



**LEEDS DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE
LTD**

**GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPANTS OF
PARSONAGE & OTHER DIOCESAN
PROPERTIES**

As from 1 January 2023

INTRODUCTION

The following information is intended to inform and assist clergy and lay people

This document is not intended to be comprehensive as the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is continually reviewing policy, and individual situations may sometimes require special consideration, particularly during this period of transition.

The stewardship of housing is a partnership between the occupant, the DBF and the Parish. The staff members at the Diocesan offices are always happy to answer questions about the care and upkeep of these properties, and are eager to be helpful. Please feel free to contact the Property Team at:

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Some other useful addresses and telephone numbers are to be found on page 36.

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AMENDED 04/01/2017

AMENDED 01/06/2018 – Contact Information

AMENDED 12/07/2018 – Contact Information

AMENDED 01/06/2019 – Contact Information

AMENDED 08/09/2021 - Contact Information + clauses for Property Committee

AMENDED 01/01/2022 – Contact Information

PREAMBLE

This section of the document sets out the terms on which, subject to the general provisions of the law, you will occupy your home, whether freehold or a license agreement. The remainder of these guidelines are written to help you understand the context and framework within which these rights and the Diocesan policy and objectives are framed.

Your Rights & Duties

If you have the freehold or are under Common Tenure you have certain rights and duties in respect of the Parsonage house and the land on which it stands. Some of these for example are set out in the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 which includes the following general statement: *'The incumbent shall have a duty to take proper care of a parsonage house, being a duty equivalent to that of a tenant to use premises in a tenant-like manner.'*

If you hold a License then your rights of occupancy will be framed within the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Diocesan Policy and Objectives

The Diocesan policy in relation to Parsonage houses and other houses ("Property") is set out in detail in this document.

The Diocesan Property Team ("Property Team") is ready to help with any queries that you may have about your Property. During your occupancy, the Team will be responsible for ensuring that the Property is wind and water tight, along with the state of the essential services – water, power, drainage, sewage, and heating. The Team may also be responsible for any trees in the garden although this may depend on the size and type.

Your Obligations

Your obligations as occupant include the following:

- That occupiers and the Property Team work with each other in accordance with our values and behaviours adopted by the Diocese of Leeds;
- To inform the Property Team if there is any damage or defect requiring the team's attention.
- To be responsible for fruit trees, shrubs etc. in the garden.
- To keep the garden in reasonably good order, and not allow rubbish etc. to collect in the grounds.
- Not to make or allow any alterations to the property which have not been authorised by the Property Team, including modifications to the essential service installations.
- To consult the Diocesan Secretary if you intend to take in a lodger who is not a member of your immediate family.
- To vacate the property on leaving office and leave it in a clean and tidy state. (Please note that the DBF has the right to recover from you the cost of

repairing any damage caused during your occupancy and cleaning the property.)

- Please contact members of the Property Team or your Archdeacon if you have any queries or encounter any difficulties at any time. We want to do all that we can to enable you to be comfortable and feel secure in your new home.

THE GUIDELINES

ADMINISTRATION

The Property Portfolio

The Diocese of Leeds is a large Diocese covering an area of approximately 2,425 square miles. There are circa 470 parishes which are organised into five archdeaconries. There are around 460 houses that the DBF are responsible for.

The Diocesan Estate also includes a large property portfolio in the form of glebe land.

The DBF, through its officers, is committed to enhancing the service it offers to those who live in its properties and to the custodianship and husbandry of its property and land assets.

The Diocesan Board of Finance

The DBF is responsible for property matters with the following objectives:

To ensure that property is used and managed effectively as a support to the mission and ministry of the Church.

To provide houses which are of a satisfactory standard, and which are maintained and, where necessary, improved in a manner that is timely and consistent with good value for money.

To recognise the impact on Diocesan clergy, their families and other occupants of timely maintenance and repair as part of the pastoral care offered by the Diocese.

The Archdeacons

The Archdeacons have an important role in ensuring that the housing stock is fit for purpose. Primarily this is achieved through effective liaison with occupants, all interested parties in the parishes and the Property Team. Each Archdeacon meets regularly with the Property Team to ensure that matters are being addressed particularly during the appointment process as vacancies arise.

Note: Glebe properties and other clergy housing not in use for ministry are administered by the Property Team. Where Parsonages and Assistant Ministers' houses are let out on a temporary basis during vacancies the Archdeacons are, of course, more directly involved.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Budget

The DBF is committed to providing realistic budgets for the maintenance and improvement of the property portfolio. The source of this income is through the parish share.

Works are carried out within three headings:

1. *Improvements:* Works of maintenance and repair that include 'improvement value' for occupants. (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, new central heating systems, double glazing, insulation etc.)
2. *Cyclical Maintenance:* Planned maintenance works running on short defined cycles to meet requirements of legislation or definable maintenance cycles. External Decorations – 5 yearly; Electrical Periodic Tests – 5 yearly; gas safety checks – annually. Generally these cycles are driven by legislation.
3. *Reactive Repairs*
 - i. *Inspection Repairs:* Works of reactive repairs identified at the time of the Quinquennial Inspection or other visits carried out by the Property Team. (Generally minor repair need.)
 - ii. *Other Reactive Repairs:* Unforeseen reactive repairs due to breakdowns identified by occupants.

The nature of reactive work should generally be minor and may involve an element of a 'holding repair' until major maintenance can be programmed.

Contractors

When contractors are working under the supervision of the Diocesan Surveyor, Property Manager or some other appointed architect, surveyor, engineer or other individual; clergy, members of their families, and PCC officers, should normally address concerns about the work being undertaken, preferably in writing, via the Property Team to the DBF. There may be exceptional circumstances where direct contact is necessary between the occupant of the property and the contractor to avoid a crisis situation. If this occurs, it should always be notified to the Property Team as soon as possible.

Council Tax

Normally Council Tax in respect of the occupation of the Parsonage House is paid directly through the Diocesan Budget. Clergy and PCCs should refer correspondence regarding Council Tax to the Diocesan Office. Council Tax is not paid when a house is temporarily unoccupied pending reoccupation by a Minister of Religion. Moving in and moving out dates must be communicated to the Property Team so that the appropriate reimbursements are claimed.

When houses are let, tenants become responsible for Council Tax.

The Diocese is also able to claim a Council Tax rebate for **Single Occupancy**. Where occupants live alone, or circumstances change this must be communicated to the Property Team otherwise the Diocese will be in breach of the law. Where appropriate such matters are dealt with in absolute confidentiality.

See also 'Lettings and Lodgers' (p.14)

Damage

The DBF will adopt a pro-active approach in recovering the cost of damage caused during an occupation of a Parsonage. The provisions of section 13(4) of the Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 will apply with regard to the occupier paying for repairs resulting from a lack of reasonable care of the property.

See also 'Pets' (p.17)

Internal Decoration Grants

Usually, a one off grant of up to £1,500 is provided on receipt of invoices which must be forwarded to the Property Team within three months of moving in. Under exceptional circumstances this could be reviewed. This should be discussed with the appropriate Property Team before moving in. No decorating will be undertaken by the DBF other than consequential decorations as a result of major works

Insurance

The DBF insures the Properties (i.e. buildings insurance) together with their fixtures and fittings for standard risk including third party claims. Any damage or any claim for compensation should be reported immediately to the Property Team who will advise, and who will, if appropriate, notify the insurers.

