core Skills	The operational development tracker. Used in supervision to track engagement and development in core areas of ministry practice.	<i>Chapter 10</i>

Targeted Development Plan	A time-limited plan used when extra focus is needed, clear about outcomes, support, and review timing.	Chapter 10
Portfolio	A small, selected body of testimony to formation: anonymised, realistic in scope, and focused on learning, judgement, and practice change over time.	Chapter 6

A realistic pattern of life is expected

Naming a realistic pattern of life is part of truthful formation. It is not an administrative formality. It is how curacy is protected from becoming heroic performance, and how those in the curate's pastoral keeping are protected from a minister who is running on empty.

For SSM and part-time curates, a realistic pattern of life should be visible in the Learning and Ministry Agreement, CDP, Core Skills expectations, portfolio expectations, and assessment timing. This normally includes clear decisions about:

- realistic scope for ministry within your pattern of life
- protected time for prayer, supervision, reflective practice, learning, and rest
- travel realities, paid work, caring responsibilities, and seasonal pressures
- what is reduced or omitted so formation practices remain sustainable

A curacy that cannot be lived will not form anyone well.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Your primary responsibility with this chapter is to make the map real in the first weeks: agreements in place, rhythms established, and scope honest. Where the pattern slips - supervision deferred, rest unprotected, scope quietly expanding - name it early. The shared pattern of curacy is only as strong as the habits formed in the first month. A curate who sees these disciplines modelled by their TI will take them more seriously than one who reads about them in a handbook.

Where the working paperwork lives

This handbook sets out principles and expectations. The working documents are held on diocesan SharePoint:

- Learning and Ministry Agreement template and guidance
- CDP and TDP templates
- Core Skills and guidance
- supervision log template
- portfolio structure and prompts
- assessment and panel paperwork
- placement paperwork and 360 materials

Detail: Appendix F.

When curacy feels crowded or unclear, reduce to four questions:

1. What is being formed in me as a public minister?
2. What must I carry reliably and safely in the next month?
3. What am I learning about this place and the craft of ministry?
4. What is the next faithful step, held within a sustainable pattern of life?

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Are all three threads - supervision, reflective practice, portfolio - being held, or has one quietly dropped away? What would it take to restore it?

Is my pattern of life, as it is lived, named honestly in my Learning and Ministry Agreement? What needs updating?

At this point in curacy, which of the four documents - LMA, CDP, Core Skills, portfolio - is giving me the most honest account of my formation? Which is giving me the least?

What would it mean to treat the shared pattern of curacy as a discipline of love rather than an administrative requirement?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 8

The Learning and Ministry Agreement

A covenant for sustainable formation

Chapter 9 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

The Learning and Ministry Agreement (LMA) is the practical covenant that holds curacy in a particular place, with particular people, under the responsibilities of public ministry. It names what is being asked, what is being protected, and what lies outside scope for now.

The LMA is one of the Church's ordinary means of care: a shared promise about scope, supervision, boundaries, rest, learning, and the conditions in which the settled pattern of character and practice is cultivated.

What the LMA is for

A workable LMA does four things.

1. **Names scope truthfully:** what is in scope now, and what is not yet in scope.
2. **Protects formation practices:** supervision, reflective practice, prayer, and learning are held as core disciplines of curacy.
3. **Makes ministry safe:** boundaries, safeguarding clarity, and digital practice are named plainly.
4. **Holds a realistic pattern of life:** the pattern of life is faced honestly, so curacy can be lived without hidden strain.

When the LMA is made and reviewed

At the start of curacy

The LMA is agreed early, then revisited once the first weeks have surfaced what is realistic.

At each assessment point

The LMA is checked and, where needed, adjusted.

When circumstances change

Illness, family pressures, changes in parish staffing, vacancy, travel demands, housing pressures, or significant shifts in diocesan commitments normally call for a prompt LMA reset.

The LMA is a living agreement. Changes are recorded clearly rather than carried as unspoken assumptions.

What the LMA covers

Keep it plain. If it becomes complicated, it stops being used.

1. Pattern of week and protected time

- rest day and sabbath pattern, including what protected means in practice
- annual leave expectations and how leave is requested and recorded

- study time and expectations for reading and learning
- time for IMD days and diocesan learning commitments
- travel realities and any agreed travel limits

2. Scope of ministry

The LMA names scope in two directions.

In scope now: for example, leading worship, an agreed preaching pattern, pastoral visiting, school presence, occasional offices within agreed limits, participation in parish teams and meetings.

Not yet in scope: for example, leading major change projects, chairing PCC, managing entrenched conflict alone, carrying complex safeguarding cases, taking responsibility without appropriate oversight.

The LMA also names how scope widens over time, and what evidence will be looked for before responsibility increases. This is one of the main protections against premature loading, and it protects Training Incumbents from unspoken expectation.

3. Supervision and reflective practice

- supervision frequency, length, and protected time
- where supervision happens, private and free from interruption
- how agenda items are brought and prioritised
- how supervision is recorded: themes and agreed actions only, anonymised
- participation in RPG, or an agreed equivalent where a different pattern is required, and how it is made sustainable

4. Boundaries and availability, including digital practice

- normal availability windows and response expectations
- digital messaging windows and what is handled by other means
- how urgent pastoral need is handled out of hours
- how confidentiality is held in public and online spaces
- role accounts, access management, and consent for images and stories

5. Safeguarding and risk discipline

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Safeguarding commitments belong in the LMA from the outset: training completion and refresh expectations, what happens when a concern arises - record, report, contact the DSO through diocesan procedure promptly - expectations about record-keeping and storage, and the limits of confidentiality in ministry settings.

6. Support and escalation routes

- what happens when supervision is slipping or not working
- what happens when workload becomes unsustainable
- who to contact: Training Incumbent first, then MDO or IMD lead as appropriate, safeguarding escalated to the DSO as required

The LMA is also a good place to note the curate's dominant learning orientation and agree early what forms of evidence, journalling, and supervision approach will suit them best. What is agreed in the first weeks tends to shape what becomes habitual.

A realistic pattern of life, by pathway

A realistic pattern of life is named early and revisited often.

Stipendiary full-time curates

The LMA normally includes weekly supervision early on, then a reviewed rhythm. It also makes Sundays and rest explicit and attends to the common tendency to over-function quietly.

Part-time stipendiary curates

The LMA translates part-time into a lived pattern: days in ministry, availability windows, travel realism, Sundays, and what is explicitly outside current scope. A part-time curacy holds its own expectations, not compressed full-time ones.

Self-Supporting Ministers

The LMA treats paid work, caring responsibilities, and travel as part of the formation context rather than obstacles to it. A faithful curacy is one that can be lived. That typically requires explicit decisions about:

- scope that fits the pattern of life
- protected time for supervision, reflective practice, prayer, and learning
- what is reduced or omitted so core practices remain sustainable
- assessment timing that matches lived evidence

Pioneer and Distinctive Deacon pathways

The LMA names what faithful presence looks like in the context, and what evidence will be gathered with integrity. Where ministry sits in less conventional settings, digital boundaries, consent, and safeguarding discipline remain central.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

The LMA is worth more time than it typically receives. A curate who arrives to find the agreement vague about scope, rest, or digital availability will either over-function or under-function - and may not realise which until the pattern is already established. The first few weeks set the defaults. Taking thirty minutes to agree the LMA concretely, and revisiting it after the first month, is among the most formative things a TI can do for a curate's sustainability and growth.

A quick test of whether the LMA is workable

An LMA is usually working when it is:

- short enough to reread

- explicit about rest, availability, and supervision
- clear about scope now and scope later
- honest about travel, paid work, and limits
- clear about safeguarding and escalation routes
- revised when reality changes, rather than months afterwards

Templates and current process notes are on SharePoint. Appendix F points to where they are held.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Does my current LMA reflect the curacy I am living, or the curacy I intended to live? What needs updating?

What is the thing the LMA does not yet name that most needs to be named - a boundary, a limit, a realistic scope decision?

Where has scope expanded quietly beyond what the LMA agreed? What would it take to name that and reset it?

Is the rest and sabbath pattern in the LMA real or notional? What one change would make it real?

If I were joining this curacy today as a new curate, what is the first thing I would want the LMA to say clearly that it does not yet say?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 9

The Curate Development Plan and Targeted Development Plans

Formation priorities, held in truth

Chapter 10 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

The Curate Development Plan (CDP) is the living formation map for curacy. It keeps growth focused, honest, and grounded in a realistic pattern of life. It is a shared discipline of attention: what is being formed, what is being practised, what is being learned, and what needs time.

A Targeted Development Plan (TDP) is used when a narrower, time-limited focus is needed, either to address a clear gap, respond to risk, or stabilise formation when patterns are not maturing.

What the CDP is for

A workable CDP:

- holds a small number of priorities that matter most now
- links those priorities to the Formation Qualities and Domains
- names concrete practices and what maturing will look like over time
- supports fair evidence for assessments and, later, CMD handover
- keeps a realistic pattern of life in view for every pathway

The Curate Development Plan is where aspiration becomes practice.

How the CDP relates to the LMA, supervision, and portfolio

These four elements work together. When one floats free, formation becomes either vague or procedural.

- **LMA:** holds scope, rhythm, boundaries, rest, and protected practices.
- **CDP:** holds formation priorities and the practices that shape them.
- **Supervision:** is where CDP priorities are worked on through real episodes of ministry, with feedback and agreed next steps.
- **Portfolio:** holds selected evidence that shows pattern, reflection, and changed practice over time.

How the CDP relates to the Core Skills Framework

The diocese uses two practical tools alongside the Formation Framework. They do different jobs, and they are designed to work together.

1 Curate Development Plan: the formation map (mandatory)

The CDP is the agreed formation map for the current phase. It names a small number of priorities that matter most now, links them to the Formation Qualities and Domains, and identifies the repeatable practices and evidence that will indicate maturing ministry over time. The CDP is reviewed and adjusted as the curacy context becomes clearer.

The CDP answers: What is being formed now, and how will we recognise growth over time?

2 Core Skills Framework: the coverage and sequencing tool (normal practice)

The Core Skills Framework is a companion coverage tool used by many Training Incumbents and curates. It supports safe sequencing and reduces avoidable gaps in experience. It is used lightly to keep the core practices of ordained ministry in view, and to agree what is practised next, with what support, and with what feedback.

The checklist answers: What have we practised, what is next, and what is becoming reliable?

How they work together in supervision

Most supervision conversations work well when they draw on a real episode of ministry and then link to both tools. The checklist helps identify the next appropriate opportunity to practise and the level of support needed. The CDP holds the deeper formational question: what is being formed in public office, what is being learnt about judgement, boundaries, prayer, and trustworthiness, and what changes are being sustained.

How they are used at assessments

At the First and Second Assessments, the Formation Qualities and Domains are used as lenses to support formative discernment. The checklist offers a brief snapshot of coverage and developing confidence where helpful, used to inform the conversation rather than to band or determine outcomes.

At the Final Assessment, the checklist can support the overall picture of increasing responsibility and reliability, alongside the CDP trajectory and curated portfolio evidence. End-of-curacy outcomes and, where used, band descriptors belong to the Final Assessment stage only.

Keeping the tools in their right place

The checklist is a supervision aid: next practice, next step, next feedback. It carries weight in proportion to the depth of reflection behind it, and items can be deferred legitimately when the context does not yet allow safe or appropriate practice. Deferrals are named transparently and revisited.

The CDP and portfolio carry the formation narrative: what is being formed, what has changed, what is being sustained. The aim is depth, honesty, and stable practice.

What goes into a CDP priority

Keep priorities few. Two to four is often enough. Each priority is written plainly and normally includes:

- **Focus:** what is being formed or strengthened.
- **Formation lenses:** relevant Domain or Domains, and one or two Formation Qualities.
- **Practices:** what will be repeated over the coming weeks.

- **Support:** what will be provided, for example supervision focus, observation, reading, coaching, peer learning.
- **Evidence to notice:** what will indicate growth over time, and where it will be recorded.

A simple test: can both curate and Training Incumbent name the priority, the practice, and the sign of change without referring to paperwork?

Writing CDP priorities well

A well-formed CDP priority does four things: it draws the curate's attention towards a clear formation question rather than leaving growth vague; it identifies the productive edge where challenge is present but the risk of harm is low; it names the conditions - supervision, feedback, safe practice opportunities - that will make learning possible; and it describes what steady, changed practice will look like over time. When all four are present, the priority is usually workable.

The form priorities take will also vary by learning orientation. A curate with an activist or pragmatist orientation will engage most honestly with a priority framed around a concrete repeatable action, with the formational question embedded rather than leading. A curate with a reflector or theorist orientation may benefit from a priority that names the formation question explicitly and uses the practice as the means of testing it. What matters is that the priority is honest, specific, and can be worked on in the coming weeks.

A brief practical prompt for writing priorities

Use this only as a drafting aid, then write the priority in ordinary language.

- What is the main formation question here?
- What is one repeatable practice for the next month?
- What feedback or observation will help?
- What will look different in six to eight weeks if this is maturing?

Reviewing the CDP

The CDP is revisited:

- lightly in supervision at agreed intervals
- at each assessment point as part of shared discernment
- when the context changes, for example vacancy, conflict, illness, workload change, or family pressures

A CDP is a map, not a verdict. Adjustments are expected as reality becomes clearer.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

The CDP's usefulness in supervision depends on whether it stays close to real ministry. A priority that cannot be connected to an actual episode, and that neither curate nor TI can name without consulting the paperwork, has already floated free. The most formative supervisory move with the CDP is to take one priority and ask: what happened this week that bears on it? That question keeps the map grounded in the territory it is meant to represent.

When a TDP is used

A TDP is used when focused attention is needed, for example when:

- a significant formation gap persists over time
- reliability, boundaries, or safeguarding discipline are slipping
- feedback indicates a pattern that needs clear, time-limited work
- the curate is stuck or overwhelmed and needs a stabilising plan
- increased responsibility is being considered and needs explicit preparation

A TDP is a focused form of care and accountability. Training Incumbents hold the day-to-day formation work. The diocese holds oversight, fairness, and support, especially where risk is rising or trust in the training relationship is under strain.

What a TDP contains

A workable TDP includes:

- **Issue and why it matters:** written concretely and linked to relevant Domains and Qualities.
- **Outcomes:** observable and time-limited, few enough to be realistic.
- **Support:** what the Training Incumbent, diocese, and others will provide.
- **Rhythm:** the supervision rhythm during the plan, and what will be tracked.
- **Evidence:** what will be noticed, and where it will be recorded.
- **Safeguarding clarity where relevant:** including escalation routes and immediate actions if risk changes.
- **Review date and next steps:** including what happens if outcomes are met, partly met, or not met.

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Where a TDP addresses safeguarding, boundary discipline, or fitness to practise, escalation routes and immediate risk thresholds must be stated plainly. The aim is steadiness and truth, not intensity. Where risk is rising, diocesan oversight takes precedence over the training relationship alone.

Fairness across all pathways

For SSM and part-time curates, CDP and TDP expectations are shaped by the lived pattern of life. The test is whether the plan can be carried without eroding prayer, supervision, reflective practice, rest, and safeguarding discipline.

Where a TDP moves towards more serious concerns, fairness is protected through clarity about expectations, written records, and appropriate diocesan oversight.

What growth often looks like

Growth is usually shown by:

- repeated practice that becomes steadier over time
- feedback received and translated into changed practice
- clearer judgement under pressure
- boundaries held kindly and consistently
- safeguarding discipline becoming ordinary, not anxiety-driven
- a sustainable pattern of life that can be lived

Templates and current process notes for CDP and TDP are on SharePoint. Appendix F points to where they are held.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Can I name my current CDP priorities, the practice each one requires, and what growth will look like - without consulting the paperwork? If not, what needs simplifying?

