

## **Remuneration of Church Musicians 2025**

First issued in 1996, these recommendations are guidelines, not directives. The qualifications and competence of the musician, what is expected of them, the ability of the choir, and the amount of administrative work involved are among the matters which should be considered when applying the guidelines to the local situation. The scales are revised from time to time in line with remuneration in other sectors.

When appointing musicians, parish authorities are strongly advised to consult the Code of Practice on Determining Employment Status prepared by the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Social Protection and the Workplace Relations Commission. The most recent version was published in July 2021.

It can be very helpful and will avoid difficulties arising, if there is an agreed understanding between clergy and musicians as regards choosing music for the liturgy, fees for weddings and funerals, the use of the organ for teaching and other matters.

In some cases the musician either accepts no payment or donates it back. While of enormous benefit, this generosity distorts the cost of running the parish. It is suggested that in such cases the parish should transfer the appropriate level of fee into a separate fund as, when the present musician leaves, it is probable that the successor will have to be paid. This procedure will establish a realistic payment level for the post and will avoid a sudden additional cost in the future.

The value of regular in-service training cannot be over-emphasised. At all stages in their careers, musicians benefit from continuous professional development. They bring back to the local church fresh approaches and ideas to support their work. Clergy and parish committees should encourage and expect their musicians to attend relevant courses and should provide financial assistance towards the cost.

Church authorities should find these guidelines useful in determining an appropriate payment level. It is important that the value of music in the worship of the Church and the musician's training, skill and commitment are appropriately recognised in monetary terms.

### **Background Information**

Since 2005 the Advisory Committee for Church Music has issued guidelines in tandem with the Church of Ireland for remuneration of Church musicians. These rates remained unchanged from 2009 to 2015. The rates were increased in 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2022. By this time it had become apparent that it was necessary to make Church work more financially attractive for competent musicians, and a major revision was carried out in December 2022, with more substantial increases agreed (especially in relation to the lower bands), to be spread over 2023 and 2024. Aside from this more substantial increase, the external benchmark for adjusting rates

is the change in the CSO Consumer Price Index for the previous year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June; in this case the period June 2023 to June 2024, the CPI increased by 2.2%.

The rates below are those adopted by the Church of Ireland, which we present for consideration at diocesan and parish level in order to attract and maintain the services of competent musicians. The Advisory Committee is at the same time aware that economic shrinkage is a feature in many quarters and emphasises that these are merely guidelines, to be adapted to each parish's particular financial circumstances.

### Introductory Notes

1. The revised rates apply to well-trained and competent musicians appointed on a contract of service and whose main employment lies outside the field of music.
2. Professional musicians can reasonably ask for higher pay than above. Factors such as hours worked, qualifications and expertise, length of service, responsibility for a junior choir and the amount of preparation time and administrative work involved should also be taken into consideration.
3. The annual rates cover attendance on up to seven occasions in addition to regular Sunday services, e.g. Christmas (3), Holy Week (2), Confirmation (1) and one other.
4. The rates relate to situations where one person works as both organist and choir director. Where two persons are employed to share these responsibilities, the parish should recognise the amount of spent in rehearsals, services and administration. It is recommended that each should receive at least 75% of the relevant rate, with the implication that the total cost to the parish will be at least 50% higher.
5. In the case of all appointments, remuneration should take account of working time, expertise, qualifications, and overall responsibilities, including administrative.
6. Additional payment should be made for duties over and above those set out in the contract.
7. Statutory annual holiday and sick pay arrangements should apply in the case of contracts of service. In other cases, musicians should be given at least four Sundays leave each year, the parish paying the deputy.

These guidelines are advisory, with the recommended rates **in the right hand column below**.

		2024	2025
Band A	One Sunday service, no choir	€6,048	<b>€6,181</b>
Band B	Sunday Service and Sunday choir rehearsal	€7,639	<b>€7,807</b>
Band C	One Sunday service, weekday rehearsal	€9,231	<b>€9,434</b>

Band D	Two services, no choir	€9,231	<b>€9,434</b>
Band E	Two services, Sunday choir rehearsal	€11,777	<b>€12,036</b>
Band F	Two Sunday services, weekday choir rehearsal	€13,369	<b>€13,663</b>

The minimum suggested fee for deputy and occasional work is €110 for each service plus out-of-pocket expenses when significant travel is involved.

**Funerals:** minimum €175. **Weddings:** minimum €250. These fees should be increased where appropriate, in recognition of travel, rehearsals and if music needs to be learned.

### **Additional Guidelines**

1. A written contract or letter of appointment should be provided, outlining the terms and conditions of service and listing the duties, including festivals other than Sundays, for which the musician is required.
2. When organ music is required at weddings and funerals, the resident organist should be given first refusal and, if available, is entitled to receive the appropriate fee when the marriage couple / family wish to engage a different organist.
3. All rates should be reviewed annually by reference to external benchmarks.
4. Church authorities should reimburse expenses incurred – such as choir music, postage and stationery – within an agreed budget.
5. Church authorities should encourage and expect musicians to attend relevant courses (in music, liturgy, theology, etc.) and should contribute towards the cost, recognising the benefit accruing to both the parish and the musician from continuous professional development.

**January 2025**