Household contents including TV aerials are not covered. It is important that clergy make their own arrangements for the insurance of their personal possessions.

Repairs: External

External repairs, agreed by the DBF to be necessary, are the responsibility of the DBF. The DBF, in consultation with the clergy concerned, reserves the right of discretion to remove unnecessary items and demolish superfluous buildings where this is agreed to be appropriate.

Repairs: Internal

The DBF expects clergy to do very basic jobs such as replacing a replacing silicone . Care should be taken not to undertake any work which would put people at risk, nor to embark on repairs which are beyond the capabilities of those concerned. All non-emergency work involving the DBF in expenditure must be approved through the Property Team before work is commissioned.

If works are not approved in advance, the DBF cannot guarantee they will reimburse clergy or pay any bills received, unless the matter is deemed to have been an emergency situation.

It is a legal requirement that work to the electrical installation should only be carried out by a 'Competent' Contractor¹. Work to the gas installation must not be carried out except by Gas Safe Register approved contractors.

Water Rates

The DBF pay water rates/meters unless there is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in place with an external tenant in which case the tenants are responsible for water rates.

Water rates are not paid when a house is temporarily unoccupied.

¹ "*Competent Contractor*" includes any Full Scope Part P Competent Contractor carrying certification from NICEIC, ECA, ELECSA and NAPIT.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Quinquennial Inspection

These are carried out every five years. The Diocesan Surveyor or Property Manager normally undertakes the survey. The inspection will review the condition of the house and its grounds. The surveys are not intrusive and occupants are not asked to undertake special preparation prior to the survey. However, the surveyor will need to see all round the property and access should be afforded accordingly.

Following the survey a short report will be issued including a list of minor and holding repairs that will be undertaken as a result of the inspection. Proposals for improvement works will only be implemented as budgets allow.

Alterations

Incumbents should be aware that under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 no additions or alterations may be made to a Parsonage house without the prior consent of the DBF.

See also 'Self-financed Improvements' (p.17)

Others who occupy houses owned by the Diocese should note that their occupation gives them no right to alter or add to the property.

Green Guide

The Church Commissioners publish a book on Parsonage standards and good practice known commonly as 'the Green Guide'. The guide is applicable to **new build** Parsonage housing only.

The DBF also uses the document as a broad guide to assess the suitability of existing housing or new acquisitions but, for a variety of reasons, it is unrealistic to expect that all Parsonages will comply exactly with all the guidelines within the latest edition.

Lettings and Lodgers

The law governing the letting or leasing of a Parsonage house or its grounds is complex and numerous approvals are required. If clergy or PCCs believe there are special circumstances that will make a tenancy or lease appropriate they should, in the first instance, contact the Property Team for advice on procedures.

There are legal considerations to be taken into account when clergy take in lodgers. The DBF **must** be consulted and agreement reached before any such arrangement is made. In the event of an interregnum all lodgers must vacate with or before the Incumbent.

If a house is going to be vacant for some time, the DBF will look to let the property (usually for a minimum of 6 months) until such a time as the vacancy is filled or the house is put on the open market for sale. All lettings are undertaken through independent professional letting agents. If the house is a Parsonage house the Landlords will legally be the sequestrators (i.e. the Area Dean and Churchwardens),

however in practice they will have no involvement in the day to day matters of the tenancy, these being handled by the letting agent and the Property Team.

If the house is to be let out during the vacancy, **responsibility for the utility bills will be passed to the tenant.** The Property Team will ensure that meter readings are obtained at this point by agreeing these with the letting agent.

See also 'Council Tax' (p.11)

Party Wall, etc. Act 1996

Party walls exist where two properties share a common dividing wall; this can take the form of a property or structure for example a garden boundary wall or house wall in a terraced or semi-detached property. Before work can be commenced on such walls, agreement must be reached with the adjoining owner, and a Party Wall Notice served. If you should need any work doing or receive such a notice or your neighbour commences work on such a wall please contact the Property Team before commencing any negotiations.

Planning & Other Building Works concerned with Former Church Property

Many of the present Parsonage houses have been constructed on land or in close proximity to the old Parsonage or former church buildings. When old Parsonages and church property were sold off restrictions may have been placed on the property in connection with its use, extension or alteration and new building. Please inform the Property Team if any new developments or building works takes place on or around such property.

Statutory Notices

If a Statutory Notice has been served upon an Incumbent e.g. planning proposal, the Property Team should be informed **immediately.**

Listed Buildings

Some houses are listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of architectural interest and are required by law to be kept in good order. Alterations or major repairs require planning permission and Listed Buildings consent.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE: When a building is listed, it is **listed in its entirety**, which means that both the exterior and the interior are protected. In addition, any object or structure fixed to the building, and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, are treated as part of the listed building.

It is a criminal offence to carry out work which needs listed building consent without obtaining that consent beforehand.

Occupants of a Listed Building will be informed of this fact at appointment by the Property Manager.

FROM MOVING IN TO MOVING OUT

Acceptance of an Appointment

During a vacancy a visit will be made by the Diocesan Surveyor or Property Manager, who may be accompanied by the Archdeacon and others as appropriate, to inspect the house and make recommendations about work that is required to the property.

A schedule of work will be prepared and implemented and the DBF will finance all the repairs and improvements thought to be necessary and affordable within budgetary constraints.

Before anyone is offered a post in the Diocese, where the occupation of a house is part of the appointment package, the individual will be shown the house and made aware of any work that the DBF have undertaken or are planning to do during the vacancy. Additional work may be agreed subject to the approval of the DBF.

Prior to Moving In

The Property Team is informed of a pending appointment and some informal discussions may then take place regarding the Property. Please note that financial assistance is available for moving and first appointments. Details of which are available from the Diocesan Office.

Keys

These are generally kept locally and arrangements for their hand over should be agreed with the Property Team. Priests-in-charge, assistant clergy and lay occupants of properties will not be handed the keys until a **License Agreement** or **Tenancy Agreement** has been signed and returned to the Property Team.

The replacement of locks and keys as a result of loss or theft rests with the occupier and in most cases is covered by a contents insurance policy

Adaptations for the Disabled

It is the policy of the DBF to undertake the reasonable adaptation of properties to accommodate the needs of clergy and their resident dependants where required. It is not the policy of the DBF to finance adaptations for occasional visitors to the house (whether family members or otherwise). However the DBF will support self-financed adjustments where these are both reversible and carried out to the specification of the Diocesan Surveyor or Property Manager.

See also 'Self-Financed Improvements' (p.17)

Parsonages and all other housing are private dwellings and, as such do not come under the Equality Act 2010. It is not therefore appropriate or possible for the DBF to make adaptations to properties for visitors. It is recommended that for the purposes of meeting the requirements of the Act that clergy make 'alternative provisions' such as meeting individuals in their own homes or arranging meetings in other premises.

Fixtures

The fixtures within a property are reviewed at vacancy and checked during the Quinquennial Inspection. Occupants are asked to consult with the Property Team prior to removing, altering or adapting fixtures.

Instruction Booklets

All instruction booklets/manuals should be kept in a safe place and close to hand should any engineer/contractor be on site and want to undertake any servicing or repair of the appliances at the property.

Pets

If clergy families keep domestic pets they will be held liable for any damage that arises as a consequence and will be asked to pay for professional cleaning if deemed necessary. Under no circumstances should houses be modified, for example, by the fitting of cat flaps etc. unless prior written approval has been obtained from the Property Team, as unauthorised works could invalidate warranties.

