

4.1 HOUSING

1 **PRINCIPLE**

The offer and provision of an appropriate manse, either a UCA property or leased, is part of the placement process for a minister.

2 **APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION**

Manse

The congregation/placement may offer a suitable manse within the area of the placement. This would be rent free and include the standard provision of meeting manse maintenance, property insurance, normal local government rates and charges, and manse water, service and usage charges as required.

Other Appropriate Accommodation

The congregation/placement may request the minister to live within the area of the placement and provide accommodation which is considered by the minister, placement body and the PR & PC to be appropriate for the minister and their domestic situation. This may be a leased or rented property.

Relevant provisions include an adequate study/office (or on an adjacent site), maintenance costs, insurance, rates and water charges as required. Where the minister has a study/office on the Church site, it is appropriate for the congregation to accept responsibility for insurance of the minister's personal on-site office contents under the Church's insurance policy.

Accommodation Owned by Minister

A minister may choose not to accept a manse or other appropriate accommodation and provide his/her own accommodation. When this occurs, the consultation between the parties is required to determine the level of the allowance up to the maximum housing set annually by the Synod, with any resulting change to the terms of placement being reported to the Placements Commission.

3 **ACCOMMODATION EXPECTATIONS**

The placement may "own" the accommodation or rent a suitable property. Where a property is rented the placement will meet all costs associated with the rental. The property must be available for a reasonable period so that the minister and family are not disrupted with continual moves. Where a move has to occur, the placement will meet the removal costs.

Where a property is being rented for a minister, it does not mean that the full maximum manse allowance has to be paid as rent. There will be areas particularly in the country, where rents for a suitable property could be well below that level, as well as areas where the rent may exceed the allowance. The determining factor is the suitability of the property and its location.

The congregation (and/or the landlord if rented) is responsible for capital maintenance and all repairs and replacements relating to improvements, fair wear and tear, and general depreciation. It would not be unreasonable for Church Councils to request manse inspections.

A minister, in accepting a call, accepts responsibility to keep the property in a state of cleanliness and ongoing general maintenance, as would apply if it were a rental situation, e.g. gardens tended and lawns mown, windows clean, guttering and down pipes cleared, and appliances, including smoke alarms, clean and functional. The occupants are responsible for unreasonable wear and tear or damage, including damage caused by family pets.

A minister who is offered and accepts a suitable manse for their domestic situation and decides during the placement to purchase his/her own home should note that the congregation or placement is under no obligation to pay a housing allowance.

4 HOUSING/MANSE COST

4.1 House Insurance and Rates

Where accommodation is Church owned or rented by the congregation the Church/congregation meet the cost of the insurance of the property (which includes carpets, window treatments and light fittings). Normal local government rates and charges are also the responsibility of the congregation. The minister is responsible for manse contents insurance. However, where the minister has a study/office on the church site, it is appropriate for the congregation to accept responsibility for insurance of the minister's personal on-site office contents under the Church's insurance policy.

4.2 Electricity, Gas and Fuel

Usage charges for all electricity, gas and fuel are, as a general principle, part of normal living costs and the responsibility of the Minister. Within the Uniting Church, these expenses can be paid from a Minister's Benefit Account. Some congregations meet these costs, either wholly or, for instance, where a study is home based, contribute to the home gas and electricity accounts. This is a matter for local decision, and should be recorded in the terms of placement.

4.3 Water and Sewerage

All manse water service and sewerage charges are the responsibility of the congregation or placement and utility usage is the responsibility of the Minister.

4.4 Housing Costs — Variations

The minister and congregation may, in special circumstances, agree to vary the above standard arrangements provided Pastoral Relations Committee approval is obtained. Any variation should be included in the terms of placement.

4.5 Summary of Costs when a Manse is provided

Expense	Responsibility for Payment
Utility/Council Rates	Placement
Utility Usage Insurance	
— Building	Minister
Insurance — contents	Placement
	Minister

4.6 Vacation of Manse

When a manse/property is vacated after a placement it is the responsibility of the Minister to leave the premises in a clean state. If a placement body needs to call in cleaners this is at the expense of the vacating Minister. It would be common practice for a Minister to get carpets cleaned prior to or on vacating the property.

5 MANSE/HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Housing allowances for those in placement are set and reviewed by the Ministerial Benefits Committee on an annual basis.

6 CLERGY COUPLES

- (a) A Minister placed in a Pastoral Charge shall be provided, by the body responsible for payment of stipend, with a suitable residence.
- (b) If a residence owned by the body responsible for payment of stipend is not available, that body will provide an appropriate rented residence for the Minister.
- (c) At the initiative of the Minister and by agreement between the Minister and the body responsible for payment of stipend, the Church may pay an allowance in lieu of residence towards the cost of the Minister residing in a residence owned by the Minister.
- (d) The Ministerial Benefits Committee shall from time to time determine the maximum residence benefit that may be paid.
- (e)
 - (i) Where both members of a couple are ministers in placement and the Ministers elect to live in a residence owned by the Minister or Ministers, the clergy couple shall be entitled to receive one housing allowance only up to the maximum housing allowance that may be paid.
 - (ii) The housing allowance shall normally be provided in equal amounts by the bodies responsible for the payment of stipend in respect of the two placements.
- (f)
 - (i) Where both members of a clergy couple are ministers in placement, but in different Congregations, Board or Agencies, so that both placements require the provision of a residence, the clergy couple may negotiate in which of the residences they will live.
 - (ii) The Congregation, Board or Agency whose residence is not so required shall pay a $\frac{1}{2}$ residence allowance to the other Congregation, Board or Agency towards maintenance of the residence in which the clergy couple are to live.
 - (iii) In the event of either of the placements referred to in (f)(i) and (ii) not having a residence, the payment of a $\frac{1}{2}$ rental allowance to the Congregation, Board of Agency that lease a residence will still apply.

7 PART-TIME PLACEMENTS

Ministers in part-time placements are entitled to appropriate accommodation that is equivalent to a minister in a full-time placement. (See part-time placements policy 9.1 in the Ministry Handbook)

8 FURNISHING PROVISIONS

Ministers in Western Australia are responsible for the furnishing of manses. This gives the minister and their family freedom of personal choice.

It should be noted that Ministers in congregations above the 26th parallel within the Western Australian Synod are provided with a fully-furnished manse including a refrigerator and washing machine.

9 PURCHASE OF MANSE

Properties are purchased by the Property Services Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery, for their appropriateness in given situations.

10 INSPECTION OF MANSES

In Western Australia, the Property Services Committee, on behalf of the Presbytery will arrange for a regular inspection of all manses to ensure that the properties are maintained in good and safe condition. [Reg 2015 - 4.3.1.(b)(v)]