Which of my CDP priorities is closest to lived ministry right now, and which has drifted into abstraction? What would it take to bring it back to ground?

Is the form my CDP priorities take suited to how I learn? Would a different kind of focus - more action-based or more reflective - serve my formation better?

Where has growth been happening that the CDP does not yet name? What would it take to make that visible?

If a TDP were needed, what would it most honestly be about? Is there a pattern I am waiting to be named rather than naming myself?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 10

Assessments, Panels, 360 Feedback, and Episcopal Discernment

Each Assessment of Curacy

Chapter 11 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

In Hereford, curacy assessments arise from discernment and are exercised through it. Assessment is not a hurdle to clear. It is a structured moment of shared attention to what formation is showing, what needs time, and what the Church must be able to say with confidence.

Two questions are held together throughout every assessment.

1. Is the curacy providing what it needs to provide: supervision, appropriate opportunities, timely feedback, clear boundaries, and a sustainable pattern of life?
2. Are the curate and Training Incumbent engaging the rhythms of formation faithfully and well: prayer and worship, supervision, reflective practice, portfolio habits, learning priorities, safeguarding discipline, and accountability?

Assessments keep formation honest, face risk early, and support truthful discernment about readiness for licensed public ministry for the sake of the gospel and those in its pastoral keeping.

Fitness to practise

Fitness to practise runs through all three assessments as a steady thread, not only as a concern at the end of curacy. It asks whether formation is producing a minister who can be trusted with the responsibilities of public office: consistent, boundaried, accountable, safe.

The Formation Quality of Trustworthiness carries the greatest weight in fitness-to-practise discernment. It includes:

- safeguarding discipline and appropriate response to risk
- stable boundaries and consent-aware practice, including in digital spaces
- reliability, accountability, and truthful record-keeping
- appropriate use of power across pastoral, collegial, and public settings
- responsiveness to feedback and oversight, without evasion or defensiveness

Fitness to practise is not a separate test applied at the end. It is the cumulative picture of what supervision logs, portfolio evidence, feedback, and observed practice together show about how a minister is becoming. Where concerns arise at any stage, the Training Incumbent should name them in supervision, record them clearly, and - where the threshold is met - escalate them through diocesan procedure without delay.

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Where a safeguarding concern arises during or between assessments, follow diocesan safeguarding procedure. Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. A safeguarding concern is not held inside the assessment process: it is acted on through the proper route, and the assessment may be paused or restructured if needed. Assessors and Training Incumbents must not allow the assessment timeline to delay a necessary safeguarding response.

Who does what

Curate

- Keep the portfolio manageable and disciplined, with depth rather than volume.
- Bring real ministry material into supervision and follow through agreed actions.
- For First and Second Assessments: select three to five portfolio items that show growth and a current learning edge.
- For Final Assessment: complete the required self-reflection, including the fitness to practise self-assessment (see Appendix F for the form).

Training Incumbent

- Keep supervision regular, protected, and recorded as themes and actions only, with appropriate anonymisation.
- Provide appropriate opportunities, including supported stretch.
- Offer timely, specific feedback linked to agreed formation priorities.
- Provide written input with concrete examples, including any themes relevant to fitness to practise such as safeguarding practice, boundary discipline, reliability, or judgement.

Together

- Keep the Learning and Ministry Agreement current, especially scope, boundaries, rest and sabbath, and a realistic pattern of life for every pathway.
- Agree two to three priorities for the next stage, stated plainly with owner and timescale.
- Where a concern is significant, name it early and agree a written plan with support, timescales, and assessment points.

The three assessments

Curacy assessments are held in three stages: First, Second, and Final. Timing is set by sufficient lived practice and evidence rather than calendar dates alone and is shaped by the lived pattern of each pathway.

First Assessment

A light-touch assessment after sufficient lived practice to see early patterns. Focus: foundations.

- supervision rhythm established and followed through
- scope and boundaries working as agreed in the LMA
- portfolio habits that are workable and realistic
- sustainability and wellbeing, including rest and sabbath
- safeguarding discipline and basic risk awareness
- early patterns in all four Formation Domains visible

The First Assessment is also a moment to reset the LMA if early experience has surfaced what was not anticipated, and to refine CDP priorities for the next stage.

Second Assessment

A midpoint assessment after broader exposure. Focus: integration and range.

- growth across Domains and Qualities, shown through lived examples
- feedback themes, including 360 where used and appropriate
- patterns that are strengthening and patterns that remain uneven
- refreshed CDP priorities and any targeted plan where needed
- fitness to practise thread: are boundaries, accountability, and safeguarding discipline stable under pressure?

Where a Targeted Development Plan is agreed at this stage, it should be clear about outcomes, support, and review timing before the Final Assessment. The no-surprises principle applies anything that will feature in Final Assessment evidence should already have been named and worked on.

Final Assessment

The end-of-curacy assessment stage. Focus: readiness for next-stage public ministry.

- sustained practice over time, not only recent performance
- explicit attention to Trustworthiness as the integrative Quality of safe, accountable public office
- fitness to practise: can this person be trusted with the responsibilities of licensed public ministry, over time, in real contexts?
- panel recommendation informing episcopal discernment
- clear transition planning and CMD handover priorities

Timing is shaped by the lived pattern of each pathway. The aim is fair evidence, not calendar compliance.

What assessors draw on

Across the three assessments, assessors commonly draw on: supervision logs (themes and agreed actions); portfolio evidence selected by the curate; CDP and Core Skills trajectory; written input from the Training Incumbent; 360 feedback where used; and the curate's own self-reflection. The picture assembled is cumulative, not a snapshot.

Pattern over time matters more than any single episode, whether impressive or concerning. Assessors attend to whether formation is becoming integrated across the Domains, and whether the Formation Qualities - above all Trustworthiness - are showing as stable, repeatable practice rather than effortful performance.

360 feedback

360 feedback widens perspective and supports self-awareness. It is a formational exercise, used as part of the Second Assessment, where it can help the curate and Training Incumbent notice patterns that are strengthening, patterns that remain uneven, and the most consequential priorities for the next stage of formation.

In this diocese, the curate receives feedback through direct conversations with reviewers rather than through written questionnaire forms. This is a deliberate departure from more conventional written 360 approaches, and the departure is made for formation reasons. A conversation places feedback in relationship: the curate must listen, receive, and respond as a mature minister rather than reading anonymised text in private. This is harder, and it forms something that written feedback does not - the capacity to hear honest assessment from someone who knows you, to hold it without defensiveness, and to take it seriously enough to name it in the CDP.

Numerical scoring is discouraged because ordained ministry is complex, contextual, and relational, and numbers inevitably flatten what narrative can hold. The curate then completes a written reflection, which is the only document entering the diocesan record: this ensures that the 360 evidence is integrative and curate-owned, not assembled from reviewer opinions.

A well-held 360 process

A well-held 360 process includes:

- Clear purpose agreed in advance, including how the 360 will feed into the Second Assessment and the CDP.
- A balanced set of reviewers (normally five to seven) who have real contact with the curate's ministry and can speak from different angles of responsibility and experience. The curate may consult the Training Incumbent but makes the final selection.
- Structured prompts aligned to the Formation Qualities and Domains, written in accessible language and answered with concrete examples.
- A direct conversation with each reviewer (normally thirty to sixty minutes). Reviewers complete the feedback form in advance and bring it to the meeting. The curate listens attentively, asks only clarifying questions where needed, and receives what is offered with gratitude.
- Appropriate confidentiality: reviewer forms are not circulated. They are shared with the curate in the meeting and retained temporarily for reflection, then disposed of securely. The curate submits only their own written reflection into the diocesan record as part of the Second Assessment evidence.
- A curate-written reflection (normally no more than two sides of A4) completed after all reviewer meetings, drawing out what was encouraging, what was challenging, what to attend to going forward, and concrete actions for development.
- A debrief held pastorally and with clarity: the curate shares their reflection with the Training Incumbent ahead of a supervision conversation. Together they translate learning into a small number of CDP priorities, rather than an anxious attempt to address everything at once.
- A clear route for concerns: if feedback raises a safeguarding concern or credible risk, follow diocesan safeguarding procedure promptly and involve the Ministry Development Officer early where appropriate.

For self-supporting and part-time pathways, the reviewer set, scope, and interpretation are shaped by the lived pattern of ministry.

Panels and episcopal discernment

What panels are for

Panels provide a structured, evidence-based conversation held with shared accountability. They are not an interrogation. They are a moment in which the Church's discernment about formation in public ministry is made transparent and communal.

A panel brings together the curate, Training Incumbent, and one or more diocesan representatives to review evidence, name what formation is showing, and make a clear recommendation to the bishop. At the Final Assessment stage, the panel recommendation informs episcopal discernment about readiness for licensed public ministry and provides continuity into CMD.

Panels are not designed to produce surprises. By the time a panel meets, its likely shape should be visible in the supervision record, the portfolio, the TI's written input, and the curate's self-reflection. The no-surprises principle applies: a concern that appears for the first time at a panel has not been handled well.

Preparing for a panel

Curates prepare by:

- selecting portfolio evidence that shows pattern and growth, not a showcase of impressive moments
- completing the required self-reflection, including the fitness to practise self-assessment (see Appendix F for the form), with honesty rather than performance
- arriving ready to reflect on what has been learned, what remains uneven, and what the next stage requires

Training Incumbents prepare by:

- providing written input with concrete, specific examples - not general endorsements
- naming any fitness-to-practise themes clearly, with evidence, even where those themes are difficult to name
- being ready to speak honestly about the formation trajectory, the quality of the working relationship, and any unresolved concerns

How panels work

Panels follow a structured conversation, typically including:

- opening prayer and brief introductions
- curate's reflection on formation to date: what has formed, what has been tested, what has changed
- TI's perspective on the curate's development, with reference to their written input
- panel questions drawing on portfolio evidence, CDP trajectory, and Formation Qualities
- explicit attention to Trustworthiness and fitness to practise themes
- agreed next priorities named together

- closing prayer and outcome communicated clearly

Panel records are held securely and form part of the assessment evidence available to the bishop. They are not circulated beyond those with a direct role in the discernment.

Episcopal discernment

Episcopal decision-making at the end of curacy is explicit and accountable. The bishop receives the panel recommendation alongside the curate's self-reflection, the TI's written input, and, where relevant, any diocesan officer input. The bishop may meet with the curate directly as part of the discernment.

Outcomes are: Sign-off; Conditional sign-off; Further formation required; or No recommendation for licensed ministry at this time. Full descriptions of each outcome are in Appendix A. Episcopal decision-making is pastoral in intent and transparent in process. The curate is told the outcome clearly, with the reasoning, and is supported through the transition, whatever form it takes.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

The quality of written input at an assessment panel matters more than its length. A paragraph with concrete, specific examples - naming what you observed, when, and what it showed about formation - is more useful than a page of general endorsement. Where there are concerns relevant to fitness to practise, name them plainly with evidence. A TI who cannot name a concern in writing, when it has been present in supervision, has not served the curate or the Church well. The panel is not the right place to discover that a concern exists.

Quick reference: assessment essentials

- assessment arises from discernment, not inspection
- fitness to practise runs through all three stages as a steady thread
- the no-surprises principle: the Training Incumbent names concerns in supervision before they reach written reports or panels
- pattern over time matters more than any single episode
- Trustworthiness is the integrative Quality at the Final Assessment
- panel recommendations inform episcopal discernment: the bishop makes the final decision
- assessment timing follows sufficient evidence, not calendar dates alone
- safeguarding concerns are acted on through proper routes, not held inside the assessment process

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

What pattern is forming in my supervision record and portfolio that I have not yet named to myself?

Where is the fitness to practise thread strongest in my formation now - and where is it thinnest?

Is there a concern about my formation that I am aware of but have not yet named in supervision?

What would it take to name it before it reaches a written report?

What would I say in a panel about what has formed in me, what has been tested, and what the next stage most requires? Can I say it honestly, without performance?

What does the pattern of my CDP work show about how I am being formed, and what is it asking of me next?

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Public Office and Representative Ministry

Carrying the responsibilities of ordained life

Chapter 12 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Ordination places you in a public and representative office. Many will meet the Church through you before they meet it through any institution. The gospel will be read not only in your words, but in your manner, your restraint, your steadiness, and your willingness to live in the light.

The responsibilities of public ministry are carried as trust, not status. Curacy is the season in which this trust is learnt slowly, without hurry and without concealment.

This chapter sets out baseline expectations for carrying public office safely and well in:

- worship and occasional offices
- pastoral care and confidentiality
- collegial and team ministry
- community and civic life
- digital presence and parish communications

This is a concise reference. Detailed digital guidance is held in Appendix E, Digital Ministry Code.

The core commitments of representative ministry

Across all settings, the same commitments apply.

Presence without performance

You represent the Church's prayer and care for those in its pastoral keeping. Attention is directed to Christ, not to the minister. When things go wrong, steadiness matters more than cleverness. Prayer and preparation belong to Trustworthiness.

Boundaries that make love safe

Availability is named and kept. Power is handled consciously, not casually. Dependency traps are resisted, especially when trust is granted quickly.

Truthfulness and accountability

Promises are kept and limitations are named early. Counsel is sought without delay when you are unsure. Supervision is used to keep ministry in the light.

Safeguarding as ordinary ministry

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Safeguarding belongs at the centre of ministry. It is Love for People made concrete. Where a safeguarding concern arises: follow diocesan procedure promptly, contact the DSO, record, and report. Concerns are escalated, not absorbed. Chapter 13 and Appendix C hold the full guidance.

Representative practice in the main arenas

Worship and occasional offices

Trustworthiness in worship is expressed through:

- careful preparation and orderly practice
- warmth and clarity, especially in funerals and other exposed moments
- inclusion and accessibility attended to as standard
- restraint with improvisation, including knowing when advice is needed

Occasional offices in particular carry vulnerability. Boundaries, confidentiality, and consent-aware practice matter as much as liturgical competence.

Pastoral care

Pastoral care is one of the most public ways the Church is judged. A faithful pattern includes:

- clear role boundaries and availability, offered without defensiveness
- confidentiality held with clarity, including calm explanation of safeguarding limits
- consent-aware practice, including touch, prayer, and what is recorded
- timely follow-up and reliable communication
- refusal to collude with harmful secrecy, even when it would feel easier

The aim is to love people truthfully, with steadiness and good judgement.

Collegial and team ministry

Representative ministry is also exercised among colleagues: clergy teams, staff groups, wardens, lay ministers, and volunteers. How a curate carries themselves in collegial settings - with honesty, appropriate deference, willingness to disagree without damaging relationships, and readiness to take and give clear feedback - is as much a part of public office as preaching or pastoral visiting.

Working well in a ministry team requires the same disciplines as working well with parishioners: attentiveness to the room, clarity about role, willingness to name difficulty early, and the capacity to stay in relationship when there is disagreement. The team is not simply the context for ministry; it is itself a place of formation, and how you contribute to its health or dysfunction will shape what kind of minister you become.

The honest conversations that collegial relationships sometimes require - about role, contribution, conflict, or disagreement - are addressed in Appendix G, which offers guidance for navigating these well.

