

Authorisation of Communion Assistants (Diocese of Ely Policy)

1. Scope and Legal Basis

This policy sets out the process for authorising lay persons to assist in the administration of Holy Communion in public worship within the Diocese of Ely.

The legal basis for this policy is Canon B.12 and the Administration of Holy Communion Regulations 2015. The Bishop of Ely has used the power granted by these Regulations to delegate authorisation of Communion Assistants to incumbents.

This policy does not cover:

- taking communion to the sick or housebound, or leading worship in residential care homes or hospitals, will be separately authorised by the bishop - normally as part of an explicit ALM or LLM authorisation; or
- Communion by Extension, which requires separate permission from the Bishop - see the diocesan [Communion by Extension policy here](#).

2. Selection and Authorisation

- The incumbent, with the agreement of the PCC, may authorise lay persons to serve as Communion Assistants.
- Nominees must be regular communicants and of good standing within the parish. (In parishes which admit people to Holy Communion before they are confirmed, regular communicants might not be confirmed. See the diocesan [policy on Admission to Communion here](#).)
- Authorisation is granted for a period of three years, after which it must be reviewed and may be renewed.
- The role and duties of a Communion Assistant should be set out in a Role Description.

3. Safeguarding and Training

- All Communion Assistants must complete a Basic DBS check.
- All Communion Assistants must complete Basic Awareness safeguarding training and renew this every three years.
- In some cases, an adult Communion Assistant might supervise under-18s (for example, teaches the role to a child, has responsibility for them before, during, and after the service, helps them to robe, etc.). In this case, an

enhanced DBS might be required, also a Confidential Declaration, and the training requirement would be likely to include Basic Awareness (once), Foundation level (to be renewed every three years) and Awareness of Domestic Abuse (to be renewed every three years). All of this should be clearly outlined in the role description, which will define the correct level of DBS check, the appropriate workforce category, training needs, and whether a Confidential Declaration Form is required.

4. Children and Young People

- Children may serve as Communion Assistants, with parental consent, if they have been confirmed or admitted to communion before confirmation and are regular communicants.
- If communion is to be administered within a school, the Head Teacher's permission is also required.

5. Record-Keeping

- The parish must maintain a record of all authorised Communion Assistants, including dates of authorisation and renewal.
- This record should be displayed in the vestry or another suitable location.

6. Review and Renewal

- Authorisations must be reviewed every three years by the incumbent and PCC.
- Renewal is subject to continued good standing and any safeguarding requirements having been completed before renewal.

7. Liturgical and Practical Guidance

- Communion Assistants should receive appropriate training in the liturgical and practical aspects of their role.
- It is appropriate that Communion Assistants should be commissioned for this role during a main Sunday service.
- Hygiene and reverence are to be observed at all times.