Implementation Handbook
for Local Churches
2017 Edition

May 2017

Contents
1 Contact details and changes......................................................................................................................................... 2
2 This handbook ................................................................................................................................................................. 3
3 Why PGS ? ...................................................................................................................................................................... 4
4 How does PGS work ? .................................................................................................................................................. 6
5 What does the church need to do ? .......................................................................................................................... 8
1 Contact details and changes

Here are the contact details for any questions you may have about PGS:

1.1 Not yet registered

If you are wondering about registering or have any other questions, please contact:

Mary Spredbury
London Diocesan House
36 Causton Street
London SW1P 4AU

Tel: 020 7932 1245
Email: mary.spredbury@london.anglican.org

1.2 Already registered

If your church is already registered with PGS, please contact:

Mary Spredbury at the above address if you would like further copies of the materials, or advice about stewardship.

The Parish Giving Scheme Officer at the address below for queries relating to donors, donations and parish statements:

Parish Giving Scheme
Church House
College Green
Gloucester GL1 2LY
Tel: 01452 835595
Email: info@parishgivingscheme.org.uk

1.3 Amendments to this handbook

This handbook is a work in progress. The version you are looking at is identified by the digits at the bottom left hand corner of this page.

If you would like to suggest amendments, please send an email to Mary.spredbury@london.anglican.org suggesting your amendment, along with the version number from the bottom of this page.

Thank you!
2 This handbook

2.1 Aim of handbook

This handbook is intended to provide Parish Treasurers and Giving Officers with a single reference document for a local church’s planning and deployment of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS).

This handbook may also be of interest to clergy, church wardens and PCC members. Each local church can have as many copies as they like, and the whole document will also be available to download from the Diocesan website in due course.

2.2 Related documents

There are various other documents available for PCCs and for individual donors and an order form is enclosed with this handbook.

2.3 Structure of this handbook

The sections that follow are:

- Section 3 – ‘Why’ – the rationale behind adopting PGS in our diocese
- Section 4 – ‘How’ – details about how it works
- Section 5 – ‘What’ – the things a PCC needs to do to get a successful launch of PGS in the parish
- Section 6 – ‘Action’ – the form you need to get started, which you are welcome to photocopy if necessary

2.4 Copyright notices

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- The logo can only be used in articles or posters relating directly to the Parish Giving Scheme
- You will not make any changes to the logo, other than resizing (please preserve the aspect ratio)

If you wish to use the logo please write requesting permission to info@parishgivingscheme.org.uk agreeing to the above conditions.

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3 Why PGS?

Why are we adopting PGS?

**It will help us be more efficient**

The Parish Giving Scheme is a highly efficient system. It will improve cash flow for PCCs who are not able to make a monthly Gift Aid claim already and will reduce the amount of administration for the Gift Aid secretary.

Many donors now give to other charities by Direct Debit and so are used to this method and this scheme will also enable them to increase their gift annually in line with inflation without the need to complete further paperwork.

**It is a tried and tested scheme**

PGS started life in the Diocese of Gloucester. It has been running there now for several years. Their experience is that it enables significant increases in giving to support the local church. A number of dioceses have since joined the scheme and it has gained the national backing of The Archbishops’ Council. The PGS is now part of a new joint venture charity, with many new dioceses – including London – being able to join.

**It has some unique benefits**

Being a direct debit scheme, PGS enables the church (the beneficiary) to maintain control over the mechanics of payment. Significantly, it means that an inflationary uplift can be automatically applied each year, if the donor ticks the appropriate box on the form.

Another unique benefit is that a donor can choose to remain anonymous to the local church. This can be helpful in encouraging those who for various reasons feel more comfortable with their donations being kept anonymous, whilst still enabling the church to benefit from Gift Aid.

![Figure 1: the form enables a donor to sign up for an annual inflationary uplift and, if they choose, to remain anonymous to the local church](2-PGS-Implementation-Handbook-London.V4.doc)
4 How does PGS work?