Community and civic life

Clergy are often visible beyond the congregation: schools, civic services, local networks, charities, public events. This visibility carries opportunity and risk. Representative practice includes:

- listening more than asserting
- holding disagreement with restraint and respect
- engaging the common good without aligning the Church with party politics
- speaking carefully when tired, provoked, or pressured to comment

- attending to safeguarding in community-facing activity, especially with children, young people, and vulnerable adults

Public credibility is fragile. It is sustained by reliability and humility more than by forceful opinion.

Where public or civic situations call for honest conversations - about contested questions, community pressure, or public challenge - Appendix G offers practical guidance for handling them with wisdom and restraint.

Digital ministry and parish communications

Digital spaces are real spaces of ministry. They are also spaces where boundaries blur quickly and words travel without context. Digital practice therefore belongs to public office and needs discipline.

Keep four essentials in view:

- **Identity and boundaries:** role accounts and clear expectations about availability.
- **Consent and confidentiality:** anonymisation as default, consent for images and stories.
- **Moderation and safety:** active oversight that protects the vulnerable.
- **Safeguarding response:** prompt escalation through the DSO route when concerns arise.

For the full guidance, including account handling, messaging windows, moderation practice, and portfolio evidence, see Appendix E, Digital Ministry Code.

Where this is held in curacy

- In the LMA: availability, digital boundaries, rest day and sabbath, scope, and escalation routes.
- In supervision: real episodes from worship, pastoral care, collegial relationships, and online activity are reflected on, with practice changes agreed.
- In the portfolio: evidence is anonymised and disciplined, showing judgement and learning over time rather than display.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

The curate's conduct in collegial settings - team meetings, relationships with wardens and lay ministers, interaction with other clergy - is as formative as their public ministry. It is worth attending to in supervision: not only what happened in worship or pastoral care, but how the curate is learning to navigate the team they have joined. Where collegial dynamics are complex or unhealthy, name it early and give the curate language and support for engaging it well. A curate who understands their own contribution patterns in team settings - including tendencies to over-function, withdraw, or avoid conflict - is better placed to carry representative ministry with integrity.

Continuity into CMD

As you move toward a first post of responsibility, the responsibilities of public ministry increase. The disciplines established in curacy - especially supervision, reflective practice, safeguarding judgement, and sustainable boundaries - carry into CMD as continuity rather than a fresh start.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Where is the representative weight of public office landing most sharply for me now - in worship, pastoral care, community life, or team relationships?

In the team I have joined, what is my default pattern - to lead, to follow, to withdraw, or to over-function? What would a healthier contribution look like?

Where am I handling power casually rather than consciously? What one practice would make that more intentional?

What boundary needs strengthening this month so that love is safe - in pastoral care, digital practice, or availability?

What have I noticed about my public manner - when tired, pressured, or provoked - that I would want to attend to in supervision?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 12

Safeguarding

Love for People in Public Office

Chapter 13 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Safeguarding is how Love for People becomes practical in public office. It is a core requirement of fitness to practise and a primary expression of Trustworthiness.

In curacy, safeguarding is learnt and lived through steady habits: training completed on time, boundaries held with clarity, consent practised consistently, records kept with discipline, and concerns escalated without delay. These are ordinary marks of Trustworthiness - visible in daily ministry, tested under pressure, and cumulative across the whole of curacy.

This chapter sets out the baseline of safe practice expected across all pathways. The full diocesan guidance, including the safeguarding policy, reporting routes, and forms, is held in Appendix C.

What safeguarding requires in curacy

Curates and Training Incumbents are expected to:

- complete safeguarding learning and refresh on time
- understand role responsibilities and reporting duties
- practise clear boundaries, including in digital contact
- work with consent and truthful confidentiality
- keep proportionate, secure records
- escalate concerns promptly through diocesan procedure
- seek advice early when unsure
- co-operate fully with safeguarding processes and required boundaries

These belong to the heart of ministry and to the obligations of public office.

Training and refresh

Safeguarding learning forms shared judgement: thresholds, reporting, safe practice, and a common language for risk. It is not a box to tick. It is how the Church equips its ministers to recognise harm, respond proportionately, and act with the courage safe practice sometimes requires.

Where learning is overdue:

- name it promptly in supervision
- complete it as a priority
- record completion in the portfolio as corrective action taken

Overdue safeguarding training is attended to promptly. It is a formation matter, not an administrative one.

Boundaries, power, and consent

Safeguarding is inseparable from boundary discipline and power awareness. Early in curacy, clarity is needed about:

- appropriate pastoral contact and meeting practice, including timing, location, and visibility
- dependency risks and blurred roles
- communication windows, including digital boundaries
- safe practice with children, young people, and vulnerable adults

Consent is an ongoing practice, not only formal permission. It helps people understand what is happening, what will be recorded and why, and what can and cannot be kept confidential.

A curate needs to be able to say calmly: what can be treated as confidential, what must be shared for safety, and how advice will be sought when uncertain.

Confidentiality: truthful and bounded

Clergy confidentiality is real and bounded. A working sentence to hold and use plainly:

A WORKING FORM OF WORDS

"I will treat what you tell me with care and discretion. I cannot promise complete confidentiality if someone may be at risk of harm."

This protects the vulnerable and keeps the minister truthful. It may need saying at the start of a pastoral conversation, a home visit, or a confidential disclosure - not as a warning but as honest care.

Record-keeping: disciplined, proportionate, secure

Good record-keeping is a safeguarding practice. It protects the person, the Church, and you.

Records are:

- factual rather than speculative
- proportionate rather than verbose
- made promptly rather than delayed
- stored securely, not in unsecured notebooks or personal devices
- shared appropriately through agreed routes

Where there is uncertainty about recording systems or storage, seek guidance from the Training Incumbent or DSO before proceeding.

Escalation to the DSO: prompt and clear

Where a safeguarding concern arises, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer promptly, in line with diocesan procedure.

Hold a simple discipline:

- record what was said or observed, and as soon as possible
- report promptly via the correct channel
- escalate to the DSO, leaving investigation to those with the proper authority and training
- keep confidentiality bounded: secrecy must never be promised where risk may be present

- co-operate with advice and next steps

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLE

If you are unsure whether something meets a safeguarding threshold, seek advice promptly. Delay is a common way harm is prolonged. It is always right to ask.

Where safeguarding shows up in ordinary ministry

Safeguarding is woven into daily practice:

- **Worship:** visibility, safe teams, clear boundaries around vulnerability and prayer ministry.
- **Pastoral care:** meeting practice, home visits, transport, communication patterns, dependency risks.
- **Schools and children and young people:** DBS clarity, supervision requirements, boundaries around touch, reporting discipline.
- **Digital ministry:** private messaging risks, consent for images, anonymisation, moderation, escalation. See Appendix E, Digital Ministry Code.

How safeguarding is held in supervision, portfolio, and assessments

In supervision

Safeguarding is brought into the light as judgement and practice. Supervision helps you attend to:

- where uncertainty was felt and why
- how power operated in the situation
- what was recorded and how
- whether escalation was prompt and appropriate
- what boundary or practice change is now required

In the portfolio

The portfolio must never compromise confidentiality or identify individuals. Evidence focuses on learning, judgement, and practice change; record discipline and reporting clarity; and boundary decisions and their rationale. The portfolio shows what you learned, not another person's story.

In assessments

Assessments attend explicitly to safeguarding and fitness to practise as part of Trustworthiness: a visible pattern of safe, accountable practice, sustained over time. Where safeguarding discipline is demonstrably unstable or mandatory learning is out of date, sign-off will not be recommended until these matters are addressed.

If a mistake is made

Curacy is a learning season. Where a mistake is made:

- inform the Training Incumbent promptly

- seek advice from the DSO as appropriate
- record accurately what occurred and what has been done
- adjust practice and boundaries
- reflect in supervision on what pattern led to the mistake

Covering up, minimising, or delaying undermines trust and increases risk. Honesty is always the right response, even when it is costly.

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Your role in safeguarding formation goes beyond modelling compliance. It includes creating the conditions in which the curate can bring uncertainty and near-misses into supervision without fear. A curate who can say "I wasn't sure what to do and here is what I did" is showing exactly the formation that safeguarding requires.

Where you observe boundary slippage, recording failures, or avoidance of escalation, name it promptly and clearly - with the specific example, the formation question it raises, and the agreed next step. Where a concern meets the threshold for escalation, follow diocesan procedure without delay and without expecting the training relationship to carry what the safeguarding structure is designed to hold.

Quick reference

- safeguarding learning and refresh completed on time
- reporting duties understood, including who must be contacted
- meeting and communication boundaries clear and practised
- records kept properly and stored securely
- DSO contacted promptly when concerns arise
- concerns escalated; secrecy never promised where risk is present
- portfolio material fully anonymised
- safeguarding learning and boundary decisions brought into supervision regularly

A closing reminder

Safeguarding is how Love for People becomes practical in public office. It is a baseline of fitness to practise and a core marker of Trustworthiness.

Where mandatory safeguarding learning is out of date, where a live safeguarding concern requires action, or where boundary discipline is demonstrably unstable, sign-off will not be recommended until these matters are addressed. This is the Church's duty of care to the public, to the vulnerable, and to the curate.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Where in my ministry am I least confident about safeguarding practice now? What would it take to address that this week?

When did I last feel uncertain about a safeguarding threshold? What did I do, and what would I do differently now?

Is there a boundary in my current ministry that has blurred quietly? What is one concrete step to restore it?

How do I hold the tension between pastoral presence and the limits of confidentiality? Is there a situation where that tension needs naming in supervision?

What does my portfolio evidence show about my safeguarding judgement and record discipline? What is absent that should be there?

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Chapter 13

Placements and Mixed-Ecology Learning

Widening the field of formation

Chapter 14 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Curacy is formed in a particular parish or benefice, but not only there. In Hereford, placements are a core part of curacy formation. They widen the field of vision so that ordained ministry is learnt across the mixed ecology of Church and community.

Held well, placements deepen Wisdom, cultivate Fruitfulness, and strengthen Trustworthiness in settings that ask different questions of a minister. They also train a theology of being with: arriving without mastery, listening before acting, learning the language and rhythms of a place, and offering faithful presence where you are not in charge. Authority is tempered into service.

Placements are meant to leave you changed. Their fruit is often quiet: a deepened capacity to listen, a clearer sense of power and vulnerability, a chastened confidence, and a gentler authority. What is noticed is brought into prayer and supervision; habits are reshaped over time. The CDP and portfolio then provide the Church's way of seeing whether this formation is taking root.

Purpose of placements in curacy

Placements are held so that you may:

- experience ministry beyond your training context
- cultivate attentive listening and contextual humility
- strengthen the capacity to relate across difference
- explore the responsibilities of ordained office in other settings
- gather evidence of formation across the Domains, especially World and Church
- discern how gifts meet the needs of communities you may later serve

The Hereford core placements

In Hereford, three placements belong to curacy as standard. Curates can expect to undertake them, with timing and scope shaped by the lived pattern of each pathway:

- Education placement in Year 1
- Cathedral placement in Year 2
- Mission Focus placement in Year 3

These placements are planned and debriefed as formational work. Each placement is expected to generate learning that is:

- debriefed in supervision
- translated into CDP priorities
- showing in the portfolio with disciplined anonymisation

Mission Focus placement in Year 3

The Mission Focus placement sits in the final year because it contributes directly to formation and discernment about the next stage of ministry. It offers a structured opportunity to test learning beyond the title context, so that end-of-curacy conversations are grounded in lived evidence rather than aspiration.

A Mission Focus placement may serve one or more of these purposes:

- strengthen areas lightly encountered in the title post, for example occasional offices, funerals, schools-facing ministry, or forms of leadership not yet exercised
- explore likely future ministerial settings, for example chaplaincy, outreach, or a mixed-ecology role
- act as a mirror to the current parish context, enriching self-awareness, and theological judgement through contrast
- broaden ministry experience beyond the base parish, especially where the title setting is necessarily narrow in exposure

A Mission Focus placement can take multiple forms, agreed with the Training Incumbent and the diocese as part of an end-of-curacy formation plan. It may be:

- within or beyond the diocese
- a chaplaincy setting, for example hospital, hospice, prison, university, or workplace
- an overseas placement or ministerial exchange, where appropriate and feasible
- another mission-focused context, for example community partnership work, outreach to a particular community, estates ministry, a resourcing church, network-based ministry, or work alongside diocesan mission initiatives

The form is chosen for learning value and discernment clarity.

Additional placements

Beyond the Education, Cathedral, and Mission Focus placements, further placements may be arranged where there is a clear formational rationale and capacity to undertake them sustainably. Any additional placement is agreed transparently with clarity about:

- scope and timetable
- safeguarding arrangements and boundaries
- debrief and integration into supervision, CDP, and portfolio
- what is reduced elsewhere so the placement remains viable

Planning and expectations

A placement is most fruitful when it is planned with clarity:

- a named host supervisor and an agreed pattern of engagement
- clear learning goals, normally two or three, linked to Domains and Qualities
- safeguarding and confidentiality expectations understood from the outset
- a debrief plan, in supervision and, where helpful, a structured conversation with the host
- an evidence plan that is disciplined and anonymised, including what will be recorded and how

Placements are about formation. The posture is attentive participation, held within appropriate boundaries.

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

Safeguarding and confidentiality expectations apply in placement settings from the outset. DBS, role boundaries, and reporting routes are agreed before a placement begins. Where a safeguarding concern arises during a placement, contact the DSO promptly and follow diocesan safeguarding procedure. The host setting's own policies do not replace the curate's obligations under diocesan procedure.

Pathway notes

SSM curates

Core placements remain part of curacy, but the pattern is planned around work and home life, with explicit agreement about scope. Often the wiser approach is fewer visits with clear learning goals and a strong debrief, rather than frequent attendance that becomes unsustainable.

Part-time stipendiary curates

Placement time is included in the working pattern. The LMA names what is reduced elsewhere to make space.

Pioneer pathway curates

Core placements remain core. Debrief and evidence attend especially to mixed-ecology leadership and partnership practice: listening, consent discipline, small repeatable experiments, and reading what is emerging. Evidence shows discernment and adaptation.

Distinctive Deacons

Core placements attend to public, community-facing service and institutional life, with explicit reflection on representation, advocacy, and the handling of power. Debrief includes what diaconal visibility looked like in practice, and what it required.

Examples of placement patterns

These examples illustrate principle rather than prescription.

- Education placement: ten half-days across a term, or five full days using annual leave, with attention to presence, collective worship, safeguarding culture, and professional rhythms.
- Cathedral placement: six to eight visits, including one civic service and one weekday office, plus a focused conversation about public ministry and institutional leadership.

- Mission Focus: a defined number of engagements across three to four months, or other agreed period, with supervision debrief and careful evidence discipline.

The goal is sustainable learning that can be integrated into parish practice.

A simple integration prompt

After each placement engagement, it is often enough to capture three brief lines for supervision:

- what I noticed
- what it asked of me
- one practice or boundary I will carry back into my parish pattern

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Your role in placement formation is to protect space for it in the curate's week, to ensure the debrief conversation in supervision is genuinely formational rather than merely logistical, and to help translate what was noticed into CDP priorities and portfolio evidence. A placement that is not debriefed is an experience, not formation.

Where a placement raises concerns - about safeguarding, scope, or the curate's wellbeing - act promptly rather than waiting to see if things settle.

If issues arise during a placement

Where concerns arise, respond promptly:

- raise practical issues first with the host supervisor or head, as appropriate
- inform the Training Incumbent early, so concerns are carried together
- where safeguarding concerns arise, contact the DSO promptly and follow diocesan safeguarding procedure
- where a placement becomes harmful or unmanageable, pause and seek diocesan guidance; a placement may be ended wisely when done transparently and for clear reasons

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these after a placement, in supervision, or in reflective practice. Take one at a time.