See also 'Damage' (p. 12)

Meter Readings

Upon occupation and vacation of houses occupants should read all meters and provide the meter readings to the Property Team within 24 hours of vacating the property. This is important for your own protection.

Self-Financed Improvements

Diocesan policies are broadly framed so that individuals are neither favoured nor disadvantaged by their own or local circumstances. There are occasions however where occupants wish to make improvements to properties that are outside the normal provision of the DBF. The DBF always considers requests for such improvements and applications should be made in writing to the Property Team who may then wish to visit the house with the Archdeacon.

In reaching its decision the DBF will consider the effect of the improvement on the property in terms of both the local context and of the Diocesan property portfolio generally. A key consideration will be the ongoing cost of maintenance once the occupant has moved on. The DBF may stipulate that the improvement must be removed at the end of the occupancy, if it is thought to be un-sustainable.

The improvements will only be allowed if they are carried out to a specification agreed with the Diocesan Surveyor or Property Manager and subject to inspection of the works on completion.

PCC-Financed Improvements

From time to time PCC's wish to support the ministry of their clergy (and indeed the work of the DBF) by funding improvements to properties. Such improvements must be approved in advance by the DBF and will be assessed on the criteria outlined above.

See also 'Self-Financed Improvements' (p. 17)

Security Precautions

- All doors and windows should be kept locked and alarms switched on in times of absence from the property.
- Don't leave notes for tradesmen. Telephone or email them instead.
- Ask a neighbour or friend to water the garden and indoor plants, mow the lawn and cut the hedge. They might also be asked to park their car occasionally on the drive or in front of the house and put the bin out on bin day.
- If everyone in the household is to be out until after dark, leave a light on in a room, not the hall. A time switch or light-sensitive fitting is recommended.
- In the house remember that curtains and blinds drawn in the daytime can attract unwanted attention.
- Make sure the doorbell is only audible from the inside – let people assume it is not working rather than not being answered.
- Disconnect telephones that can be heard left ringing (particularly those on window sills). Also, any answerphone message should always say "We cannot come to the phone at present", rather than "we are not here".
- Keep garage doors shut and locked. If the garage has windows, use curtains or blinds to block prying eyes. No car often means that nobody is home.

Fire Precautions

- Never leave matches or lighters where children can find them.
- Never leave a lit cigarette unattended – it may fall onto an armchair or carpet, which could catch fire, giving off dense smoke and fumes.
- Do not use candles where there are safer alternatives. If you do, never leave them unattended and extinguish them properly.
- Use fireguards around fires and heaters to protect children. Never place clothes on the guard to dry or put papers on the guard.
- Always stand portable heaters in a safe place where they cannot be knocked or tripped over. Keep them well away from furniture and soft furnishings such as curtains and cushions and never place them next to beds or where objects may fall onto them.
- Check that your furniture conforms to current fire resistant standards. Look for the warnings on labels.

- Turn off and unplug electrical equipment unless it is designed to be left on.
- Keep curtains well away from any cooker and television sets.
- Do not leave aerosols in direct sunlight or use them near flames, hot electric elements or other potential sources of ignition. They may contain a flammable propellant gas.
- Do not place mirrors or bottles in direct sunlight as concentrated sun-rays can start a fire. Windows with a glass lens-like piece imitating old glass should not be used in south-facing windows.

Vacating

When vacating a Property the following **must** be followed.

Keys must be left with the Churchwardens/Property Team

Meters must be read within 24 hrs and the Property Team notified of utility provider

All water (including the heating and hot and cold water systems) must be drained from the house unless otherwise agreed. Arrangements for this are made by the Property Team once the house is vacated.

The house must be made secure

Fittings and fixtures must remain

The house including outbuildings, garages & lofts must be cleared of all furniture and personal possessions. Carpets and curtains may be left for the next occupants by private arrangement.

The house must be left clean, tidy and in good repair.

There must be twice weekly internal and external inspections of the house made by a Parish representative (this is a prerequisite of the insurance policy).

See also 'Damage' (p. 12)

Spouses in Parsonage Houses Following Death in Service

Following the death of a serving clergy person, the spouse should be reassured that he/she will be able to remain in the house for a period of up to 12 months. During that period, the Bishop's Visitor will work closely with the family to discuss and consider their future housing needs.

USE OF THE HOUSE

Policy Statement on Clergy and parish offices

Background

The provision of this policy has become necessary because, in recent years, Parish Offices have evolved and the tendency for these to be integral with the Parsonage Study is beyond the scope of the Parsonages Green Guide and the remit of the DBF.

Definitions

Parsonage Study: Every Parsonage must include a separate room designated as the Study. This must meet the Parson's need for a place of work and quieter activities, both pastoral and administrative, and to hold in privacy interviews and small meetings without disturbance. Sufficient space in the study for these activities will prevent their encroaching on family life elsewhere in the Parsonage.

Crucially, the use of this space (as with the rest of the house) is under the control of any given Incumbent and not the churchwardens, PCC or other members of the church. The Study is **not** intended to accommodate parish supplies or equipment, nor is it designed to be the administrative centre of parish affairs. However, any particular Incumbent may engage, at their discretion, the services of a secretary or assistant to work from the Parsonage study.

Parish Office: This facility, where it exists, should not be integral with the Parsonage house. It may therefore be the place of 'work' for an Incumbent and Parish Administrator and will be a focus for administrative functions beyond the scope of the Incumbent's private and personal matters. The size and nature of the Parish Office will vary greatly depending on the size and shape of ministry in the benefice. The provision of a Parish Office facility is a local matter and under the control of the Incumbent, churchwardens, and other officers of the benefice or parish.

Study Policy

The DBF will identify and designate in each Parsonage house a room to serve as the Study. Each such room will be equipped with bookshelves, telephone point and adequate power points to enable the safe operation of any IT equipment etc. Where practicable this room will be adjacent to the front door, a ground floor toilet and, if layout allows, a lobby will be divided from the rest of the accommodation by some form of partition.

Guidance Note

The DBF encourages all Diocesan clergy to be careful in the use of terms. The preferred designation is 'Study' and the use of the word 'office' is discouraged as it confuses and raises local expectation as to the use of the study within the Parsonage by others. The 'Green Guide' applies to '**new build**' Parsonage houses. Certain compromises in layout may have to be accepted in houses that already exist in the Diocese or where a property is purchased to provide a new Parsonage house. The DBF aims to move houses as close to the 'Green Guide' as practical within the physical constraints of any building. Clergy are encouraged to adopt sensible modes of operation within the context of their own local situation.

The DBF asks that practices are not set up locally that would be difficult to sustain during a vacancy or may be incompatible with the lifestyle or expectations of any future Incumbent.

PCC's and church officers need to be encouraged not to see any accruing right for the study to become a centre for parish administration. The nature of the study and the rest of the house are essentially private. To give indication that it is otherwise is to open the door to complication in terms of insurances, public liability, employment law and so forth.

PCC's and churchwardens should note that to ask prospective candidates how they intend to use the house if appointed during the interview process might be considered inappropriate.

Reception Rooms

The Green Guide clearly states that: "one of the family rooms (generally the living room) should be sufficiently large to allow clergy to offer hospitality to their parishioners. However this room should not be regarded as a substitute for a proper parish meeting place elsewhere."