4.1 The PGS cycle

![Diagram of the PGS cycle](image_url)

Figure 2: The PGS operates on a monthly cycle, collecting from donors on the first of each month, and then remitting the donations back to the local church on the tenth of the month. The Gift Aid follows later the same month after it has been received at PGS from HMRC.

4.2 Advantages for donors

Many donors are accustomed to automatic direct-debit-based systems and think the traditional ways of collecting money into the local church are a bit out of date!

Donors may have their donation automatically uplifted by inflation each year, if they so choose. Also, donors can remain anonymous to their local churches if they prefer.

Some people are suspicious of the direct debit processing system. They needn’t be! It is the only payment method with a money back guarantee, and is therefore safer for the donor than standing orders, cheques and cash. If you want to read more about this, go to [www.bacs.co.uk/Bacs/Businesses/DirectDebit](http://www.bacs.co.uk/Bacs/Businesses/DirectDebit)

4.3 For local churches

As shown in Figure 2 above, PGS remits money directly to the local church’s bank account on the 10th of each month. The amount remitted is the total for all the PGS donors in the congregation. The Gift Aid on eligible donations follows as a separate remittance later the same month. The Statement Receiver receives a report showing names and amounts for each donation, except where the donor has chosen to remain anonymous.
As more and more donors switch to the PGS, it will save many hours of administrative time at local church level. Donations are much easier for the Treasurer (or Giving Officer) to reconcile than standing orders or cash. It will improve cash flow, since Gift Aid is added each month. Furthermore, with the donor option to accept an inflationary uplift (which most people tend to go with), the church receipts should increase year on year.

4.4 Some other questions often asked

4.4.1 How much will it cost us?
The Diocese of London is covering the cost of participation in the scheme from the general fund budget.

4.4.2 How long does it take for the money to come through?
Money is collected from donors on the 1st of each month, and the donations are remitted to PCC bank accounts on the 10th of each month or the subsequent working day. The Gift Aid is remitted later the same month, once received by PGS.

4.4.3 What do PGS donors do as the bag or plate is passed round on a Sunday?
We can provide scheme participants with PGS tokens which can be placed on the plate or in the collection bag. This indicates that they participate in PGS and enables them to express an act of offering during the course of Sunday worship. Tokens, if included in the offering, may be received and blessed by the priest or minister with the rest of the collection. After the service they should be separated out from the rest of the money and stored somewhere safe until the next occasion a collection is taken, when they should be made available to worshippers who like to use them.

4.4.4 Can we photocopy the donor forms?
No. Only original forms will be accepted at the PGS office.
5 What does the church need to do?

5.1 Be realistic
The PGS will not solve all your financial problems with one ‘silver bullet’. However, it does offer a ‘golden opportunity’ to engage people in thinking about their own level of financial generosity.

It is strongly recommended that you run a stewardship programme, first, to take advantage of the opportunity to discuss giving and second, as a way to introduce the PGS as a preferred method of payment. As already explained, PGS is a good mechanical tool to help your church to process incoming donations and administer Gift Aid, but it is not of itself a motivational tool to elicit more giving.

If you would like help or advice about a stewardship programme your Finance Adviser will be pleased to assist.

5.2 Pray
We need to seek God’s guidance before we make any significant decision affecting our church.

5.3 Pass a PCC resolution
As some donor money will now flow to the PCC through the PGS, rather than directly from the donor to the church it’s important that the PCC pass and minute a resolution. It can be as simple as:

“We the PCC of … request the Parish Giving Scheme to commence operation of the scheme on our behalf.”

Aide-memoire:
Write here the date the PCC resolution was passed

5.4 Organising a stewardship programme
In launching the PGS there is clearly an opportunity for parishes to engage in some form of giving initiative at the same time. Experience reveals a much stronger take-up of the PGS when it is offered as a vehicle for giving on the back of a stewardship programme. More importantly this provides an ideal occasion to encourage your parishioners in their Christian giving. As with any well-designed stewardship programme it is another way of declaring vision and demonstrating how generosity enables the funding of Christ’s mission and ministry. It is crucial to use this to link generosity with the mission, and ministry that flows from it.

