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THE ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICES (TERMS OF SERVICE) MEASURE By David Phillips

This legislation gained Royal Assent on 2 April just a few minutes before the Easter recess of Parliament. It had originally been hoped that it would gain approval by the end of 2008 but the Government seems to be operating a deliberate go-slow policy in relation to ecclesiastical matters. The suspicion is that they are doing this to increase the calls for disestablishment within the Church.

The Measure will mark a significant change in the nature of ministry in the Church of England although incumbents will remain Office Holders and will still hold the freehold of the church, churchyard and parsonage.

When the Measure comes into force all clergy who do not have freehold of office will transfer to Common Tenure and by then terms of service, role specification and so on should have been agreed. This will be a major piece of work for already stretched Dioceses. Clergy who have freehold are not obliged to transfer but may choose to do so.

The new legislation will have an impact on **appointments** because of the need to produce various agreed documents and to follow certain 'best practice'. **Ministerial Development Review** will become mandatory for all office holders and this will include participation in a certain level of training. **Capability Procedures** are being introduced, as are **Grievance Procedures**.

Much work has to be done before implementation to ensure that proper procedures for all these things are in place in each Diocese and various models, codes and guides will go to the General Synod for approval before then.

David Phillips is General Secretary of Church Society.