Guidance Note

In reviewing the use and designation of the Parsonage Study, the DBF feels it appropriate to reiterate the above guidance and its clear emphasis on 'hospitality' rather than the normally assumed 'use for meetings'. Meeting facilities and arrangements for meetings are a local matter and are beyond the scope and remit of the DBF and the proper use of the Parsonage house. As with the Study, any existing arrangements involving the 'use' of the reception rooms should lapse with a vacancy. They may only be reinstated at the discretion of the new occupants of the Parsonage.

Insurance

Local arrangements must be made for the insurance of any contents in the Parsonage. No items should be stored that would put the occupants at risk e.g. fuel.

GENERAL GUIDANCE (PROPERTY)

This guidance is offered so that you are able to assist in the maintenance of the Property you occupy and to ensure that all that can be done locally is being carried out so as to avoid costly repairs arising from untimely notification of problems to the Property Team.

Air Bricks and Damp Courses

Most houses have these. It is essential to see that earth and vegetation is prevented from growing around or blocking air bricks and that no earth is above the damp course. Walls should be kept clear of earth to a depth of about 9 inches (225 mm) below ground floor level or 6 inches (150 mm) below the damp course. In particular care should be taken if occupants are altering garden and/or paving levels.

Asbestos

The Diocese has a duty of care, in its role as a property manager, to any contractors engaged to undertake work on vicarage premises and will ensure that the appropriate legislation is followed. In parishes where ministers and other church workers operate from PCC owned property the Diocese draws attention to the duty of care which rests with the building owner.

See also Appendix 2 – ‘Asbestos’ (p. 39)

Chimneys and Flues

The regular sweeping of chimneys used for open fires, or for any solid fuel burning stove, is essential. Blocked chimneys or flues can be fatal, causing carbon monoxide poisoning (see Appendix 3) or fires. Chimney fires can cause great damage to the house and unnecessary inconvenience to the family.

Keeping chimneys clear is the occupant’s responsibility. It is recommended that this is undertaken on an annual basis and certainly before vacating and records kept.

Where appropriate the sweeping of flues to open fires will be carried out by the Parish during a vacancy and before a new Incumbent moves in.

Condensation

Millions of homes in the UK suffer from condensation every year. Condensation is simply a result of warm, moisture laden air coming into contact with a cold surface and turning from a warm vapour into condensing water droplets.

Condensation usually appears on windows and mirrors. In extreme cases, it can cause mould to appear inside cupboards, on clothes inside wardrobes and behind furniture close to or in contact with external walls. Fortunately, extreme cases like this are very rare and the problem should be dealt with or recognised long before this situation arises. If you think you have a problem with condensation please contact the Property Team.

The occupants of the house can greatly assist in preventing condensation problems where possible, for example:

- by using extractor fans provided in kitchens and bathrooms and not turning these off at the isolator;
 - by having a constant gentle and even heat throughout the property; i.e. not turning off the heat in unused rooms and not going from extreme heat to cold.
- **See also Appendix 3 – ‘Asbestos Condensation’ (p. xx)**

Exceptionally bad cases of condensation can cause health problems to occupants and damage to the fabric of the building.

Decorations – External

The DBF will arrange for the outside of the house, including its outbuildings, but not garden sheds to be painted, stained or treated with preservative as appropriate at five yearly intervals.

Decorations – Internal

AT VACANCY: See ‘Internal Decoration Grants’ (p.12)

AT OTHER TIMES: If redecoration is necessary as a consequence of building works authorised and carried out by the DBF, then reasonable costs involved will be met. If redecoration is necessary as the result of an insurable event such as fire, flood or structural improvement, then the Property Team will make the necessary arrangements.

UNDERTAKING THE WORK: Many PCCs assist clergy and some occupants. If you or other volunteers carry out the work, care must be taken to ensure that everyone works safely, within their competence and to a decent standard. Whatever method you adopt at the start of any vacancy, the house will be handed over in good order. .

Thought should be given to colour schemes. If you paint the walls in bold, dark or bright colours they **must** be returned to neutral shades prior to vacating the property to ensure that the property can immediately be re-occupied either by a member of the clergy or a tenant.

Drains

TOILETS: Sewers are only designed to take away water, toilet tissue and human waste. All paper and plastic waste, such as sanitary products, nappies and wet wipes, should be wrapped up and placed in a bin. Even the smallest of items, like dental floss and cotton buds, can have a damaging effect as they collect in the filters at sewage treatment works and can cause machinery to break down.

Although wet wipes are very useful when toilet training toddlers or removing makeup, they should be disposed of in the same way as nappies – in the bin. Wipes

do not break down like tissue, so may not get washed away down the pipe. When wipes mix with solidified fat, they set hard, forming a solid obstruction. Even items that are marketed as 'flushable' or 'biodegradable' contribute to blockages.

Although these items disappear when you flush the toilet, they do not break down in the sewers, as they take a number of years to disintegrate.

SINKS: Fat and oil poured down the sink after cooking is most likely to block your drains. Fat may be in liquid form when you pour it away but it quickly cools down and becomes hard, forming a thick coating around the inside of the pipes. When fat mixes with other items, such as wet wipes, it can form a solid obstruction, restricting the flow in the pipe and causing a blockage. The wastewater running through the pipe will then find an alternative place to flow out from, which may cause flooding.

Please note, these items **MUST NOT** be flushed down a toilet or poured down a drain:

- Fat and oil
- Wet wipes
- Female hygiene products
- Nappies
- Kitchen roll
- Food waste
- Incontinence products
- Colostomy bags
- Cotton wool/cotton buds
- Razor blades
- Tights
- Plasters and bandages
- Latex products
- Dental floss
- Medicines and tablets
- Engine oil, chemicals and paints

Chemicals, solvents, engine oil and paint should be taken to a local refuse site and medicines to a pharmacist for safe disposal.

Should the Diocese have to unblock a drain and the blockage is caused due to improper use of the drain the cost of the service will be recharged to the occupant, this will include where overflows have been deliberately blocked by occupiers or materials unsuitable for flushing have caused a blocking.

Fixtures and Fittings

The Diocese provides and maintains various fixtures and fittings in its properties. These are reviewed at vacancies and at the quinquennial inspection.

These items should not be removed, altered or adapted without first consulting with the Property Team.

The fixtures and fittings are considered to include the electrical services (power points, switches etc.), heating systems, kitchen, bathroom fittings, internal doors and miscellaneous items.

When necessary and appropriate the DBF will consider the improvement of all fixtures and fittings (including kitchens and bathrooms) to bring them up to modern standards. Normally consideration is only given to this as vacancies occur or at the time of the quinquennial survey.

Gutters, Downpipes and Water Butts

All gutters, down pipes, gullies and drains should be cleaned once a year during the autumn once leaves have fallen from the trees. A further clean in areas surrounded by trees may be beneficial earlier in the year. Clergy, or during a vacancy, the PCC, should make any appropriate arrangements with a local contractor and submit a claim for the expenditure to the Property Team. Great care should be taken to ensure qualified contractors carry out the work safely. People should not be asked to use ladders unless they have been properly trained and qualified for the purpose. The Property Team arranges gutter clearance at properties at the time of the renewal of external paintwork i.e. once every five years.

Under no circumstances should clergy or members of their family undertake gutter clearances themselves, particularly above single storey height, in the light of the risks to health and safety.