What did this placement ask of me that my title parish does not? What did that reveal about my formation?

Where did I arrive with assumptions that this placement challenged or confirmed? What am I taking back into my parish practice?

What did I notice about power and vulnerability in this setting - in myself and in those I encountered? Is the learning from this placement finding its way into supervision and the CDP, or is it staying as an interesting experience? What would it take to translate it into practice?

What does faithful presence look like in a context where I am not in charge and not yet known? Where did I inhabit that well, and where did I default to performing?

Pathways and Patterns

Formation held faithfully across diverse curacies

Chapter 15 | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Curacy is a shared national framework lived in local and varied realities. The Church expects a common seriousness about formation; it does not presume a single pattern of life, time, or context. Naming a realistic pattern of life is the way formation remains faithful, sustainable, and fair across different pathways.

The principle is simple. The Formation Framework is held consistently; the manner of engaging it is scaled truthfully. Standards are consistent. Unreality is resisted. A pattern of life is named that can be lived; those in its pastoral keeping are served safely; the minister is protected from hidden strain and heroic overreach.

Public office does not pause when life is complex. The diocese therefore attends carefully to scope, boundaries, and evidence discipline, so that ministry remains safe for parishioners and sustainable for you.

For pathway-specific formation emphases and evidence discipline for Distinctive Deacon and Pioneer curacies, see Appendix D.

A shared baseline for all pathways

Whatever your pathway, these commitments remain core:

- safeguarding learning completed and refreshed; prompt contact with the DSO when concerns arise
- a reliable supervision rhythm, with sessions recorded appropriately
- participation in reflective practice: RPGs, or an agreed equivalent
- a portfolio demonstrating pattern-based evidence, fully anonymised
- an LMA naming scope, boundaries, availability, and rest and sabbath protection
- engagement with assessments and panels, with timing shaped by the lived pattern of each pathway
- sustained engagement with the Seven Formation Qualities across the Four Domains

What varies is not seriousness, but shape.

15.1 Self-Supporting Ministers

Formation alongside work and home life

SSM curacies are a substantial expression of the Church's ministry in the world. They are also a place where unrealistic assumptions can quietly accumulate unless clarity is practised. Formation for SSMs is therefore made explicit and carefully bounded, so that safeguarding remains clear and ministry remains sustainable.

What a realistic pattern of life looks like for SSMs

The LMA states plainly:

- work pattern and fixed non-available times
- named ministry time, including travel, and how occasional offices and emergencies are handled
- supervision frequency and how it is protected
- boundaries for availability and digital communication, including response windows and rest day
- what is in scope now, and what is not yet in scope

A realistic pattern of life is named in the LMA and held in diocesan oversight, so expectations remain clear, fair, and reviewable.

Formation emphases often strengthened in SSM curacy

SSM curacy commonly strengthens:

- **World Domain:** through work-based and community embeddedness.
- **Wisdom:** through prioritisation and decision-making under pressure.
- **Trustworthiness:** through disciplined boundaries and reliability.
- **Call to Ministry:** as public office is carried alongside other professional identities.

Evidence discipline for SSMs

An SSM portfolio demonstrates:

- sustained engagement in supervision and reflective practice
- safeguarding discipline, consent awareness, and clean anonymisation
- pattern-based learning over time, with depth rather than volume
- scope and boundary clarity that can be sustained beyond curacy

Assessment timing and expectations

SSM curacies may run on an extended timeline, depending on the pattern agreed. Assessment points are shaped by the lived pattern so evidence is substantial, and patterns can be discerned fairly. The aim is sufficiency of lived practice, not calendar compliance.

15.2 Part-time Stipendiary Curates

Reduced hours held with full seriousness

Part-time stipendiary curacy is a committed form of ordained ministry with a reduced time allocation. The common risk is that expectations remain implicitly full-time while time is not. Reductions are therefore made explicit, so formation remains sustainable and ministry remains safe.

What a realistic pattern of life looks like

The LMA states:

- the contracted working pattern, including protected non-working time
- what is reduced compared with a full-time scope, named explicitly
- how IMD days, placements, supervision, and RPGs sit within the pattern
- how seasonal intensification is carried, especially Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter
- boundaries for availability and digital communication, including rest day and sabbath protection

A practical test: can this be lived without constant catch-up on non-working days?

What becomes visible

What becomes visible is shaped by the working pattern. The expectation remains the same in kind: in kind:

- depth over volume
- pattern over isolated events
- integrated learning across Domains
- transparent boundaries and sustainability

Where the curacy timeline is extended, the extension serves richer formation.

15.3 Distinctive Deacons

Formation for diaconal visibility, service, and advocacy

Distinctive Deacons are ordained into a public office that is both liturgically visible and community-facing. Diaconal formation attends particularly to service, advocacy, and the Church's presence among those who are marginalised or overlooked. It also attends carefully to the responsibilities of service, which can create patterns of over-functioning and quiet burnout unless a truthful pattern of life is held.

Distinctive Deacons are formed through the same Seven Qualities across the Four Domains, with particular attention to how these Qualities are lived diaconally. See Appendix D for detailed pathway guidance.

Emphases in diaconal formation

Distinctive Deacon curacy often gives weight to:

- **Love for People:** as safeguarding-aware service and advocacy.
- **Wisdom:** in reading systems, power, and social complexity.
- **Fruitfulness:** expressed through enabling others' agency and sustaining partnerships.

- **Trustworthiness:** expressed through reliability, boundaries, confidentiality, and record-keeping.
- **World Domain:** as a central arena of ministry.

Liturgical and civic visibility

Distinctive Deacons are often publicly recognised and publicly accessible. This calls for formation in restraint and clarity, including:

- steadiness in liturgical leadership appropriate to the diaconate
- boundaries in public settings where people approach informally
- careful handling of confidences in community-facing contexts
- explicit consent and safeguarding discipline in service settings

Visibility belongs to the office and calls for sustainable presence.

Placements and exposure for Distinctive Deacons

Placements can strengthen diaconal identity and public witness, for example:

- hospitals, hospices, prisons, and care settings
- food poverty, debt advice, housing, and refugee support initiatives
- schools with a strong inclusion and wellbeing focus
- civic partnerships where clergy represent the Church publicly
- community organising or advocacy learning contexts, where appropriate

Supervision focus for Distinctive Deacons

Supervision attends explicitly to:

- power and vulnerability in service and advocacy
- patterns of over-responsibility and rescuing
- sustainable boundaries and rest
- safety and safeguarding discipline in community-facing work
- how diaconal ministry remains connected to worship, prayer, and ecclesial accountability

Portfolio evidence examples

Evidence might include:

- anonymised reflections on advocacy and partnership work
- examples of enabling others to serve, rather than carrying everything yourself
- reflections on liturgical leadership and the responsibilities of public office
- evidence of safeguarding discipline in community settings
- reflective learning on power, consent, and boundary challenges

15.4 Pioneer Pathways

Formation for listening, co-creation, and sustained experiment

Pioneer curacy is held within the same national formation framework; it is often lived in contexts where traditional parish measures do not describe what is being formed. Pioneer ministry gives priority to listening, relational trust, and small faithful experiments that can be tested, adapted, and shared.

A dedicated Pioneer Pathways appendix provides observable indicators and evidence discipline. This chapter names the core expectations and directs the reader to the appendix for detail.

The pioneer formation stance

Pioneer formation gives weight to:

- listening before leading
- co-creation rather than importing solutions
- small repeatable practices rather than large one-off events
- disciplined reflection on what is emerging, and why
- clear safeguarding, consent, and record-keeping practices appropriate to context
- sustainable patterns of life that resist heroic overwork

Naming a realistic pattern of life in pioneer contexts

Pioneer work can create pressure to prove outcomes quickly. A realistic pattern of life, named in the LMA and CDP, protects against that pressure. It clarifies:

- what counts as faithful practice at this stage, such as listening, partnership building, pilot practices
- what lies outside current scope, such as premature launch of multiple programmes
- how learning is documented without excessive writing
- how safeguarding, consent, and digital boundaries are held

Evidence discipline for pioneer curates

Pioneer evidence remains concrete and observable, including:

- relational partnerships and how they are sustained
- small repeatable practices that can be lived and shared
- documented experiments and adaptations: what was tried, what happened, what changed
- consent and safeguarding logs appropriate to the context
- reflections mapped to Formation Qualities and Domains without forcing pioneer work into parish-maintenance categories

A coherent learning trajectory is sought, not busyness.

15.5 Assessment and Fairness across Pathways

The diocese's commitment to fairness is expressed through these disciplines:

- the same Formation Framework for all curates
- assessment timelines shaped by lived patterns, where practice takes longer to become visible
- evidence weighed by depth, integration, and Trustworthiness rather than by volume
- explicit attention to safeguarding, boundaries, and wellbeing as part of fitness to practise

In panels and episcopal discernment, questions of this kind are held:

Is this curate becoming a trustworthy minister in public office? Is a sustainable pattern of life being lived? Is learning being received and translated into practice? Are parishioners being served safely and faithfully in the contexts to which the Church may call them?

FOR TRAINING INCUMBENTS

Fairness across pathways depends on TIs naming the realistic pattern of life honestly in the LMA and revisiting it when reality changes. The most common failure is allowing scope and expectations to drift towards a full-time stipendiary pattern while the curate's actual time and energy cannot support it. Where you notice this drift - increasing catch-up, rest not protected, formation practices quietly dropping away - name it early and reset the agreement. A curate who is overloaded is not being formed; they are being eroded.

A final note on continuity into CMD

Pathway differences do not end at sign-off. CMD handover needs to carry forward the same commitments: supervision, reflective practice, safeguarding discipline, and a truthful pattern of life. Continuity is one of the Church's main protections against avoidable moral injury and burnout, particularly in the first post of responsibility.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journalling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Does my LMA truthfully reflect my pathway and pattern of life as it is lived? What needs naming or updating?

Where is the temptation in my pathway - to over-function, to prove outcomes too quickly, or to let scope quietly expand? What is one concrete step to resist it this month?

What Formation Qualities are most alive in my pathway context? Which are hardest to attend to given the shape of my curacy?

Is my portfolio evidence appropriate to my pathway - showing depth and pattern rather than volume?

What would an assessor see that I would want them to see, and what is missing?

What will the handover into CMD need to carry forward that my curacy has been building? Is that continuity visible in the formation record?

Formation Qualities, Assessments, Banding and End-of-Curacy Outcomes

A single reference point

Appendix A | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This appendix gives a single reference point for: the Four Domains and Seven Formation Qualities; how the Qualities are used at First, Second, and Final Assessments; where national banding language applies; and how banding relates to end-of-curacy outcomes.

The Four Domains

Domains help locate where something is showing up in formation.

Domain	What it covers
Christ	Prayer, worship, scripture, holiness of life.
Church	Ecclesial leadership, collaboration, governance, forming disciples.
World	Mission, public witness, community relationships, justice.
Self	Self-awareness, maturity, boundaries, wellbeing, sustainable patterns.

The Seven Formation Qualities

Qualities help name what is being formed and tested. In supervision and the portfolio, Domains help ask 'where is this showing up?' and Qualities help ask 'what is being formed here?'

Quality	What it names
Love for God	Prayerful life and worship rooted in genuine relationship with God.
Call to Ministry	Clarity about vocation and growing confidence in ordained identity.
Love for People	Pastoral care, safeguarding discipline, and consent-aware practice.
Wisdom	Judgement, theological reflection, and wise decision-making under pressure.
Fruitfulness	Enabling growth in others, with ministry seen to bear fruit over time
Potential	Capacity to learn and develop; willingness to receive feedback and grow.
Trustworthiness	Safe, accountable, reliable practice: the integrative quality of fitness to practise.

How the Qualities are used across assessments

Assessment	Purpose	Use of Qualities
First Assessment	Confirm foundations for safe formation and a curacy that is functioning as it needs to function.	Narrative and evidence-based, focusing on early patterns. Banding is not used at this stage.
Second Assessment	Assess breadth, integration, and learning conversion into practice.	Clearer mapping across Domains and Qualities through lived examples, with 360 themes where used. Banding is not used at this stage.
Final Assessment	End-of-curacy discernment about readiness for next-stage licensed public ministry.	Sustained evidence over time, with explicit attention to Trustworthiness as the integrative Quality of safe, accountable public office. Banding language used at this stage.

National banding and what it is used for in Hereford

Banding provides a shared national descriptive framework. It describes formation maturity, not performance grades. In Hereford, banding language is used in the Final Assessment to support a clear, transparent, and proportionate account of readiness and required next steps.

The national band descriptor wording is held in the diocesan end-of-curacy paperwork on SharePoint. The bands describe a spectrum from emerging through developing and consolidating to established formation, with fitness-to-practise concerns named clearly at appropriate points.

End-of-curacy outcomes

End-of-curacy outcomes are stated plainly for fairness and transparency:

1. **Sign-off:** readiness for next-stage licensed public ministry affirmed.
2. **Conditional sign-off:** readiness affirmed with named development priorities for CMD.
3. **Further formation required:** extension of curacy with a clear plan agreed.
4. **No recommendation for licensed ministry at this time:** concerns are serious; diocesan procedure and pastoral care are engaged.

Banding supports articulation of the most truthful outcome. The decisive question is: what does faithful, honest discernment indicate about readiness for the next stage of public ministry?

Evidence that carries weight at end of curacy

Across pathways, assessors attend especially to:

- sustained patterns and learning conversion into practice
- safeguarding discipline and boundary stability as Love for People made concrete
- reliable supervision and reflective practice engagement, with follow-through
- portfolio discipline and anonymisation integrity
- a realistic pattern of life, named truthfully and sustained
- the capacity to seek counsel and escalate appropriately

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Appendix A

Curacy Rhythm and Timeline

Phase 0 to Phase 3 (and Phase 4 for incumbent pathway)

Appendix B | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This timeline describes the common rhythm of curacy in Hereford. It supports clarity, fairness, and sustainability across all pathways.

Full-time stipendiary curates can read Phases 1, 2, and 3 as Years 1, 2, and 3. Self-supporting and part-time curacies often extend across a longer period, with assessment points shaped by lived evidence rather than calendar dates.

Shared commitments across Phases 1 to 3

Across all pathways, the following commitments remain constant:

- safeguarding learning completed and refreshed on time
- prompt escalation to the DSO when concerns arise
- a reliable supervision rhythm, recorded as themes and actions only
- participation in reflective practice through RPGs or an agreed equivalent
- a portfolio built little and often, fully anonymised
- an LMA that names scope, boundaries, availability, rest, and a realistic pattern of life
- a CDP that holds a small number of formation priorities and practice changes
- engagement with assessments and panels, with timing shaped by the lived pattern of each pathway

Phase 0 pre-ordination and transition from IME1

Final preparation for diaconal ordination and arrival in the title post

Phase 0 marks final preparation for diaconal ordination and arrival in the title post. This phase includes legal, safeguarding, and practical foundations.

Safeguarding and compliance

- required safeguarding learning and checks completed through the national safeguarding portal as directed
- DBS clarity confirmed
- any additional pathway learning required for the role completed

Legal and ministerial foundations

- title post confirmed and Training Incumbent in place
- key declarations, oaths, and licensing requirements completed in line with diocesan process

Practical transition

- local induction and arrangements confirmed
- initial expectations clarified, including availability and digital boundaries
- portfolio access and basic structure set up
- supervision dates diarised for the first term

Spiritual preparation

- ordination retreat attended as part of preparation for public office

Completion markers

- safeguarding and legal requirements complete
- title and Training Incumbent confirmed, settled into title post
- supervision rhythm scheduled and protected
- portfolio structure in place and usable

Phase 1 Foundations and faithful presence

Establishing a safe, sustainable pattern of life in public office

Purpose: to establish a safe, sustainable pattern of life in public office, with reliable supervision, clear scope, and disciplined formation habits.

