

Ministry Statistics for 2012, published today by the Research and Statistics Division of the Archbishops' Council, show a change in patterns of ministry over the past 10 years with numbers remaining largely constant.

The overall number of diocesan licensed clergy declined by 1% in the decade between 2002 and 2012. The number of full-time stipendiary clergy was 7,798 in 2012, a fall of 2% since 2011. They now represent 69% of all licensed clergy compared to 80% in 2002. Over the same period the number of self-supporting ministers increased by 50% from 2,091 in 2002 to 3,148.

The 2012 statistics show a continuing trend of increase in the proportion of female clergy in all categories. Whereas in 2012 there were 6,017 male full-time stipendiary clergy compared with 7,920 in 2002, a fall of 24%, in the same period their female counterparts have increased by 41% from 1,262 to 1,781. Women now account for 21% or one in five incumbents or those of incumbent status. Amongst senior clergy the percentage has increased from 4% to 11%.

The number of ordinations has remained broadly stable since 2002. In 2012 22% of recommended candidates were under the age of 30, compared to 15% in both 2002 and 2007. This reflects a focus in the dioceses on encouraging vocations among younger people.

Ven Julian Hubbard, the Church of England's director of ministry said: "These statistics reflect changing patterns of ministry, to meet the changing demands of 21st Century life, with an increasing reliance on self-supporting ministers and the spread of ministry teams. The continued commitment to ministry in the Church of England shows the importance of the Church as a Christian presence in every community."

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