

2025 clergy well-being package

Today's announcements on clergy stipends and the Church of England three-year spending plans fit into a major programme of changes to support the well-being of clergy.

The package brings together proposals and actions by separate Church of England bodies including the Archbishops' Council, Church of England Pensions Board and Church Commissioners.

The key elements include:

Stipends

- The two key measures for clergy pay - the **National Minimum Stipend** (NMS) – and the **National Stipend Benchmark** (NSB) will both rise by **10.7 per cent** next year (to £33,350 and £34,950 respectively).
- They are being **rebased to catch up with inflation since 2011** and the rise comes on top of above-inflation increases in the past two years.
- The NMS is the legal minimum which can be paid to full-time stipendiary clergy – and dioceses are encouraged to adopt it as a national standard stipend for curates.
- The NMS also used as a key measure in setting pensions payment so the higher rate will also mean higher pensions.
- A major overhaul of the church's financial system and more support for dioceses set out in the Church of England three-year spending plans will make it easier for dioceses to adopt the new higher NSB as a **national standard stipend** for incumbent status clergy.
- In future years the NMS and NSB will automatically increase in line with inflation (CPIH) for the preceding April up to five per cent, with discretion for the Archbishops' Council, in its capacity as the Central Stipends Authority to go above that level.

Pensions

- Proposals to restore the **target level of the two-thirds of stipend**, abolished in 2011 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, are due to come before the General Synod in July.
- The proposals also include an **increase to pensions that have come into payment since 2011** for service since 2011 and an **uplift to accrued benefits for active and deferred members** to reflect a two-thirds accrual rate since 2011.
- These would involve an additional **£900 million** expenditure on clergy pensions over time.
- Proposed changes to the pension rules include **removing the 'one-year lag'** in the *reference stipend* used to calculate a member of clergy's pension when their first retire – providing a boost to all pensions coming into payment.
- Other changes would include removing **the limit on pensionable service accrual** for clergy who have served their whole career in stipendiary ministry and making it possible

for clergy to make **Additional Voluntary Contributions** (AVCs) via 'salary sacrifice', saving themselves and dioceses National Insurance Contributions.

Housing and retirement planning

- Helping clergy get on the property ladder during their ministry through new **Church-backed mortgage products** with banks or building societies, made possible through spending plans funding.
- Access to free **Independent Financial Advice** at crucial stages in ministry as well as other **pre-retirement support** through regional officers.
- Funding both to **upgrade existing Church-provided retirement rental properties** and to enable these to continue to be an option for new applicants - providing long-term security of tenure on a below-market rent.

Support for ordinands and curates

- Extra **investment to increase to the level of financial support** for ordinands.
- A new **single ministry training fund**, handling fees to training institutions, maintenance grants to ordinands and expense claims to make the process simpler and consistent.
- New '**golden hello**' **kick-starter grant** for new stipendiary curates to encourage long-term saving.

Other well-being support

- **£2m grant to the Clergy Support Trust** announced in February.
- New national **guidance on rest periods and working patterns** planned, recognising the importance of appropriate rest period.