Key formation practices

- LMA agreed early and revisited after initial settling
- CDP opened with a small number of priorities
- supervision established as protected time distinct from staff meetings
- RPG participation confirmed within the diocesan pattern
- portfolio built little and often, with anonymisation as a baseline discipline

Core formation emphases

- supervision reliability and follow-through
- scope clarity and protection from premature loading
- safeguarding discipline as ordinary practice
- sustainable weekly rhythm, including rest day and sabbath protection
- basic competence in worship and pastoral care, held with restraint

Placement and learning

- education placement normally sits within the early formation period as scheduled by the diocese
- placement learning debriefed in supervision and shown in the portfolio with integrity

First assessment

Timing: typically, mid-way through Phase 1, once there has been sufficient lived practice.

Focus: foundations, including supervision rhythm, scope, boundaries, safeguarding habits, sustainability, and whether the curacy is resourcing and stretching appropriately.

Typical output: refreshed LMA and CDP priorities for the next season.

Completion markers

- supervision and reflective practice participation steady
- LMA workable and kept current
- portfolio habits established and manageable
- safeguarding learning complete and showing in practice
- early patterns visible and named clearly

Phase 2 Deepening practice and widening perspective

Broadening exposure, strengthening judgement, integrating feedback

Purpose: to broaden exposure, strengthen judgement, and integrate feedback into observable practice changes.

Key formation practices

- scope widens in a planned way, with supported stretch
- CDP priorities refined and revisited regularly in supervision
- portfolio evidence continues to prioritise depth, pattern, and anonymisation
- LMA revisited as responsibilities increase or context changes

Placements and mixed-ecology learning

- cathedral placement commonly sits in Phase 2 as scheduled
- other mixed-ecology exposure may be agreed where there is a clear formational rationale and capacity

Second Assessment

Timing: typically, mid-way through Phase 2 once the curate has sufficient breadth of practice to evidence patterns.

Focus: integration across Domains and Qualities through lived examples; feedback themes, including 360 where used; how learning is converting into changed practice over time; and whether a realistic pattern of life remains truthful as scope increases.

Typical output: updated CDP, and a targeted plan where a pattern needs focused attention.

Completion markers

- clearer judgement under pressure and improved prioritisation
- feedback received and translated into specific practice changes
- sustained safeguarding and boundary discipline, including digital practice
- supervision notes show learning and follow-through over time

Phase 3 Integration, readiness, and end-of-curacy discernment

Consolidating formation for next-stage public ministry

Purpose: to consolidate formation into a coherent, sustainable pattern that can carry the responsibilities and risks of next-stage public ministry.

Key formation practices

- consolidation over novelty: integration across Domains rather than new initiatives for their own sake
- explicit attention to Trustworthiness as the integrative Quality of safe public office
- portfolio curated for discernment, shaped rather than expanded
- LMA and CDP aligned to transition planning and realistic scope

Mission Focus placement

- normally sits within Phase 3 as part of end-of-curacy formation and discernment
- placement is chosen for learning value and clarity about next-stage ministry
- learning is debriefed and shown in the portfolio with integrity

Final Assessment and panel process

Timing: held once there is sufficient lived material to discern from, with timing shaped by the lived pattern of of each pathway.

Focus: readiness for next-stage public ministry, becoming visible in sustained practice; explicit attention to Trustworthiness, including safeguarding discipline, boundaries, reliability, and accountability; clarity about strengths, development edges, and continuity priorities into CMD.

Panel recommendation informs episcopal discernment.

End-of-curacy outcomes

1. sign-off
2. conditional sign-off

3. further formation required
4. no recommendation for licensed ministry at this time

Completion markers

- end-of-curacy assessment completed, and episcopal outcome confirmed in writing
- CMD handover priorities agreed as continuity rather than reset
- supervision and reflective discipline set for the next stage
- sustainability protections named clearly, especially for first posts of responsibility

Phase 4 Into incumbency and early responsibility

FPPR alignment

Purpose: to carry curacy disciplines into the first post of responsibility so that wellbeing, safeguarding, and sustainable leadership are protected from the outset.

Phase 4 is described here as a trajectory rather than a required programme. Where FPPR is used, it provides a diocesan structure for this transition.

Continuity commitments

- supervision and reflective practice continue in an agreed form
- boundaries and availability remain explicit and sustainable
- safeguarding discipline remains ordinary and prompt
- CMD priorities build directly from Phase 3 handover
- leadership is bounded and collaborative, resisting heroic over-functioning

A realistic pattern of life across pathways

The diocese names a realistic pattern of life by design, so that each pathway is held with equal seriousness.

Self-supporting curates

- overall timeline often extends to allow sufficient lived practice for fair discernment
- assessment points are set by the sufficiency of lived material to discern from, rather than calendar dates alone
- the LMA makes work pattern, availability, scope, and exclusions explicit
- evidence expectations prioritise depth, integrity, and anonymisation rather than volume

Part-time stipendiary curates

- contracted hours shape scope and evidence expectations explicitly

- diocesan learning commitments, supervision, RPGs, and placements are integrated into the pattern
- seasonal intensification is planned with compensatory reductions agreed in advance

Across pathways

- decisions about scope and timing are recorded and revisited rather than carried as informal assumptions
- sustainability is treated as a formation issue, not private coping
- the curacy remains safe and accountable for parishioners and viable for the curate

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Appendix B

Safeguarding Escalation, Confidentiality, and Anonymisation

A protocol for prompt, safe action

Appendix C | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This protocol exists to make safe action simple. Safeguarding is a foundational expression of Love for People and a core requirement of fitness to practise.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLE

If you are unsure whether something is a safeguarding concern, seek advice promptly through the diocesan safeguarding route. Uncertainty is a reason to seek guidance, not to wait.

1 Immediate principles

When a safeguarding concern arises:

- act promptly - delay can increase risk
- record f: what you observed or were told, without speculation
- escalate through diocesan safeguarding procedure, including contact with the DSO
- leave investigation to those with proper authority and training
- keep confidentiality bounded: secrecy must never be promised where risk may be present

2 If someone discloses something concerning

Keep your approach calm and steady:

- listen without pressing for detail
- take the concern seriously
- thank them for telling you
- explain what happens next, including confidentiality limits

A WORKING FORM OF WORDS

"I will treat what you tell me with care and discretion. I cannot promise complete confidentiality if someone may be at risk of harm."

3 What to do next

Step 1 - Ensure immediate safety

If someone is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services. If risk feels urgent, escalate without delay while categories are clarified.

Step 2 - Record promptly and factually

Record as soon as possible:

- date and time
- who raised the concern, where appropriate to record
- what was said or observed, using the person's words where possible
- any immediate actions taken
- who has been informed

Keep records factual. Avoid diagnosis, interpretation, or speculation.

Step 3 - Contact the DSO

Make contact promptly, in line with diocesan procedure. If the DSO is not reachable, use the diocesan fallback route for safeguarding advice and reporting.

Step 4 - Inform your Training Incumbent, where appropriate

Inform your Training Incumbent that a safeguarding concern has been raised and escalated, unless doing so increases risk. Safeguarding concerns are handled through safeguarding channels, not through supervision or RPGs.

Step 5 - Follow advice and remain within role

Co-operate fully with safeguarding advice and diocesan process. Stay within role: contact with alleged parties and informal resolution are matters for those with proper authority. Maintain clear boundaries and appropriate confidentiality.

4 Confidentiality and information sharing

Confidentiality is a discipline, not an absolute:

- share information only with those who need to know for safeguarding action
- keep details out of informal circulation, including email chains, messaging apps, or peer conversation
- if unsure what can be shared, ask the DSO

5 Digital contexts

If a safeguarding concern arises through digital platforms:

- use messaging to make initial contact if needed, not to conduct pastoral investigation
- preserve relevant material in line with safeguarding advice
- escalate promptly through the DSO route

- if moderation action is needed to protect others from harm, act in line with parish and diocesan guidance and safeguarding advice

6 Record keeping and storage

Records are:

- factual, timely, and proportionate
- stored securely in line with diocesan policy
- accessible to safeguarding processes if required

If you are unclear where to store records, seek guidance through the Training Incumbent and diocesan safeguarding guidance before proceeding.

7 Anonymisation for supervision, RPGs, and portfolio

Safeguarding concerns are escalated through safeguarding channels, not processed as case narratives in supervision or RPGs. Learning and practice changes can be explored in supervision after escalation, without case detail.

Non-negotiable anonymisation rules for portfolio and reflective materials:

- remove names, dates, locations, and identifying combinations of detail
- exclude screenshots or copied communications containing personal data
- focus on your learning, judgement, and practice changes, not on another person's story
- where doubt remains, anonymise further or omit and discuss the learning in general terms

8 After escalation: formation learning in supervision

After escalation through safeguarding channels, supervision may explore:

- what you noticed and what you found difficult
- power and boundary dynamics
- timeliness and clarity of your response
- practice adjustments required
- how wellbeing support is maintained without breaching confidentiality

Quick reference

Act

- act promptly
- record f
- escalate through the DSO route

- keep information-sharing minimal and appropriate
- follow advice and remain within role

Avoid

- taking on investigative or informal resolution roles
- promising secrecy or keeping concerns alone
- delaying while seeking certainty
- sharing case detail in RPGs or informal conversation
- including identifiable material in portfolio evidence

Templates and operational guidance are held on diocesan SharePoint. This appendix provides the action sequence and core discipline.

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Appendix C

Distinctive Deacon and Pioneer Pathway Notes

Emphases, evidence discipline, and supervision focus

Appendix D | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This appendix supports curates and Training Incumbents to hold pathway-specific formation with clarity and fairness. Both pathways are formed through the same Seven Formation Qualities across the Four Domains. The difference is emphasis and context, not rigour.

A shared baseline for both pathways

Across Distinctive Deacon and Pioneer pathways, these commitments remain constant:

- safeguarding learning completed and refreshed
- prompt escalation through diocesan safeguarding procedure when concerns arise
- clear boundaries and consent-aware practice, including digitally
- a reliable supervision rhythm, with brief notes of themes and actions
- reflective practice participation, RPG, or an agreed equivalent
- portfolio evidence that is anonymised and pattern-based, shaped by depth rather than volume
- an LMA that names scope, availability, rest, and a realistic pattern of life

D1 Distinctive Deacon Pathway

Formation for diaconal visibility, service, and advocacy

Distinctive Deacons are formed through the national framework with a distinctive emphasis on service, advocacy, and the Church's presence among those who are marginalised or overlooked.

Formation emphases

Common formation emphases include:

- **Love for People:** as safeguarding-aware service and advocacy.
- **Wisdom:** in reading systems and acting with clarity under complexity.
- **Fruitfulness:** expressed through enabling others and sustaining partnership ministry.
- **Trustworthiness:** shaped through, and showing in, reliability, confidentiality, boundaries, and record keeping.
- **Call to Ministry:** expressed as coherent diaconal identity, held with humility and clarity.
- **World Domain:** engagement where the Church is known by presence more than programme.

Visibility in worship and community

Distinctive Deacons often carry high visibility. Formation attends to:

- steady, dignified liturgical ministry appropriate to the diaconate
- warm presence without over-availability

- clarity about what you can offer and what lies outside role
- careful handling of confidences in public settings, including after services and at civic events

Evidence and portfolio discipline

Suitable evidence tends to be short, concrete, and anonymised, for example:

- a reflection on an advocacy or service situation, focusing on judgement, boundaries, and learning
- evidence of partnership work showing ethical clarity and shared responsibility
- a reflection on liturgical leadership and the responsibilities of public office
- a learning note on safeguarding practice in a community setting, focusing on judgement and action taken
- examples of enabling others' agency rather than taking responsibility from them
- evidence of sustaining prayer and sabbath amid service demands

Avoid case narratives. Evidence focuses on practice, judgement, and what changed.

Supervision focus

Supervision often attends to:

- power and vulnerability in service settings
- boundary drift and patterns of over-responsibility
- safeguarding judgement in community contexts
- emotional load and exposure to distress
- public and digital visibility and its impact on wellbeing
- integration across Domains, especially Christ and Self, so service remains rooted

What panels attend to

Panels tend to focus on:

- coherence of diaconal identity and practice
- safeguarding maturity and boundary clarity
- wise judgement in complex social contexts
- fruitfulness through enabling and partnership
- trustworthiness shaped through and showing in reliable practice and disciplined confidentiality
- sustainability that protects prayer, rest, and relational life

D2 Pioneer Pathway

Formation for listening, co-creation, and sustained experiment

Pioneer ministry is formed through the same national framework, typically in contexts where inherited parish measures do not describe what is being formed.

The pioneer stance

Common features include:

- listening before leading
- co-creation rather than importing solutions
- attention to power and consent
- experiments that are small, repeatable, and learnable
- adaptation in response to what is discovered
- sustainable rhythms that resist heroic over-functioning

Evidence and portfolio discipline

Pioneer evidence is strongest when it shows coherence over time, for example:

- learning from a defined listening phase, captured as themes and questions, not personal stories
- evidence of partnerships with clear boundaries and shared responsibility
- one or two repeatable practices, refined over several repetitions
- a simple experiment record showing what was tried, what was learned, and what changed
- explicit consent practice for photos, stories, and online communications, without identifiers
- theological reflection grounded in a specific encounter or practice

Avoid using size, speed, or novelty as the primary measure. Evidence focuses on trustworthiness, learning, and sustainability.

Supervision focus

Supervision commonly tests:

- whether you are listening or performing solutions
- whether boundaries and safeguarding discipline are clear enough for increased relational exposure
- whether responsibility is becoming sustainably shared
- whether theological articulation is grounded rather than aspirational
- what evidence is safe to record and what belongs outside the portfolio

What fruit looks like in pioneer contexts

Fruitfulness is often visible as:

- trust built with people who would not otherwise engage church life
- a small practice that repeats and can be carried by others
- a partnership that strengthens community flourishing
- a learning cycle that demonstrates wise adaptation
- a bounded ministerial presence that resists rescuing

What panels attend to

Panels tend to focus on:

- trustworthiness, boundaries, consent discipline, and safeguarding judgement
- coherence and learning over time

- evidence of adaptation, not just activity
- sustainability and shared ownership
- theological integration across Domains, not only World-domain activism

Where the detailed tools live

Detailed pathway tools and examples are held on diocesan SharePoint, including:

- pioneer listening log templates and experiment records
- partnership and boundary templates
- consent practice guidance for stories and images
- pathway-specific evidence examples and prompts

This appendix provides the pathway emphases and evidence discipline for use in supervision, portfolio selection, and assessments.

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Appendix D

Digital Ministry Code

Baseline expectations for curates and Training Incumbents

Appendix E | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

Digital ministry is real ministry carried in public and semi-public space, including social media, livestreams, messaging platforms, and email. It can widen welcome and deepen connection. It can also collapse boundaries quickly in ways that are hard to recover and can create safeguarding risk at speed.

This code sets minimum expectations for curates and Training Incumbents. It is referenced explicitly in the Learning and Ministry Agreement so that messaging windows, consent, moderation, escalation, and sabbath protection are clear, agreed, and practised.