If you decide to install a rainwater butt, please ensure it has an efficient overflow system connected back into the rainwater downpipe. Omission of the overflow connection will result in dampness to the property and potential subsidence to the structure.

Any damage to gutters, downpipes, gullies & drains due to negligence or unauthorised adaptations, must be paid for by the occupant.

Insulation

All lofts should be insulated. Most lofts already have fibreglass quilt insulation to a minimum depth of 270 mm. If a loft is lacking this insulation then the Property Team should be advised. The laying and subsequent disturbance of insulating material should only be carried out by personnel with the proper protective clothing including a mask.

Loft Ladders

It is not the policy of the DBF to install a loft ladder.

Overflow Pipes

If you notice that you have water leaking or dripping from an overflow pipe please inform the Property Team **immediately**.

This could be indicative of a much more serious problem and in the worst cases could result in your home being flooded.

Please **do not ignore** leaking overflow pipes. They are easy to fix in the early stages but can cause costly and major problems to the structure if left unattended.

Pest Control

The top ten common household pests in the UK are flies, fleas, ants, wasps, mice, rats, spiders, moths, woodlice, bedbugs and cockroaches. Your local council will have a pest control service. Occupants must insure that domestic pets such as cats and dogs are regularly treated to prevent flea infestations.

Pest control works are the responsibility of the occupier however, if there is a breach in the fabric of the building, holes etc., then the DBF will attend to these once it is confirmed the pests have been eradicated.

Replacement Windows

Houses have single glazing, secondary glazing or double glazing. The DBF will consider replacing existing singled glazed windows or secondary glazed windows with double glazed sealed units during a vacancy, at the time of the quinquennial inspection or where exceptional circumstances prevail. Priority will be given to replacement of windows where insulation is poor; the fabric has deteriorated or there is a security dimension and is subject to budget availability.

Please note that it is not always possible to make changes to windows, particularly if the property is Listed or sits within a Conservation Area.

Security

The DBF places a high priority on ensuring that houses have good physical security including high quality locks to British Standards on stout doors and windows that can be locked shut.

It is not appropriate or possible to seek to make Parsonage houses into fortresses, as inappropriate measures can single them out as targets and are therefore counterproductive.

Clergy concerned about the security of their house are advised to consult with the Property Team who will be able to offer guidance on good practice.

See also 'Alarm Systems' (p.30)

See also 'Lighting' (p.29)

GENERAL GUIDANCE (GROUNDS)

Boundaries

When work is required to existing boundary fences, walls etc., the Property Team must first be consulted. Responsibility may be with the owner on either side, or it may be shared with them. If responsibility is with the property or partly with the property, then the DBF will meet the cost or its share of the cost. However, should the repair to the boundary be necessary due to neglect, the occupant will be liable for the cost. The DBF cannot meet the expense of changing boundary fencing for the occupant's preferred type for their children or domestic pets.

Driveways

Clergy families should keep all paved areas in good condition with weeds and moss removed and drains kept clear of earth and other obstructions. Any deterioration of the surface should be reported to the Property Team.

Fishponds

The Diocese is not responsible for the upkeep or maintenance of fishponds. If a fishpond is created during your occupancy, you will be required to make this safe prior to vacating.

Gardens

Maintenance of gardens is the responsibility of the occupant.

It is expected that gardens will be kept in good order by the clergy or, during vacancy, by the PCCs.

Hedges

Hedges are considered as part of the garden and as such are the responsibility of the occupant, or, in a vacancy, the PCC. Expenditure on maintenance will not be reimbursed. In exceptional circumstances the DBF may consider a grant towards costs.

Occupants of Parsonages **should not** plant *Cupressus leylandii* as hedge screening because of its rapid growth. Hedges should be kept at a height that is easy to maintain. (Max 6ft or 1.8m)

Japanese Knotweed

There are increasing instances in Parsonage properties where we have to deal with infestations of this difficult weed. First, it is important to note that it is illegal to plant or propagate this plant. Secondly, it is extremely invasive and causes serious damage to buildings and other structures.

The weed is difficult and expensive to deal with but it is vital that it is removed once it is seen on site. This is a task for a specialist contractor and should not be attempted by occupants. Please contact the Property Team if you see the plant in your garden, a neighbour's garden or you think you have it growing.

The stem of the plant can reach 3m high and is bamboo like in appearance. The leaves are 'heart shaped' and a lush green colour. It produces white flowers around September and October depending on its geographical location. It grows with great speed.

Lighting

The outside of the house should be well lit for convenience and safety and to help with security. Each house is different and what is required will depend on local circumstances, the position of the house, the closeness of streetlights etc. Where additional security is required, the DBF will consider meeting the cost of automatically operated external lights controlled with daylight sensors. Consideration will normally be given to the installation of these as vacancies occur or at the time of the quinquennial survey.

Sheds and Greenhouses

The DBF is not responsible for the maintenance or provision of sheds or greenhouses. If the occupier wishes to provide their own please contact the Property Team to discuss further.

Trees

Advice should always be sought from the Property Team before any tree is planted or replaced. Trees grown in proximity to buildings can cause severe and very expensive structural damage.

Written permission **must** be obtained from the Property Team before a tree is felled. Normally the work will be organised through the Property Team, however, you may be required by the Diocese to remove sapling trees at a quinquennial inspection. These will normally be immature self-sown forest trees.

There are regulations in force concerning trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation areas. The Local Authority strictly enforces these regulations. Their written consent is required before any tree work is carried out even if the tree is diseased or dead. Unauthorised lopping or felling, or the causing of damage to a tree, will result in a fine and can cause much ill feeling. Normally when work to trees is required the Property Team will appoint a specialist contractor who will be required to conduct consultations with the Local Planning Authority before proceeding.

Inspections and any tree works required will normally fall in line with the Quinquennial Survey although in exceptional circumstances, inspections may be required more frequently.

Any storm damaged or overhanging trees should be notified as soon as possible to the Property Team.

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Alarm Systems

Intruder Alarm Systems

Many Parsonage houses have intruder alarm systems. The installation of an alarm system, where there is none, will be considered by the DBF as vacancies occur or at the time of the quinquennial survey. Where the need is clearly demonstrated, the DBF will consider installing an Intruder Alarm System.

The maintenance costs of the system will be paid by the DBF. An Intruder Alarm System should comply with British Standard 4737 and quotations will only be sought from reputable specialist contractors that are firms either recommended by the Police or on the official list of NSI registered firms (Formerly NACOSS).

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms should be fitted to all houses. Maintenance of these, and the replacement of the batteries, is the responsibility of the occupant. If units are hard-wired, these will also be checked by the DBF's electricians during regular checks.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

The DBF will meet the cost of provision. Maintenance of these and the replacement of the batteries, is the responsibility of the occupant. If units are hard-wired, these will also be checked by the DBF's electricians during regular checks.

Boilers

The DBF has arrangements in place for the annual servicing of gas fired and oil-fired boilers. If servicing is not taking place on an annual basis, or is not satisfactory, the Property Team should be advised.

Built-in appliances

In certain situations built in appliances may be found in kitchens. The DBF is committed to maintaining these appliances. However, a pragmatic approach will be taken towards removing these anomalies (normally at vacancy or kitchen refurbishment) and arrangements will be made where current occupancies exist to enable new appliances to be purchased.

