

INTERNAL DECORATIONS GRANT

for

PARSONAGES AND OTHER HOUSES

IN DIOCESAN MANAGEMENT

All households in Diocesan-managed houses are personally responsible at their own expense for looking after the property "in a tenant-like manner". Some tasks [like gardening or unblocking drains] can usually be done on a DIY basis. Others [such as chimney sweeping or gutter clearing] may involve paying a contractor. Internal decoration may involve both self-help and labour costs.

For many years the Diocesan Board of Finance has encouraged clergy in their responsibility as householders to keep rooms decorated to a good standard by offering to help with the cost of materials.

The policy has been designed to address the need not only during the course of an appointment, but also during the period prior to a new household moving in [when the decorative condition can be variable].

Allowance policy and procedure

- [a] Initial decorating allowance:
In addition to the resettlement grant available to clergy on moving into a Diocesan-managed house, an initial decorating allowance [£500 in 2018] may be claimed. The allowance is for the first five years of the appointment and may be claimed at any time (in instalments or a single payment) during that period, from the day the appointment is publicly announced. It is anticipated that the bulk of the claim will be made prior to occupation by the new household but this is entirely at their discretion.

- [b] Decoration of hall, stairs and landing allowance:
The grant of £500 is available to help with the decoration of this area and this funding is only available once every 10 years.

NB: It is diocesan policy that no bold colours be used only neutral unless there is written agreement with remedial works to be carried out prior to the households departure.

Eligible materials are confined to paint, painting tools, white spirit, filler, adhesive, wallpaper and sanding materials. The cost of hiring equipment to meet unusual circumstances can be considered on prior application, for example for the sanding and sealing of floors.

- [c] Annual allowance:
During the course of an appointment beyond the first five years a maximum sum [£85 in 2018] per house per annum is available from the Board towards internal decorating materials. The allowance must be claimed during the calendar financial year in question. It cannot be carried forward.

- [d] In exceptional circumstances discretion may be exercised in the initial or annual maximum allowance. Individual cases should be referred to your Archdeacon or to the Property Manager.

- [e] Clergy in assistant staff houses may claim the annual allowance from appointment, but not the five year initial sum.

- [f] Evidence of expenditure [normally original or copy receipts] must be given to the Property Manager whenever a claim on either type of allowance is made.

- [g] Assistance by parishes [which is a matter of generosity not obligation] continues to be encouraged, in cash or kind, in recognition of the use of ground floor rooms in the service of the ministry locally. At the behest of the prospective or resident household, such parish help can be offered both during a vacancy and during the course of an appointment. Any such contribution is, of course, a matter for the benefice or team as a whole, not just the parish in which the house stands.

At a vacancy the contribution of the local church and the take-up of the initial allowance from the Diocese, are best determined and agreed at the scheduled Pre-Occupancy site meeting at which arrangements for the reoccupation of the house are discussed.

- [h] PCCs are encouraged to consider a special annual collection towards a PCC parsonage fund to assist with decorating labour costs and small improvements. Such a use very much serves the purpose of the original concept of the Easter Offering.
- [i] This guidance note will be issued to the Churchwardens and the prospective clergy at the time a new appointment is announced as well as to clergy in existing posts.

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