Because this is public office, digital practice is part of fitness to practise and is therefore supervised and reviewable. It is not merely a personal preference.

When in doubt: three rules

PROTECT

Default to privacy, consent, and anonymisation.

MOVE

Move pastoral and sensitive matters from platform to an appropriate pastoral channel and setting.

ESCALATE

Where safeguarding concerns arise, record and report through the diocesan route.

Quick checklist for the Learning and Ministry Agreement

Agree and record the following with your Training Incumbent:

- which accounts and channels the curate uses, and for what purpose
- who holds admin access for parish accounts and who moderates, including a handover plan
- messaging windows, rest day boundaries, and emergency signposting
- what the curate may respond to directly, and what should be referred or shared
- how digital practice will be reviewed in supervision (frequency and what is recorded)

1. Identity and accounts

Clarity about representation

Baseline expectations

- Use role-based accounts for parish communications wherever possible.
- Keep clear what is personal speech and what is representative office.
- Hold appropriate access and handover arrangements for parish accounts, consistent with diocesan policy.
- Avoid informal password-sharing. Use approved methods and protect continuity beyond individual clergy.

Good practice indicators

- Parish accounts have clear admin oversight and continuity.
- You can state which account is used for what purpose.
- Profiles and bios do not blur personal speech and representative office.
- Moderation responsibility is named and shared rather than resting with one individual.

2. Messaging windows and availability

Bounded presence

Digital channels easily create expectation of constant access. Curates practise bounded presence as part of safe, sustainable ministry.

Baseline expectations

- State response windows clearly and keep them.
- Avoid late-night patterns that create dependency or confusion about availability.
- Clarify what counts as an emergency and what people should do in an emergency.
- Protect sabbath and rest day explicitly, and practise this consistently.
- Agree with your Training Incumbent what should be answered directly and what should be referred or shared.

Sample boundary statements

- "Messages are checked Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm. If you need urgent help, please contact the parish office or, in an emergency, ring 999."
- "I do not respond to messages on my rest day. If you need support, please contact the parish office or the duty contact."
- "I can acknowledge a message and help you find the right next step, but for safeguarding reasons I do not offer ongoing pastoral care by private messaging. Please contact the parish office to arrange a conversation."

3. Consent, confidentiality, and anonymisation

Default to protection

Baseline expectations

- Do not share pastoral detail online, even when it seems vague.
- Obtain consent for photos, videos, and personal stories, and record consent appropriately.
- Avoid posting about live situations in ways that may be identifiable in a local community.
- Do not hold disclosures by private messaging. Move promptly to an appropriate pastoral route and escalate safeguarding concerns.

Practical safeguards

- Use public channels and group routes for general communication.
- Keep sensitive pastoral conversations off social platforms.
- Avoid posting about conflict, distress, or live parish tensions.
- Treat local recognisability as a safeguarding factor, not merely a privacy preference.

4. Moderation

Keeping parish spaces safe

Parish online spaces are part of public witness and need active moderation.

Baseline expectations

- Hold a clear moderation approach for parish channels, published or easily accessible.
- Remove or restrict content that is abusive, discriminatory, threatening, sexually inappropriate, defamatory, or that breaches confidentiality.
- Do not allow online spaces to become venues for harassment, shaming, or informal safeguarding disclosures.
- If discussion becomes persistently partisan or misleading in a way that compromises safety or the Church's witness, take moderation action.

Minimum moderation thresholds

Remove or restrict content that includes:

- hate speech or discriminatory language
- sexual content involving minors, or sexual harassment
- threats or incitement to violence
- personal data or identifying pastoral detail
- repeated aggressive behaviour or stalking patterns

Record keeping for serious incidents

- take screenshots where appropriate
- record date, time, account name, and action taken
- store securely and share only through appropriate routes where safeguarding or serious risk is involved

Diocesan communications liaison

If a digital situation is escalating, attracting wider attention, or may affect the reputation of the parish or diocese, seek early advice from the diocesan Communications Team. This includes media enquiries, sustained hostile engagement, online allegations, or situations that may require a coordinated response. Early contact is supportive and preventative. Contact details for the Communications Team are held in the Common Curacy Documents folder on SharePoint.

5. Safeguarding escalation

Prompt and non-negotiable

SAFEGUARDING NOTE

If you see or receive content suggesting a safeguarding concern: contact the DSO promptly in line with diocesan procedure; do not investigate; do not conduct pastoral exchanges by messaging; secure evidence appropriately and store it securely; take moderation steps to prevent further harm, in line with advice.

6. Pastoral contact online

Boundaries that reduce dependency

Digital contact can blur role and increase dependency. Brief triage and signposting by message may be appropriate. Ongoing pastoral care should move to an agreed channel and setting that supports continuity and accountability.

Baseline expectations

- Avoid private messaging for ongoing pastoral care.
- Do not conduct counselling-style exchanges by text.
- Use official channels that support continuity and accountability.
- Remember informality lands differently when you are in public office.

Moving from online contact to a pastoral conversation

When a digital exchange indicates a need for pastoral conversation:

- move to a planned conversation with clear boundaries
- attend to safe practice in timing and setting
- keep appropriate records through agreed routes

- escalate through safeguarding channels if risk is present

7. Digital wellbeing and sabbath

Sustainability as a formation discipline

Digital ministry can expand without limit. Sustainable practice is part of safe public office.

Baseline expectations

- agree digital 'off' times, including sabbath and rest day
- manage notifications intentionally
- share responsibility for parish channels where possible
- bring digital strain and boundary drift into supervision

8. Portfolio evidence

Showing judgement without breaching confidentiality

Digital ministry can generate a small amount of clean evidence that demonstrates discipline and judgement. Evidence should normally show decisions and practices, not content or conversations.

Appropriate evidence examples

- your boundary statement about messaging windows and rest day
- a brief reflection on a moderation decision, fully anonymised
- a reflection on moving an online pastoral request to an appropriate channel
- evidence of consent practice for images and stories, without personal identifiers
- a reflection on establishing and maintaining sabbath boundaries

Not appropriate

- screenshots containing personal data
- identifiable pastoral detail
- private message transcripts
- posts that reveal local conflict or vulnerable situations

9. Supervision and review integration

Digital practice is reviewed periodically in supervision and at LMA review points, including:

- boundaries clear and lived
- safeguarding risks handled promptly

- rhythm sustainable
- safe evidence emerging for the portfolio
- any learning from mistakes and any repair undertaken

Record themes only, anonymise pastoral detail, and note any proportionality adjustments. Templates and operational detail are held on diocesan SharePoint.

Connected guidance

Digital practice sits within the wider expectations for representative ministry set out in Chapter 12. Where digital interactions require honest conversations - with parishioners, colleagues, or members of the public - Appendix G offers practical guidance for navigating those conversations well.

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Appendix E

SharePoint, Templates, and Where to Find What

The handbook holds the discipline; SharePoint holds the working forms

Appendix F | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This handbook is written to be used in ordinary parish life, not filed away. It therefore does not try to carry every form, template, or process note. Those sit on diocesan SharePoint, where they can be kept current without reissuing the handbook.

Think of this less as a technical system and more as good order in the service of formation. When paperwork is clear and in one place, formation can be given the attention it deserves.

The SharePoint structure at a glance

Each curate has an individual Portfolio folder and access to the Common Curacy Documents folder.

The Common Curacy Documents folder holds the shared guidance and current templates for:

- Core Practices: Supervision, Reflective Practice Groups, Portfolio, Journalling
- Assessment and Reporting
- Learning and Ministry Agreements and development plans
- National Formation Framework documents

What this handbook contains

This handbook provides:

- the diocesan vision and ethos for curacy, including the settled pattern of character and practice, being with, and the responsibilities of public ministry
- the national IMD Formation Framework applied consistently: Seven Qualities across Four Domains
- guidance on supervision, RPGs, journalling, and portfolio discipline
- safeguarding as foundational, including escalation to the DSO
- the rhythm of LMA, CDP, 360 feedback, assessments, panels, and episcopal outcomes
- baseline expectations for placements, digital ministry, realistic scope, and pathways
- appendices designed for quick reference

What is hosted on diocesan SharePoint

SharePoint holds the working templates, logs, and operational paperwork, including:

Supervision

- supervision log templates, with curate and Training Incumbent variants where applicable
- guidance on recording themes, actions, and evidence items without pastoral detail
- Training Incumbent supervision and support materials where provided diocese-wide

Reflective practice

- RPG facilitator notes and session templates
- one-page model handouts used in RPGs
- covenant prompts and group discipline notes

Portfolio

- portfolio folder structure guidance and naming conventions
- portfolio note format prompts and mapping prompts to Domains and Qualities
- anonymised exemplars and quality thresholds
- confidentiality and anonymisation reminders

Learning plans

- Learning and Ministry Agreement template and review version
- Curate Development Plan template
- Targeted Development Plan template and review paperwork
- guidance prompts on realistic scope and pattern of life for self-supporting and part-time pathways

Assessment and reporting

- First Assessment paperwork and prompts
- Second Assessment paperwork, including 360 guidance and respondent prompts
- Final Assessment, end-of-curacy panel paperwork, and submission requirements
- panel membership guidance where applicable
- CMD handover summary template and recommended content

Placements

- placement request and approval forms
- host supervisor guidance and feedback templates
- education placement guidance and evaluation prompts
- DBS and safeguarding notes relevant to placements

Digital ministry

- parish account handling and data protection guidance where applicable
- sample boundary statements and moderation guidance for parish channels

Why this arrangement matters

Hosting templates and operational documents on SharePoint means:

- one current version of forms and guidance, reducing confusion
- updates can be made without reissuing the handbook
- confidentiality-sensitive documents can be access-controlled appropriately
- cohorts share a common discipline of evidence and record keeping

Using SharePoint well

Curates and Training Incumbents commit to:

- using the current SharePoint templates rather than local copies
- filing supervision notes and portfolio items consistently
- maintaining anonymisation discipline as standard practice
- treating SharePoint as a formation support, not simply a storage space

If you cannot access SharePoint, raise this promptly with the diocesan IMD team so it can be resolved early.

Diocese of Hereford | IMD Curacy Handbook | Appendix F

Ministry is relational. That means it is also uncomfortable. Curates in the Church of England are expected to hold the cure of souls with steadiness and joy, and that expectation will be tested most sharply not in the pulpit or at the altar but in the vestry, the Post Office, the churchwarden's kitchen, and the Bishop's office. The conversations that matter most are rarely the ones we prepare for. They are the ones that arrive sideways.

Curates in the Church of England are expected to hold the cure of souls with steadiness and joy, and that expectation will be tested most sharply not in the pulpit or at the altar but in the vestry, the Post Office, the churchwarden's kitchen, and the Bishop's office. The conversations that matter most are rarely the ones we prepare for. They are the ones that arrive sideways – and what they ask of us, more than skill or strategy, is the willingness to be truthful.

The frame of this appendix is honest conversations rather than difficult ones. That is a deliberate choice. Difficulty names the experience from the inside – the dread, the anticipation of conflict, the question of whether things will go badly. Honesty names the practice: the orientation towards truth, towards the other person's dignity, and towards the relationship that outlasts any single exchange. Many honest conversations are not difficult at all. And many conversations that feel difficult are so precisely because honesty is being avoided. The frame matters because it asks a different question: not how do I get through this, but what does honesty require here.

This appendix addresses the honest conversations required beyond the supervisory relationship – which is handled in depth in Chapter 4 – and offers practical guidance for the full range of relational contexts a curate will encounter during IMD. Its purpose is not to give scripts. It is to give enough formation in what is happening in these conversations that curates and Training Incumbents can face them with courage, judgement, and care.

Digital contexts generate many of the honest conversations addressed here – pastoral contact that has escalated, hostile engagement in public-facing channels, online group dynamics that require intervention – and this appendix should be read alongside Appendix E (Digital Ministry Code) and Chapter 12 (Public Office and Representative Ministry) for those contexts.

Chapter 4 covers honest conversations within the supervisory relationship in detail, including the three-conversation model, the no-surprises principle, and rupture and repair. This appendix builds from that foundation but is concerned with different terrain: the conversations that happen beyond the supervisory pair, in the wider relational field of parish and diocesan life.

The guidance in this appendix is grounded in the national IME2 Formation Framework. Honest conversations of the kinds addressed here are not incidental to formation: they are among the primary contexts in which the Formation Qualities are tested, integrated, and brought into the light.

Wisdom is formed when a curate can read a contested situation and respond from judgement rather than reflex.

Love for People is formed when pastoral care survives the pressure of a hard conversation without collapsing into either avoidance or confrontation.

Trustworthiness is formed when the curate can hold institutional and personal integrity together in a conversation where they are under pressure.

The national framework's attention to relational competence and fitness to practise finds its concrete expression in exactly these moments. Curates and Training Incumbents using this appendix are encouraged to map what they encounter here to the Formation Qualities in the table below, and to bring that mapping into supervision and portfolio evidence.

The Formation Qualities as proving ground

Honest conversations are not interruptions to formation. They are among the most important places where formation happens. The Formation Qualities that are most readily visible in settled, cooperative circumstances are tested most honestly when someone is angry, confused, or wrong, and the curate is still expected to be present, kind, and clear.

Formation Quality	Application in honest conversations
Wisdom	Discerning when to speak and when to offer holy silence; reading what a situation needs rather than importing a predetermined answer.
Love for People	Maintaining the dignity of the imago Dei in a person who is angry, distressed, or difficult; keeping warmth even when holding a limit.
Trustworthiness	Holding pastoral confidence and procedural duty at the same time; saying what you mean clearly, keeping what you have said, and returning to repair what has been damaged.

Wisdom is tested in the capacity to discern when to speak and when to offer what might be called holy silence: the deliberate, attentive refraining from words that would not yet help. Wisdom in difficult conversations is not cleverness. It is the capacity to read what a situation needs rather than importing a predetermined answer. It is often the difference between a conversation that opens and one that closes.

Love for People is tested in the capacity to maintain the dignity of the person in front of you when they are not making it easy: the parishioner who is shouting, the warden who is dismissive, the colleague who is unkind. Theologically, this is the discipline of holding the imago Dei in a person whose behaviour is obscuring it. Practically, it means not matching the register of anger or dismissal, not abandoning warmth even when maintaining a limit, and not confusing care for the person with agreement with their position.

Trustworthiness is tested in the capacity to hold pastoral confidence and procedural duty at the same time - to remain recognisably pastoral even when discharging a responsibility that does not feel pastoral. It is also tested in the simpler discipline of saying what you mean clearly, keeping what you have said, and returning to repair what has been damaged.

Principles common to all these conversations

Before entering any hard conversation, it is worth being clear about three things: what you are trying to achieve; what relationship you are trying to preserve or repair; and what your role is in this exchange. These three questions do not always point in the same direction, and the tension between them is often what makes a conversation feel difficult before it has even started.

Most conversations go badly not because the content is too hard but because they carry too many things at once. The person raising the concern wants to be heard, to have their facts accepted, and to preserve their own sense of themselves as reasonable - all simultaneously. The person receiving it is simultaneously listening, defending, and wondering what this says about them. Chapter 4 describes this clearly in the context of supervision. The same dynamics appear in every honest conversation that carries real stakes, regardless of the relationship. Separating what happened from how it felt, and what it means about who we are, remains the most useful thing either party can do before a hard exchange.

It is also worth naming what honest conversations in ministry are not. They are not opportunities for the curate to demonstrate robustness by winning. They are not invitations to manage or contain the other person. They are not primarily about the curate's comfort or even their formation, however formative they turn out to be. They are moments of ministry, which means the other person's dignity, experience, and need matter from the very beginning.