Electrical Installations

The Diocese is required by law to undertake a periodic inspection (every 5 years) of the electrical installations. This inspection may highlight necessary repairs or upgrades to the system and these works are given a very high priority as not to undertake such repairs may affect occupant safety.

Additionally Diocesan contractors undertake visual inspections of the installation at each change of occupancy.

Occupants are reminded that recent changes in legislation require registered contractors undertake **all** electrical works. Occupants must not adapt or alter the electrical systems installed in the property. (See footnote on page 13).

If faults are found which are caused by occupiers' appliances, the cost of any call out and repair will be recharged to the occupant.

Gas Installation

The DBF has in place arrangements for the annual testing of the gas installation including all appliances in the house. The testing will usually coincide with the servicing of any gas-fired boiler. The DBF, in consultation with the clergy family concerned, reserves the option of removing unsafe gas fires when it considers this to be more appropriate.

Gas fired cookers will be tested as part of the annual gas test but any repairs identified will be the responsibility of the occupier, unless the appliance is integrated.

Work to the gas installation and to gas appliances may only be carried out by Gas Safe Registered contractors. This is a legal requirement necessary on grounds of safety.

If there is a suspicion of a gas leak the following procedure should be followed:

Extinguish all naked flames. Do not switch on or off any electric lights or appliances because the spark in the switch may cause an explosion.

If possible turn off the gas supply at the mains.

Ensure good ventilation by opening doors and windows wide.

Seek help. Call NATIONAL GRID – Tel: 0800 111 999

If this is not possible help should be sought from the contractor engaged to service the boiler and test the gas installation.

If this is not possible then assistance may be sought from any Gas Safe registered contractor.

See also 'Cookers' (p. 34)

Heating

It is the policy of the DBF to provide all houses in its care with full central heating. Where gas is available this will normally be the fuel provided, although some areas have oil systems as mains gas is not available. In areas where gas becomes available the system may be adapted but this will be at the discretion of the Property Team within the context of the age and condition of the existing system.

Heating Oil Tanks

The Property Team has in place provision for the annual servicing and inspection of domestic oil installations. Please make sure you order your heating oil in good time and never allow the tank to run dry or until empty. This will cause your whole

system to stop working and will additionally require a qualified heating engineer to attend site, remove all the air-locks from the system and get it working again. **Any costs for such avoidable work will be fully recharged to the occupant at the time of the repair.**

If you suspect an oil leak anywhere in the system it is essential that you inform the Property Team immediately. Leaks can be noticed by smell, grass and plants dying or brown patches appearing on your lawns or borders.

All sheds, woodpiles etc. must be kept a minimum of 1.8m away from oil tanks in order to comply with regulations. If any are found within this area the occupier will be asked to move them at their expense.

Any hedges, screens etc. around tanks should be kept well trimmed at all times.

Please be extremely careful when gardening, digging, strimming or cutting the grass when you are anywhere near the oil pipes or oil tank in your garden.

LPG Gas Installations

The gas tank and fittings installed on the tank are the property of the LPG supplier who is responsible for regular maintenance.

Secondary Heating

It is the intention of the DBF to provide secondary heating in the study and the principal living room although this is not always possible, particularly in properties with oil fired heating systems. This heat source is designed to enable other areas of the house to be kept cooler through the day or to provide a boost in cold weather or when hospitality is being offered. The secondary heating source should therefore be instantaneous in nature (i.e. a gas fire).

The DBF recognises where solid fuel fires already exist they should not be removed. However the installation of new solid fuel appliances will only be considered by application to the Property Team and by the PCC or occupier being responsible for the cost, including that of reinstatement on vacating if required. Compliance with current regulations must be adhered to and installations should only be undertaken by suitably qualified HETAS registered fitters, with compliance certificates to be provided to the Property Team on completion.

Private Sewage Installations

The Property Team has in place annual provisions for the inspection and maintenance of private sewage installations.

NOTE: It is particularly important that the guidelines concerning what may or may not be flushed down your toilet or put into the drains are strictly adhered to for this type of installation.

See also 'Septic Tanks' (p.32) and 'Drains (p.24)'

Septic Tanks & Cess Pits

The DBF will meet the reasonable costs of emptying septic tanks but arrangements for emptying should be made locally, with receipts forwarded to the Property Team for reimbursement. Please note these items must NOT be flushed into a septic tank:

- Baby wipes
- Cat litter
- Chemicals: bleach, thinners, oils, varnishes, paints, pesticides
- Cigarette butts
- Coffee grounds
- Cooking oil
- Cotton swabs (Q-tips)
- Dental floss
- Female hygiene products
- Latex products
- Medicine
- Nappies

The above list is by no means exhaustive but indicates the wide range of products that are not compatible with a septic tank.

Showers

Showers are provided by the DBF as an improvement. The normal provision is an instantaneous electric shower over the bath, thermostatically controlled for safety, but some houses, for various reasons, have other arrangements.

Curtains and shower doors must be properly positioned to avoid water getting on to the floors. All seals should be regularly checked and any defects reported to the Property Team early, before significant water damage can occur.

Emergency Plumbing Issues

Frozen Pipes: If the pipe freezes, turn off the water supply at the stop tap, usually located under the sink in the kitchen or utility room, or sometimes in the downstairs WC. Open all cold water taps and flush the toilet to empty the water storage cistern and then very carefully thaw out the pipes, this should not be undertaken quickly as there may be splits in the pipe which will not be evident until the pipes have thawed.

Burst Pipes: The first thing to do is to prevent water passing the point of the leak. Start by turning off all the stop taps, if the escaping water cannot be controlled immediately, open all cold water taps so that the pipework and storage system drains quickly. DO NOT TURN ON THE HOT WATER TAPS. Switch off the central heating system and any electric immersion heater, and then call the Property Team who will endeavour to get a local plumber out as soon as possible. However if this happens after office hours or on a weekend, please contact a plumber from list of Contractors provided by the Property Team or by making your own enquiries locally.

WHAT THE DIOCESE DOES NOT PROVIDE

Carpets

Carpets are not provided by the Diocese and are a private matter for occupants. At the end of your occupancy you may leave these items behind for the use of your successor in office. It should not be assumed by incoming occupants that carpets or curtains will be left for their use as a matter of course.

Carpets in particular are vulnerable to damage, particularly if the property has been let during a vacancy. Whilst the Diocese endeavours to vet its tenants through their agents it cannot be guaranteed that carpets will be left in a usable state once the property is returned to clergy use. Any serviceable carpets present within a house at the start of a new incumbency should be regarded as a bonus whether the previous occupant was a tenant of the Diocese or a predecessor in office. If outgoing clergy wish to negotiate a payment from their successors in office for carpets or curtains they should indicate their intention to do so to the Property Team.

The moving grant offered by the Diocese is intended to cover, in part, the costs of carpets and curtains.

Notwithstanding the above, the Diocese does provide and take maintenance responsibility for vinyl flooring surfaces in kitchens, toilets and bathrooms.

Cookers

The DBF do not provide cookers although there will be provision of suitable connections for standalone electric and, where provided, gas appliances.

Where a cooker is gas, the occupant will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate engineer is engaged (Gas Safety Registered for gas or "Part P Certified" for electric) to fit the cooker and supply the Property Team with a copy of the certificate. (See footnote on page 13)

The normal provision for a space to put the cooker will be a 600 mm gap.

