Brexit Fact Sheet for Parishes

Brexit is the commonly known term used to refer to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. The latest withdrawal date is the 31st January 2020.

Brexit may have an impact on the Church of Ireland as we operate across two jurisdictions. While there is still uncertainty as to what form Brexit will ultimately take it is important to consider how Brexit may impact your parish.

There are several changes that may need to be considered. These include:

1. **Transferring personal data:**
   In a ‘No Deal’ Brexit scenario, the UK will no longer be a member of the EU; instead, it will become known as a third country. That means transferring data from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland will be treated in the same way as if you were transferring data to another non-EU country like Canada.¹

   Your Parish may regularly transfer data to/from the Republic of Ireland. If your Parish is based in the Republic of Ireland, any personal data you transfer to Northern Ireland may be treated in the same way as transferring data outside of the EU (e.g. Youth Group from Co Meath transferring data to Northern Irish event organisers, Summer Madness). If this is something that your Parish might do, you will need to ensure you have a documented agreement in place and/or an additional clause added to a 3rd party contract, to protect the data you share.

2. **Employment Contracts:**
   The Common Travel Area entitles Irish and UK Citizens to travel, work, study and access public services in both countries. This will continue post Brexit. However, if your parish is based in Northern Ireland and you are employing non-UK, non-Irish staff your parish may have to consider work permit requirements.

3. **Consider what items you need to run the Parish:**
   Do you order your stationery from Dublin; or is your newsletter printed from Belfast? Each Parish should understand where it gets its supplies from. If it is outside your current jurisdiction, you will need to ensure that you can still receive these goods post Brexit. For example, costs may increase if import/export tariffs change.

4. **Other Considerations:**
   - Transport
     - If you’re driving in Ireland on a UK driving license you may need a green card as proof of insurance.
     - If you’re driving in Northern Ireland on an Irish driving license a valid motor insurance disc or a green card will be accepted as proof of insurance.
   - Currency Fluctuations
     - Sterling may weaken on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU so it is worthwhile exploring whether the parish would be financially impacted by this.

Brexit is evolving all the time. This article will be updated as announcements are made by both the British and Irish governments. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do contact the Representative Church Body, Dublin.

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¹ Guidance Note: Guidance on Transfers of Personal Data from Ireland to the UK in the Event of a ‘No Deal’ Brexit, June 2019 (Data Protection Commissioner)