1. Conversations with wardens and lay leaders

The warden relationship is one of the most important and most consistently underestimated in a curate's formation. Churchwardens occupy ancient, legal office in the Church of England. They are neither the curate's line manager nor their subordinate. They often have decades of institutional memory, deep personal investment in the parish, and a clear sense of who should be doing what - a sense that may or may not include the curate in any meaningful role.

In rural Herefordshire, and in many of the diocese's smaller communities, 'how we have always done it' carries a weight that can feel almost theological. A curate arriving with innovative ideas, different sensibilities, or simply different habits may quickly become aware of being treated as a passing guest: welcomed, tolerated, and expected to leave without having changed very much. This dynamic is real and naming it honestly is the first step towards navigating it well.

The passing guest dynamic does not usually manifest as open hostility. More often it presents as polite non-cooperation, the redirecting of decisions to someone else, the invocation of precedents the curate has never heard of, or simply the quiet assumption that the curate will defer because they are junior and temporary. Left unaddressed, it compounds over time into a working relationship in which the curate has presence but no real voice.

The most useful principle for navigating this is legitimate voice through genuine interest. A curate who is visibly curious about the parish's history and the warden's experience, who asks rather than assumes, and who demonstrates that they are learning the place before trying to change it, will earn relational authority that cannot be given by the diocese or conferred by ordination. This is not deference. It is Wisdom: the recognition that a warden who feels seen and respected is a warden who can become a genuine collaborator.

When a concern needs to be raised directly about a decision made without the curate's involvement, about a pattern of exclusion, about a responsibility being blocked or undermined - the most effective approach is usually the most direct one, offered without accusation. 'I've noticed that the decision about the service times was made before I was aware of the conversation, and I'd like to understand

how we can work together more effectively on that sort of question.' This opens from observation rather than complaint and gives the warden room to respond rather than defend.

Conversations with PCCs and with lay leaders more broadly share similar dynamics but add the complexity of group settings. The PCC is a formal body with its own governance, its own history, and its own culture of decision-making. A curate who is new to a PCC is entering an established community, and the fact of ordination does not automatically confer authority within that community. Learning to speak in PCC with appropriate weight - not too tentative, not overreaching - is itself a formation task, and it takes time.

When a curate encounters resistance to change within a PCC setting, the instinct to push harder or to appeal to authority is rarely the most effective move. The more durable approach is to understand what the resistance is protecting before proposing the change again. Long-standing parishioners who appear to be resisting a new practice are often protecting something they love, something that holds meaning for them, something they fear will be lost. A curate who can name what is being protected, even while proposing something different, is practising exactly the kind of Wisdom that the Formation Framework is looking for.

Safeguarding note

If a warden or lay leader is behaving in a way that constitutes bullying, harassment, or serious misuse of their role, this is not merely a difficult conversation to be managed at parish level. Raise it promptly with the Training Incumbent and, if necessary, through diocesan channels. The curate who persistently accommodates behaviour that is genuinely harmful is not exercising Trustworthiness. They are absorbing a risk that belongs to the institution to address.

2. Conversations in the context of contested national questions

The Church of England has been engaged in a long, costly, and as yet unresolved process of discernment about human sexuality, relationships, and the pastoral and liturgical provisions that should flow from that discernment. The LLF programme concluded in 2026, with ongoing work transitioning to the Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working Group and Pastoral Consultative Group. The questions, however, have not concluded in parishes. Curates continue to encounter them in a hundred different forms: a couple asking about their forthcoming marriage, a long-standing member expressing distress or anger, a sermon that lands differently than intended, a warden who wants to know which side the curate is on.

This appendix does not take a position on the substance of those questions. That is deliberate. The curate's task in these conversations is not to resolve what the national Church has not yet resolved, and it is not to represent a particular theological position - whether that position is the Bishop's, the TI's, the PCCs, or their own - as if it were the settled mind of the Church. Their task is ambassadorial: to represent the whole Church, to hold the breadth of the Church's ongoing discernment, and to ensure that every person in the parish feels heard by the Church regardless of where the national process eventually lands.

This ambassadorial role is harder than it looks. It requires a curate to speak with integrity while not speaking primarily from their own convictions, to hold space for views they may find genuinely difficult, and to do all of this without performing a neutrality they do not feel. The internal conversation - how to maintain integrity without being subversive, how to exercise conscience

without becoming a faction - is itself a significant formation challenge, and it merits attention in supervision and reflective practice, not only when it becomes acute.

The most useful disposition for these conversations is what might be called listening as liturgy. If a curate can be genuinely present to a parishioner's fears, hopes, or anger about contested questions, without immediately correcting, redirecting, or managing them, they are practising Wisdom in one of its most demanding forms. This is not agreement. It is the ministry of presence, and it is a real thing, not a technique. The parishioner who has felt genuinely heard - even by a curate who will not tell them what they want to hear - has encountered something of the Church at its best.

Practically, this means developing the capacity to say a few things clearly and without embarrassment. 'My role here is to make sure everyone in this parish feels heard by the Church, and I take that seriously' is not an evasion. It is a true description of the representational role. 'This is a question the Church as a whole is still discerning, and I want to be honest with you about that' is a fair account of a live situation. 'I'm not able to resolve this for you, but I can sit with you in the complexity of it' is often the most pastoral thing a curate can offer.

What these conversations are not

The curate's goal is communion - the maintenance of relationship and mutual belonging across difference - not agreement. Avoid the fixer mentality: the attempt to move a parishioner from their position to a different one, or to reach a consensus the national Church has not reached. It is perfectly acceptable to say: 'My role here is to ensure everyone in this parish feels heard by the Church, regardless of where the national process lands.' That is not evasion. It is a truthful description of the representational office.

A particular challenge arises when the curate's own convictions are significantly at odds with those of their Training Incumbent or with the prevailing culture of the parish. The conscience and command question - how to exercise personal integrity without acting unilaterally or subversively - is not trivial. It belongs in supervision, named honestly and early. A curate who is struggling with the gap between their own theological position and what is being asked of them in a particular context deserves a conversation with their TI that addresses that gap directly, not one that pretends it does not exist.

3. Pastoral conversations where limits need to be stated: the Dual Duty

There is a particular kind of pastoral conversation that curates find among the most demanding: the conversation in which someone discloses something vulnerable, distressing, or concerning, and the curate must simultaneously offer pastoral presence and discharge a procedural responsibility. These two things can feel like opposites. They are not.

Naming them together as the Dual Duty helps a curate hold both without abandoning either. The curate's procedural accuracy - following the correct safeguarding route, declining to promise confidentiality they cannot offer, recording what has been shared - is not an interruption of pastoral care. It is an act of pastoral care. A person who has been encouraged to disclose to someone who then handles that disclosure well, honestly, and without panic, has been cared for. A person who has been encouraged to disclose to someone who then promises secrecy they cannot keep, or who investigates rather than escalates, has not.

This reframing is important because the instinct in these moments is often to lean into one duty at the expense of the other: to become so procedurally focused that the person in front of you disappears, or to be so pastorally attuned that the proper escalation is delayed or avoided. Holding both is the skill, and it is one that develops over time and with good supervision.

In practice

When someone begins to disclose something that may involve risk, the curate's first task is to remain steady and present. Pastoral presence in these moments is not about saying the right thing. It is about not panicking, not immediately reaching for a checklist, and not communicating to the person that what they have shared has made you unsafe to be with. Calmness is itself a pastoral gift.

The second task is honesty about confidentiality. Appendix C provides the working form of words: 'I will treat what you tell me with care and discretion. I cannot promise complete confidentiality if someone may be at risk of harm.' This should be said early, calmly, and without apology. It is not a warning; it is an honest account of the curate's role and the limits that come with it.

The third task is to state limits where limits need to be stated, and to do this with warmth rather than withdrawal. If someone is seeking ongoing pastoral support by private message or is looking to the curate to be their primary emotional resource or is asking for something the curate cannot appropriately provide, the limit needs to be named - clearly, kindly, and without shame. 'I want to be able to support you, and I think the right way to do that is through a conversation in person rather than by message' is a limit that can be stated with genuine care. It is not a rejection. It is a boundary in the service of better pastoral care.

After these conversations, curates need care too. The emotional weight of disclosure, of having to say no to someone in need, or of holding a limit under pressure, is real. It belongs in supervision - not as case detail, but as formative material about what the curate found hard, where they felt the pull between duty and pastoral instinct, and what they would do differently. That conversation is where the Dual Duty becomes formation rather than simply burden.

4. Conversations with other clergy

The collegial relationships of ministry are among the least formally structured and among the most personally significant in a curate's formation. They include relationships with peers in the IMD cohort, with more experienced clergy in the deanery and beyond, and occasionally with clergy in other traditions or contexts whose assumptions and practices are significantly different from the curate's own.

Peer relationships in the cohort carry a particular dynamic. The IMD cohort provides community, and that community is genuinely important. It also carries a professional dimension that can, under pressure, inhibit the kind of honesty the cohort is intended to support. Curates who are struggling may find it difficult to be vulnerable in a group where they also fear being assessed, compared, or judged. The result is sometimes a careful performance of being fine rather than the honest sharing that would help. Naming this in the cohort - or at least naming it in supervision - is itself a formation task.

When a curate has a concern about the behaviour or practice of a peer, the instinct is often either to say nothing or to raise it with the TI or the diocese before the direct conversation has been attempted. Neither is usually the best first move. A direct, honest, and kind conversation - 'I've been sitting with something I want to share with you, and I want to do that directly' - is usually both more respectful and more likely to be useful than escalation without prior attempt. If the concern touches on safeguarding or conduct, escalation may be necessary and prompt; but where the concern is about the working relationship, the shared formation process, or something that has been said that landed badly, the direct conversation should always come first.

Conversations with more senior or experienced clergy carry a distinct set of dynamics. Curates often report an uncertainty about how candid to be with clergy who are further along, whether in deanery

chapter, at diocesan events, or in informal encounters. There is a version of collegiality that is also hierarchy, and curates who are new to ordained life can find it difficult to speak honestly in those settings without feeling they are being either too deferential or inappropriately direct.

The most useful orientation here is honest professional respect: treating more experienced clergy as colleagues who can handle a real conversation, while remaining appropriately attentive to the fact that context and relationship affect how directness lands. A curate who disagrees with something said in chapter has every right to say so, calmly, and clearly, from the basis of their own experience and theological understanding. They do not need to perform agreement to be professionally appropriate.

Conversations with clergy whose theology or practice is significantly different from the curate's own can be among the most stretching collegial encounters in IMD. The temptation is either to avoid the encounter or to manage it by remaining relentlessly surface-level. Neither serves formation well. A curate who can engage honestly with a colleague whose starting point is quite different - maintaining their own integrity without needing to resolve the difference or convert the other person - is practising exactly the kind of theological steadiness that the Formation Framework describes as Wisdom.

5. Conversations with the diocese

The conversations a curate has with diocesan staff - with the MDO, the IMD lead, the DDO, or the Bishop's staff - occupy a particular and often anxiety-producing place in IMD. These are conversations in which the curate is simultaneously present as a person, as a minister in formation, and as someone who is aware that they are being assessed. The feeling of being assessed even in casual encounters is common, and it is not entirely imaginary: those who hold responsibility for the curate's formation and deployment do attend to what they observe, including in informal settings.

The most important thing to say about this is that the feeling of constant assessment, while understandable, should not be allowed to shape these conversations into performances. A curate who is managing their presentation in every diocesan encounter is not only exhausting themselves; they are depriving the diocese of the honest engagement that makes good formation support possible. The diocese cannot help with what it cannot see. The MDO who is told that everything is fine when everything is not fine cannot offer the intervention that might make a real difference.

Honest discernment under institutional pressure is itself a formation quality. The curate who can say to their IMD lead, 'I'm finding this aspect of curacy harder than I expected and I want to be honest about that,' is exercising a kind of courage and trustworthiness that the Formation Framework explicitly values. It is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of the self-knowledge and transparency that the institution needs in its ministers.

When something is formally live - a concern that has been raised, a fitness to practise question, a conversation about trajectory or timeline - the same principles apply, but the stakes are higher and the need for preparation is greater. In these conversations, curates are well served by knowing clearly what they want to say, by having discussed the situation with their TI first wherever possible, and by not attempting to navigate formal diocesan conversations alone. If a conversation with diocesan staff touches on something formal, the curate has every right to ask what the conversation is about before it happens, and to seek appropriate support beforehand.

The Bishop's staff can feel like a domain of unusual authority and unusual informality in the same moment: an encounter with the bishop, or with senior staff, may feel both significant and casual. Curates sometimes find that they have said more, or something different, in these settings than they

intended. The grounding principle is the same as everywhere else: know what your role is in the conversation, be honest within it, and do not perform either more confidence or more difficulty than you have.

Preparation, care, and repair

Before an honest conversation

The single most useful thing a curate can do before a hard conversation is to be clear about what they want to achieve. Not what they want to say - that is much easier to identify - but what outcome they are hoping for. The answer will often reveal whether the conversation is as urgent as it feels, what tone is most likely to serve it, and whether there is anything to do first that would make it more likely to go well.

It is also worth being honest about the emotional weight being carried into the conversation. A curate who is anxious, angry, or hurt will tend to bring those states into the room even if they are trying not to. Naming the emotional register to oneself - or, better, in supervision or to a trusted colleague - before the conversation usually reduces its distorting effect. This is not about managing emotions out of existence. It is about not letting them drive when they cannot navigate well.

Brief spiritual preparation also matters. The curate who has prayed before a hard conversation, who has taken a breath, and who has reminded themselves of what they are trying to do is significantly more likely to begin from a place of intention rather than reflex. Chapter 1 describes this as inner condition shaping outer practice, following Rowland's research on what distinguishes leaders who sustain change. It applies as directly to a conversation in the churchyard as to a major leadership decision.

After an honest conversation

Not every hard conversation has a clean ending. Some resolve well; others leave things partially said, or land harder than intended on one or both sides. What happens after is often as formative as the conversation itself.

In Hereford's rural and semi-rural context, the afterlife of a difficult conversation is real and visible. A terse exchange in a vestry will be noticed. A conversation that went badly at the Post Office will be known about at the PCC. This is not a reason to avoid hard conversations - avoidance compounds difficulty, it does not reduce it - but it is a reason to tend the aftermath with care.

The Second Conversation is one of the most underused tools in difficult pastoral and collegial encounters. Going back to someone a week after a hard exchange and saying, simply, 'That was a difficult conversation last week, and I wanted to check how you are' costs little and does a great deal. It signals that the relationship matters more than the dispute. It gives the other person a chance to say something they were unable to say at the time. And it gives the curate the opportunity to say something they wish they had said differently. In many cases, the real formation happens not in the original conversation but in the return to it.

Repair is not the same as withdrawal or apology for having the conversation. A curate who said something important and true should not retreat from its truth simply because it was received badly. But repair does require taking seriously that impact and intent are not the same thing: what was

meant is not always what was heard and attending to that gap - without abandoning what was meant - is itself an act of pastoral Wisdom.

Self-care after hard conversations

Curates who regularly absorb difficult emotional material - in pastoral conversations, in conflict management, in conversations where they have had to hold a limit or receive hostility - need somewhere to put it. That somewhere is primarily supervision, and secondarily reflective practice, prayer, and whatever structures of personal support the curate has built. What it must not be is the curate carrying it privately, performing wellness to those around them while slowly becoming burdened.