See also 'Built in appliances' (p. 30)

Cleaning

Under normal circumstances the DBF does not provide cleaning prior to the move-in of a new priest. If however, the DBF has undertaken works in the property, a builders clean will be commissioned on completion of works.

Curtains

The DBF does not provide curtains or rails for any area of the property. The resettlement grant offered by the Diocese is intended to cover, in part, the costs of curtains.

Telephones

The initial installation of telephone sockets for the 'public number' is the responsibility of the DBF. Where occupants wish to install a second line for personal private use they may do so but all arrangements for this are personal and local.

Usually a socket will be provided in the study and main bedroom, although precise locations may vary by property. Any other additional sockets will be at the expense of the occupier and the approval of the Property Team.

The repair, maintenance, and replacement of the telephone are the responsibility of the clergy or of the PCC as locally agreed.

The DBF is not responsible for installing, maintaining or providing extra points for answering machines, computers or other office equipment.

Cable Telephone

The installation of fibre-optic telephone cables is not permitted except on written application. Installation is subject to the written approval of the DBF and to an undertaking that the occupant and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising.

Television

The DBF does not accept responsibility for the provision or repair of TV aerials and related equipment.

Cable TV

The installation of fibre-optic telephone cables is not permitted except on written application. It is subject to the written approval of the DBF and to an undertaking that the householder and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising.

Satellite TV

In more remote locations cable TV will not be available and TV reception may possibly be poor. The installation of satellite dishes is not permitted except on written application and is subject to the written consent of the DBF. Consent will usually be given subject to an undertaking that the occupant and/or PCC formally accept the responsibility for any and all consequential costs arising from provision or removal.

The erection of a satellite dish may require the consent of the Local Authority, particularly if in a Conservation Area, and the householder should make his or her own enquiries about this.

ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Archdeacon of Bradford

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EMERGENCY CALL OUT

Outside office hours and in the event of emergency you are authorised to engage local contractors to effect immediate repairs to make the property safe and secure. This repair may not necessarily be the final repair and may be a holding repair to enable the Property Team or others to come and advise on the final outcome of any particular event.

As a first port of call seek help from your usual supplier, the list of approved contractors provided by the Property Team, from local advice on a suitable contractor or use the telephone directory.

All breaches of security **MUST** be reported to the police and a crime number obtained so that the Property Team are able to make a claim through the insurance policies.

All instances where Emergency Procedures have been followed should be communicated as soon as practical to the Property Team.

APPENDIX 1: A CHECKLIST OF HELP

It may be helpful to use the following list, as a way of identifying problems, and some simple bits of routine maintenance, that any householder is used to. It is not an exhaustive list, but might be a basis for a discussion between you and the PCC.

ONCE A YEAR

- Look at the trees in your garden for defects - Spring and after high winds and gales
- Check the central heating header tank is full and the ball valve free to move.
- Ensure insulation in the roof space has not been disturbed and pipe lagging is in place - autumn.
- Clear gutters, downpipes and gullies - autumn.

TWICE A YEAR

- Walk round the house during or after heavy rain to check that rainwater is not over-spilling or running down the walls from defective gutters or blocked downpipes.
- Check the electrical plugs on your appliances are safe.
- Clean out extractor fans.
- Kill weeds in driveway and if applicable rake gravel from sides and middle into wheel tracks.
- Oil hinges and stays to doors and windows.

FREQUENTLY

- Keep rainwater and kitchen gully gratings free of leaves and other debris.
- Look at roofs for defective or missing slates or tiles.
- Switch on central heating circulator for a few minutes once a week in the summer months. Radiator valves must be open for this to be effective.
- Check for leaks on toilets, overflows, flushpipes, etc.

WHEN REQUIRED

- Wipe up condensation from window sills in winter.
- Scrub with a solution of household bleach any mould on window joinery or walls.
- Tighten loose screws on hinges, locks, latches and other fittings before damage occurs, this also includes all doors and cupboards in the property.
- Beware frost damage, particularly while away from home

APPENDIX 2: ASBESTOS

Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012

These regulations came into full effect in April 2012. The regulation requires that Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs), which were used extensively in a wide range of construction materials throughout the last century, are managed and maintained.

Key points to note are that:

- The use of Asbestos in construction materials started in the 19th century and increased gradually until World War II. Large quantities were employed throughout the 1950s, 60s and early 1970s. Its use was subject to an informal ban from 1969 onwards with a total ban from 1999 onwards.
- Asbestos is only dangerous when the microscopic fibres are released. Therefore ACMs in good condition or encapsulated ACMs are not hazardous to health.
- Asbestos fibre inhalation is most likely to occur when the ACM is disturbed. Therefore monitoring and maintaining ACMs in-situ is often less hazardous than removing the materials.

Where is Asbestos in Buildings?

The short answer to this is nearly everywhere. Asbestos has good heat insulating properties, is fire resistant and its fibres are a good reinforcing agent in plastics. It is not found in naturally occurring building materials such as timber, stone or brick.

Typical applications are:

- Sprayed coatings to steel work for fire protection
- Laggings and packing for heat insulation of service pipes and tanks
- Asbestos Insulation Board (or AIB) used as a fire lining or often as ceiling tiles
- Rope and gaskets located round oven doors or electrical distribution box covers
- Mill boards and papers
- As a binding material in Asbestos cement
- Floor tiles, mastics and roofing felt
- Decorative paints and plasters including ARTEX.

The above list is by no means exhaustive but indicates the wide range of applications and by implication the locations of where ACMs are likely to be located.

Why is Asbestos a problem?

Although Asbestos has many good properties for use in construction (see above), the material is made up of tiny fibres, which when released can be inhaled and lead to various respiratory diseases such as lung cancer, Asbestosis and Mesothelioma. Exposure to the fibres, like lead poisoning, is cumulative, as the body has no mechanism for getting rid of the fibres. **Remember though that undisturbed or encapsulated asbestos is entirely safe. Removal of the material is not necessarily the right solution to the situation.**

APPENDIX 3: CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

WHY ARE WE TELLING YOU THIS NOW?

We are in the process of installing better insulation in your home, reducing draughts and reducing heating bills. However, if air circulation is reduced the risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning can be increased and we want to make you aware of preventative measures.

WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE- WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gas, oil, wood and coal. It is quite different from, and much more dangerous than, carbon dioxide. Carbon-based fuels are essentially safe to use. It is only when the fuel does not burn properly that excess CO is produced, which is potentially lethal. When CO enters the body, it prevents the blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs.

You can't see it, taste it or smell it but CO can kill quickly without warning. According to the HSE statistics around 20 people die from CO poisoning caused by solid fuel, gas fires and flues that have not been properly installed and maintained or that are poorly ventilated. Levels that do not kill can cause serious harm to health if breathed in over a long period. Many people associate CO poisoning with poorly maintained student bed-sit accommodation, but the risks are just as great in the private and rented housing sectors.

WHAT THE DIOCESE DOES TO MINIMISE RISK AND MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS.

The Diocese ensures that any work carried out in relation to gas appliances in our property is undertaken by a Gas Safe Registered engineer, competent in that area of work.

As your housing provider we have a legal duty to carry out an annual gas safety check and maintain gas appliances. We provide you with a copy of the completed gas safety check certificate. We also service oil fired appliances.

WHAT PREVENTATIVE MEASURES CAN YOU TAKE AGAINST CARBON MONOXIDE EXPOSURE?