‘…when we seek to raise funds we are not saying, “Please, could you help us out because lately it has been hard.” … rather we are declaring, “We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources God has given you – your energy, your prayers and your money – in this work to which God has called us.”

Henri Nouwen, The Spirituality of Fundraising

If you have recently engaged in a stewardship programme (within the last two years) prior to the launch of the PGS you may prefer to simply offer the PGS on the back of some form of ‘giving review’ to aid the take-up of the scheme.
5.5 Register your church

Use the form enclosed with this booklet to get your church registered.

One side of the form collects data about church officers and destination bank account details. The other side asks for some statistics about your current patterns of giving, to give us a base from which to measure the effectiveness of the system. **We need you to complete both sides.**

**Aide-memoire:**
Write here the date the form was sent off to the Diocese

5.6 What the Diocese will do when you register

On receipt of your Church Registration Form, we will send you some packets (or a box) of PGS materials. If you need further materials, they can easily be provided.

5.6.1 “A better way to help your local church” leaflets.

These are ‘teasers’ – they’re designed for enquirers who are wondering about the PGS. You can leave these out, for example at the back of the church, but please add a local contact on the back of each leaflet, so that enquirers know whom to contact if they want to go further.

5.6.2 PGS Gift Forms

These will be sent to you together with a stock of labels already printed and coded for your parish, so you can be sure that donations are allocated to your church. There’s a Cover Sheet in the pack as well, showing exactly how to affix the labels to the forms. **These forms cannot be photocopied – donors must use originals although they may retain a copy of the completed form for their records.**

5.6.3 PGS Donor Information Booklets

These accompany the Gift Forms and help to answer lots of questions that donors often have. Please add details of a local contact on the back of each, before you give them out. You should give out one with each Gift Form.

5.6.4 PGS tokens

We will provide scheme participants with PGS tokens. Their use is explained in the Donor Information Booklets. See section 4.4.3 on page 6 of this handbook.

5.6.5 “Covering letter” examples

We’ll also suggest that you look at some of the example covering letters which can be currently found on the Diocese of Chichester website at [www.chichester.anglican.org/pgs](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/pgs). You’ll obviously want to do something specific to your own church situation, and maybe even have different letters according to who is being written to.

**NOTE:** although we’re happy for you to photocopy the church registration form you must not photocopy the actual donor forms; their design has been agreed with the PGS bankers and photocopies will not be accepted by the PGS office.
6 Register your church

The enclosed Registration Form should be completed in full apart from the Parish Giving Scheme Code which will be allocated to you.

Please note that when supplying details of the main project leader and the statement receiver on the form it is NOT sufficient merely to state their position, e.g. Treasurer.

The overall project leader will be the person who will be contacted to discuss any aspects of the implementation of the scheme in your parish, if the need arises.

Please complete the information on the reverse as this will enable the diocese, as well as you, to gauge the impact of the scheme.

Those signing the form should check carefully that the bank details are correct.

Once the form (including the statistical information on the reverse) has been completed, and the form signed, it should be sent to:

Mary Spredbury, London Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU

On receipt of your registration form the following stages will take place:

Receipt of the form will be acknowledged and any queries dealt with

We will send the form on to the Parish Giving Scheme team to enable them to set up your parish on the scheme

The Parish Giving Scheme will process the application and the Overall Project Leader will receive a letter confirming registration and giving important parish details

A parish pack of donor materials will be sent out. The quantity of leaflets will be based on the number of givers indicated on your registration form. Further supplies can be obtained using the Resources Order form.

Your Finance Adviser will remain available to assist in the setting up and implementation of the scheme

Thereafter, individual Donor Forms need to be in the hands of the PGS administration centre in Gloucester in the first week of the month preceding the month of the first direct debit collection. This is because a lead time of at least three weeks is needed for processing the Donor Form and raising the first direct debit.

Donors may need to be reminded to CANCEL existing Standing Orders to the local church. Ideally, donors will keep existing Standing Orders going until the month before their first Direct Debit collection date.