The formation of a sustainable ministry - one that can carry the cure of souls over decades, not just through curacy - depends on the curate learning now to seek support as a discipline rather than waiting until they are in difficulty before asking for help. Raising the emotional weight of a difficult week in supervision, naming what has cost them something, and being honest about what they found hard is not a sign of inadequacy. It is the ordinary discipline of sustainable ordained life.

Quick reference: principles for all honest conversations

1. Know what you are trying to achieve, not only what you want to say.
2. Be honest about the emotional register you are carrying in.
3. Keep the other person's dignity in view throughout.
4. Separate what happened from what it means.
5. Be clear, warm, and direct rather than managing the other person.
6. Name limits without abandoning the person.
7. Tend the aftermath: tend yourself and return to the relationship when the time is right.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Use these in supervision, journaling, or reflective practice. Take one at a time.

Is there a conversation I have been putting off? What am I afraid of - that the conversation will go badly, that it will reveal something I do not want to know, or that I will be seen differently afterwards?

When I have had to hold a limit with someone - pastorally, collegially, or in relation to contested national questions - how did I hold it? Was I genuinely warm, or did the limit become withdrawal?

Where have I been performing agreement or wellness in a relationship I should be having an honest conversation in? What would it cost me to have that conversation this week?

After an honest conversation that did not go well, what did I do next? Did I tend the relationship, or did I tend my own discomfort?

What does listening as liturgy mean for me, in the most demanding relational context I am currently in?

Starting Well

Orientation guides for new curates and new Training Incumbents

Appendix H | Initial Ministerial Development (IMD) | Diocese of Hereford

This appendix exists because the full handbook is substantial, and the people who most need it are often the least resourced to read it in one sitting. A newly ordained curate in their first week, or a Training Incumbent preparing for a curate's arrival, needs to know what to do now - not everything at once.

Each part of this appendix is designed to stand alone. Part 1 is for new curates. Part 2 is for new Training Incumbents. Both can be printed or shared separately. Neither replaces the handbook; both point into it.

How to use this appendix

If you are a new curate: read Part 1 now and keep it close for the first month.

If you are a new Training Incumbent: read Part 2 before your curate arrives.

If you are both reading this together: Parts 1 and 2 make a useful opening conversation.

Part 1: For the new curate

What to read first, what to do first, and what to remember when things are hard

Welcome to curacy in the Diocese of Hereford. What follows is not a summary of the whole handbook. It is a practical guide to the first weeks - what matters most immediately, what can wait, and where to go when you need help.

What to read in your first week

The handbook has fifteen chapters and seven appendices. You do not need to read all of it now. Start here:

Read in your first week	
Chapter 1: Curacy as Formation	The theology and register of everything that follows. Read it slowly. Come back to it when things feel hard.
Chapter 2: The Mixed Ecology	Your ministry context and how Hereford reads it. Read before your first Sunday.
Chapter 8: Rhythms and Agreements	The map of how curacy works in Hereford. The single most useful orientation chapter.
Chapter 9: The Learning and Ministry Agreement	Read before you sit down to agree your LMA. This is the document that holds your curacy together.
Appendix B: Curacy Timeline	A clear picture of what happens when. Read once, then keep it to hand.

Before your first supervision session, read Chapter 4 (Supervision). Before your first assessment, read Chapter 11. Everything else can be read when you need it.

One honest thing

Chapter 1 contains a section called "This will be harder than you expected." Read it. It says what most formation documents do not say, and it is true.

What to do in your first two weeks

Formation habits form early. The defaults you establish in the first month tend to persist. These are the things that matter most to put in place quickly:

Do in your first two weeks	
Agree your Learning and Ministry Agreement (LMA) with your Training Incumbent	Chapter 9
Establish your supervision rhythm and protect it in both diaries	Chapter 4
Confirm your Reflective Practice Group participation	Chapter 5
Set up a simple portfolio structure - lightly, so it stays usable	Chapter 6
Open your Curate Development Plan with initial priorities	Chapter 10
Complete or confirm safeguarding learning is current	Chapter 13, Appendix C
Read through SharePoint to know where the working documents live	Appendix F

None of these need to be perfect at the outset. The aim is to put the container in place, not to fill it immediately.

What you can expect from Hereford

Curacy is a mutual covenant, not a one-way obligation. The diocese is committed to the following throughout your formation:

- Regular, protected supervision with a Training Incumbent who will bring both care and honest accountability
- Timely, specific feedback linked to your formation priorities - not general endorsement and not surprises at assessment panels
- A Learning and Ministry Agreement that names scope, boundaries, and rest honestly, and that is revisited when reality changes
- Fair assessment that draws on evidence over time, not a single moment of performance
- Access to the MDO and IMD team when the supervisory relationship is not enough, or when you need support, the relationship cannot carry
- Pastoral support when you are struggling - not only process when things go wrong

The diocese's commitment to you

The diocese is committed to accompanying you through what is hard, not only to assessing you through what is required.

If you are struggling and have not yet said so, the next faithful step is to name it - in supervision, with the MDO, with a trusted colleague, or through whatever pastoral route is available to you.

You do not need to be well before you can be formed. You need to be honest about where you are.

What each document is for

Several documents run alongside each other through curacy. They can feel bewildering at first. Here is what each one does:

Document	What it is for
Learning and Ministry Agreement (LMA)	The covenant that holds your curacy: scope, boundaries, supervision rhythm, rest, and what is not yet in scope. Agreed with your TI and revisited regularly.
Curate Development Plan (CDP)	Your formation map: a small number of priorities that matter most now, linked to the Formation Qualities and Domains. The primary document at assessments.
Core Skills Framework	A practical coverage tracker used in supervision. Helps you and your TI notice what has been practised, what is developing, and what is next.
Portfolio	A small, chosen body of evidence of formation: anonymised, focused on pattern and learning rather than volume of activity.
Targeted Development Plan (TDP)	A time-limited focused plan used when a particular gap or concern needs concentrated attention.

All these live on SharePoint. The templates are there; the handbook explains how to use them. You do not need to understand all of them on day one.

The Seven Formation Qualities

Everything in the handbook is organised around seven Formation Qualities and four Domains. These are the national IMD framework that Hereford uses as a shared language for formation. You do not need to memorise them immediately, but it helps to know what they are.

The Seven Formation Qualities	What they attend to
Love for God	Prayer, worship, scripture, and the life of holiness from which ministry flows
Call to Ministry	Vocation, identity, and the public responsibilities of ordained life
Love for People	Pastoral care, safeguarding, relationship, and service to the People of God

Wisdom	Judgement, discernment, theological integration, and reading situations well
Fruitfulness	Mission, growth, collaboration, and the cultivation of others' gifts
Potential	Capacity for development, self-awareness, and sustained learning
Trustworthiness	Boundaries, accountability, reliability, and fitness to practise

The Four Domains - Christ, Church, World, and Self - are the arenas in which these Qualities become visible. Chapter 3 explains how they work together. Come back to it once you have had a few supervision sessions and have some real ministry material to think with.

Where to go when you need help

If you need...	Go to...
To understand a handbook chapter	The chapter itself, or ask your TI in supervision
A working document or template	SharePoint (Appendix F has the map)
Support with a formation concern	Your Training Incumbent in supervision, or the MDO
To raise a concern about supervision itself	The MDO or IMD lead directly
Safeguarding advice or to report a concern	The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) - promptly, through diocesan procedure
Pastoral support beyond the formation structure	Your TI, the MDO, or your own spiritual director or counsellor
To understand the assessment process	Chapter 11 and Appendix B

One thing to remember above all others

The formation disciplines in this handbook exist so that you are not carrying curacy alone. Supervision, reflective practice, the LMA - these are the Church's way of staying with you. They only work if you bring what is real.

Part 2: For the new Training Incumbent

What to do before your curate arrives, in the first month, and through the curacy

Thank you for taking on the Training Incumbent role. It is one of the most consequential things a minister can do for the health of the Church's future. What follows is not a summary of everything in the handbook. It is a practical guide to the essentials - what to do first, what your responsibilities are, and where the diocese stands alongside you.

Before your curate arrives

The defaults established in the first weeks of curacy tend to persist. The time you invest before your curate arrives is among the most formative you will spend in the whole curacy. At minimum, do these things:

Before your curate arrives	
Read Chapter 1 (Curacy as Formation) and Chapter 4 (Supervision)	These set the register for the whole relationship. Read them before the first conversation.
Read Chapter 8 (Rhythms and Agreements) and Chapter 9 (LMA)	Chapter 8 gives you the map. Chapter 9 explains the covenant document you will agree together.
Read Appendix B (Curacy Timeline)	Know what happens when, so you can plan supervision and assessment points honestly.
Confirm your safeguarding currency and your curate's pre-ordination compliance	Chapter 13, Appendix C
Protect supervision time in your diary before the curate arrives	Weekly in early months. Chapter 4.
Locate the SharePoint documents you will need: LMA template, CDP, Core Skills, supervision log	Appendix F
Read Chapter 15 and Appendix D if your curate follows a non-stipendiary or pioneer pathway	Chapter 15, Appendix D

In the first month

The first month sets the culture of the curacy. Agreements made vaguely now will cost time and trust later. Priorities for the first four weeks:

In the first month	
Agree the Learning and Ministry Agreement together - in writing, concretely	Chapter 9. Revisit it after the first month once you know what is realistic.

Have an explicit conversation about the dual role: you are both companion and assessor	Chapter 4. Name it. Do not let it be discovered.
Identify your curate's dominant learning orientation and adapt your supervisory approach accordingly	Chapter 4. Ask: when do you know you have learned something?
Open the Curate Development Plan with two to four initial priorities	Chapter 10. Keep them few and honest.
Complete Core Skills at Emerging stage as a transition baseline	Chapter 10.
Confirm Reflective Practice Group participation is in place	Chapter 5.
Set up a simple portfolio structure with the curate - lightly	Chapter 6.
Name what is in scope now and what is not yet in scope	Chapter 9. This protects you both.

The most important thing you will do in the first month

Take thirty minutes to agree the LMA concretely - scope, supervision rhythm, rest day, digital boundaries, and what is not yet in scope. Then revisit it after the first month. The habits formed here shape the whole curacy.

Your core responsibilities

The handbook sets out the full detail. These are the commitments the diocese asks of every Training Incumbent:

- **Supervision:** protected, regular, and distinct from staff meetings. Keep records as themes and agreed actions only, anonymised, agreed promptly. Do not allow it to be repeatedly displaced by busyness.
- **Feedback:** timely, specific, and linked to formation priorities. Not general endorsement. Not surprises at panels. The no-surprises principle is one of the most important commitments in curacy formation.
- **Scope and boundaries:** named in the LMA and kept honest. Where scope is quietly expanding or rest is being eroded, name it early and reset.
- **Safeguarding:** ensure your curate's training is current, model prompt escalation, and create the conditions in which near-misses and uncertainties can be brought to supervision without shame.
- **Assessment input:** concrete, specific, honest. A paragraph with real examples is more valuable than a page of endorsement. Where there are concerns relevant to fitness to practise, name them in writing with evidence. The panel is not the right place to discover a concern for the first time.
- **Formation planning:** keep the CDP and Core Skills close to lived ministry, revisit the LMA when circumstances change, and use the MDO early when you are uncertain or when something is escalating.

The dual role: holding it honestly

You are being asked to hold two roles at once: the person your curate can trust most fully with the struggles of formation, and the person who will write about them for panels and episcopal discernment. This tension is real. It cannot be dissolved, but it can be named and inhabited honestly.

The most important thing you can do is make this explicit from the outset. A curate who understands that their TI holds both care and accountability is better placed to use supervision well than one who discovers the assessment function only when it matters.

You are also, in the dual role, doing something that is genuinely demanding. It is worth naming that here.

What the diocese offers you

You are not expected to carry the formation task alone. The MDO and IMD team are available to you - not as a last resort, but as a normal part of the support structure.

Where the training relationship is under strain, where concerns are escalating, or where a curate's wellbeing is giving you cause for anxiety, contact the MDO early. That is not a sign of failure. It is exactly what the diocese asks.

TIs who find the formation role genuinely costly - whose own wellbeing is affected - are encouraged to name that too. The Church's expectation is that formation be carried with steadiness and truth, which requires that you are sustained as well as capable.

When things are difficult

Most curacies pass through a difficult season. Common pressure points include the curate discovering the gap between anticipated and actual ministry, the formation relationship becoming strained, concerns emerging about pace of development or about specific formation gaps, or external circumstances in the curate's life affecting their availability or engagement.

None of these are evidence that the curacy has failed, or that you have failed as a TI. They are ordinary features of a significant human relationship conducted under the pressures of public ministry. What matters is how they are handled.

When you notice...	The right response is...
A formation gap or uneven development	Name it in supervision with a concrete example. Agree a practice change. Record it. Revisit it.
A pattern that is not improving over time	Consider a Targeted Development Plan. Contact the MDO for support in framing it. Chapter 10.
Concerns about safeguarding, boundaries, or fitness to practise	Name them promptly, record clearly, escalate through diocesan procedure without delay. Chapter 13, Appendix C.
The supervisory relationship under significant strain	Name it directly in supervision first. If unresolved, contact the MDO. This is a proper use of the structure, not a failure.
Your own wellbeing affected by the demands of the role	Contact the MDO. Name it to your own pastoral support. You are not expected to carry this alone.

Uncertainty about how to proceed on anything	Contact the MDO early - before the situation has hardened. Early contact is always right.
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The Formation Qualities in supervision

Everything in the handbook is organised around seven Formation Qualities and four Domains. You do not need to use formal framework language in every supervision session, but it helps to know what you are attending to:

Formation Quality	What to watch for in supervision
Love for God	Is prayer and worship genuinely sustaining ministry, or becoming perfunctory?
Call to Ministry	Is the curate growing into a settled sense of ordained identity, or still performing one?
Love for People	Are pastoral relationships characterised by care, boundaries, and appropriate restraint?
Wisdom	Is the curate developing sound judgement, or defaulting to reflex or avoidance?
Fruitfulness	Is ministry bearing fruit for others, or becoming self-focused or anxious?
Potential	Is the curate receiving feedback and translating it into changed practice?
Trustworthiness	Are boundaries, safeguarding discipline, accountability, and reliability stable under pressure?

Chapter 3 explains how the Qualities and Domains work together. Chapter 10 explains how to use them in the CDP. Chapter 11 explains how assessors draw on them. You do not need to be a framework expert to use them well in supervision - a single sentence will often do it: "In what we've just been discussing, I think the Quality we most need to attend to is Wisdom. What would wise judgement have looked like in that situation?"

Key chapters and where to find what you need

Topic	Where to find it
The theology of formation	Chapter 1
Ministry context and mixed ecology	Chapter 2
Formation Framework (Qualities and Domains)	Chapter 3
Supervision in depth	Chapter 4

Reflective Practice Groups	Chapter 5
The portfolio	Chapter 6
The LMA	Chapter 9
CDP and Core Skills	Chapter 10
Assessments, 360, and panels	Chapter 11
Safeguarding in curacy	Chapter 13
Placements	Chapter 14
Pathway-specific guidance (SSM, part-time, pioneer, deacon)	Chapter 15, Appendix D
Assessment timeline	Appendix B
Safeguarding policy and reporting	Appendix C
Working documents on SharePoint	Appendix F
Honest conversations beyond supervision	Appendix G

One thing to remember above all others

The habits you model in supervision are the habits your curate is most likely to form. A TI who keeps supervision protected, brings real material, receives feedback without defensiveness, and names difficulty early - is doing more to form a trustworthy minister than any document in this handbook.

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