Always make sure there is enough fresh air in the room containing your appliance (whether it is gas, oil, wood or coal fired). If you have a chimney or a flue, ensure it is not blocked up and also ensure that wall vents are not covered

If you plan to install a fire in a bedroom, do not use un-flued appliances like paraffin heaters and cabinet heaters.

Get your chimney swept from top to bottom at least once a year by a qualified sweep

If you have appliances that use other fossil fuels (wood or coal fired), make sure they are serviced and maintained by a competent person. For information on competent persons' schemes, visit the Communities and Local Government websites

You must never allow an unqualified person to install or carry out work on an appliance

You must never block airbricks or other ventilation equipment – if draughts are a persistent problem in your home please ask the advice of the Property Team

DOES HSE RECOMMEND THE USE OF CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS?

HSE strongly recommends the use of audible carbon monoxide (CO) alarms as a useful back-up precaution but they must not be regarded as a substitute for proper installation and maintenance of gas appliances by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. Before purchasing a CO alarm, always ensure it complies with British Standard EN 50291 and carries a British or European approval mark, such as a Kitemark. CO alarms should be installed, checked and serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

You can be particularly at risk from CO poisoning when you are asleep, because you may not be aware of early CO symptoms until it is too late. Having an audible CO alarm could wake you and save your life.

DOES THE DIOCESE SUPPLY CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS?

The Diocese believes that it fulfils its obligations with regard to the safety of gas and oil fired appliances through its annual servicing agreements. However this relies on you maintaining the equipment as it was at the time of the servicing and not tampering with ventilation measures. If you still have concerns then the Diocese will supply a battery powered CO alarm for each appliance.

With regard to wood and coal fired appliances (whether in a closed unit – such as a wood burning stove – or in an open hearth) the servicing and cleaning of the flue is your responsibility. Where open and active fires exist the Diocese will supply or reimburse, on request, a battery powered CO alarm for each appliance.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

Early symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with food poisoning, viral infections, flu or simple tiredness. Symptoms to look out for include:

- headaches
- breathlessness
- nausea
- dizziness
- collapse
- loss of consciousness
- tiredness
- drowsiness
- vomiting
- pains in the chest
- stomach pains
- erratic behaviour
- visual problems

For more information visit the NHS or telephone NHS 111 service by dialling 111.

If you or your family experience any of the above symptoms and you believe CO may be involved, you must seek urgent medical advice from either your GP or an accident and emergency department. You should ask for a blood or a breath test to confirm the presence of CO. Be aware, CO quickly leaves the blood and tests may be inaccurate if taken more than four hours after exposure has ceased.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM AT RISK FROM CARBON MONOXIDE?

Although carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas, signs that indicate incomplete combustion is occurring, resulting in the production of CO, include:

- Yellow or orange rather than blue flames (apart from fuel effect fires or flueless appliances which display this colour flame)
- Soot or yellow/brown staining around or on appliances
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out
- Increased condensation inside windows

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY APPLIANCE IS SPILLING CARBON MONOXIDE?

- Switch off the appliance and do not reuse until remedial action has been taken
- Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve (if you know where it is)
- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the room - do not sleep in it
- Visit your GP urgently and tell him/her that you believe your symptoms may be related to carbon monoxide poisoning and request either a blood and/or breath sample
- Contact the Property Team to effect arrangements for repair

(Source: this document has been adapted from the Health and Safety Executive Website. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/co.htm>)

APPENDIX 4: INSTRUCTIONS TO CHURCHWARDENS DURING VACANCIES

During vacancies the foregoing guidelines will be of use to churchwardens, who as part of their duties take on responsibility for benefice property. In particular they are required to ensure the following guidance is adhered to:

- a. The Churchwardens should notify the Property Team that the house has become vacant so that adjustments can be made in Council Tax payments to the local authority and that arrangements can be made by the Property Team to inspect the Property.
- b. All houses are insured with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. A condition of the block policy is that, when a house is empty, **a security check (including the efficacy of locks) should be carried out by the Churchwardens or a deputy twice weekly**, both inside as well as outside the premises. Inform the local police that the property is empty and if possible put up net curtains at windows and freestanding lamps on timers to make the property look lived in.
- c. Discretion is left with the PCC to decide if the telephone line should be retained and if it is the PCC should pay the telephone bills during the vacancy. If the telephone is discontinued a new number may be allocated when it is reconnected.
- d. While the house is unoccupied, the water, gas and electricity should be turned off at the mains for reasons of insurance. The Property Team will make arrangements for the water to be drained by a plumber from cisterns, pipes and radiators. Burst pipes are not covered by insurance. Alternatively, by agreement with the Property Team, if the Parish or Benefice require use of the house for any reason during vacancy, the central heating may be left commissioned so long as the frost thermostat is left at a minimum of 10°C. and the system left on constant. **In this instance, responsibility for utility bills and oil (if required) will sit with the Parish or Benefice rather than the DBF.**
- e. Parish equipment should be removed from the Parsonage house unless the Archdeacon has consented to them remaining. It should not be assumed that a new successor in office would automatically consent to their return once the appointment has been made.
- f. Please contact the Property Team prior to ordering a repair and if you are in any doubt about the scope of work required. **DO REMEMBER** that the need for a minor – such as a slipped slate – may indicate larger imminent failures of which the Property Team may need to be aware. Major Repairs, of course, have to be considered by the DBF. Unauthorised repair expenditure will not automatically be passed for payment, so it is always

worthwhile contacting the office. In an emergency the Archdeacon should be contacted.

- g. Electricity / Gas and all service charges are the responsibility of the DBF during a vacancy, except if the Parish or Benefice require use of the house as noted previously.

If the house is to be let out during the vacancy, **responsibility for the utility bills will be passed to the tenant.** The PCC should **ensure** that meter readings are obtained at this point either by agreeing these with the letting agent or the tenant direct.

- h. The Churchwardens must notify the Property Team immediately when anything occurs which might involve a claim under the Insurance Policy.

- i. The DBF does not maintain any contents insurance. The Churchwardens should ensure that appropriate contents insurance remains in place for any items remaining in the property.

- j. The Churchwardens are responsible for the upkeep of the garden of the Parsonage house. The grass should be cut regularly, and before the new Incumbent arrives the garden should be tidied. Trees should not be trimmed or felled without consent from the DBF.

- k. When a new Incumbent or Priest in Charge comes to the Parish the removal expenses will be reimbursed in full by the Diocese if the removal is within the British Isles. A moving in grant will also be paid towards the purchase of curtains and carpets. The PCC **should not** purchase carpets or curtains from the outgoing Incumbent.

- l. Prior to the moving-in date of the new occupier, the PCC or Benefice should ensure that the house is clean and tidy so that the house is welcoming to the new occupier.

- m. When keys are kept locally, arrangements for their hand over to new clergy **must** be agreed with the Property Team in advance as there are often works required before occupation, which may not be fully known locally.

Priests-in-charge, assistant clergy and lay occupants of properties will not be handed the keys until a License Agreement or Tenancy Agreement has been signed and returned to the Property Team.

- n. The Property Team will ensure the heating and water systems are recommissioned and serviced prior to the new occupier moving in.

- o. The Property Team will deal directly with the appropriate local authority and water supplier to ensure both Council Tax and Water Rates bills are set up once an occupier has moved into a property.

