



he Christian faith to children and young people.

Apprentice youth workers, youth ministers, children and families workers and chaplaincy aimed at students in further education are to be funded as part of major awards to dioceses announced by the Church of England.

A total of £16.3 million has been awarded by the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board to five programmes to support parishes and clergy to spread the Christian faith and increase the Church of England's engagement with young people.

The plans reflect the Church of England's goal of doubling the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030 and ensuring that its churches more fully represent its communities in age and diversity.

The Diocese of Bristol has been awarded £6.8 million for work including church and school partnerships with children, youth and families workers, with a special focus on lower income areas.

Under the plans the investment will provide support for ordained ministers to lead mission work, with investment in wellbeing, as well as vocational and leadership coaching and volunteer development.

Collaborative training and support will help teams to revitalise parishes, plant new congregations and pioneer new expressions of church.

There will also be a pilot administrative centre across several benefices to help free up clergy from paperwork, and investment in areas of deprivation including work to promote ministry on estates.

The Diocese of Sheffield is to receive £4.8 million to fund church plants and a Ministry Experience Scheme for 18-to-25-year-olds to develop young leaders, along with a new communal 'house of prayer' for young adults, inspired by the monastic movement.

The funding will further support five church revitalisations in areas of deprivation in Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster, and provide support for lay-led congregations through a small grants scheme and funding for lay workers.

The Diocese of Durham has been awarded £2.7 million to support chaplaincy to further education colleges through local partnerships with churches, interim ministry and strengthening the diocese's strategic capacity over the next six years.

The Board has also agreed in principle to award a further £1.2 million - with funds released subject to approval of additional plans - to support three Mission Hubs, where churches work together to develop mission projects.

The Diocese of London is to receive an award of £1.5 million over three years to expand its youth worker apprentice scheme with an aim of recruiting 24 apprentice youth workers who will be deployed in parishes in deprived areas across the diocese.

The Diocese of Canterbury has been awarded £560,000 to support the development of mission plans across the diocese and two cohorts of the

Ministry Experience Scheme. The scheme, offering young adults the chance to spend a year's placement in ministry, will be focused on working with children and young people.

As part of this work the Board has further agreed to award £460,000 - subject to approval of additional plans – to support the development of seven youth ministers working with churches in the diocese over a five-year period.

John Spence, Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board, said: "We have been really pleased and impressed by so many creative plans for the Church to become younger and more diverse.

"The Board was delighted to be able to provide funding to partner with dioceses in supporting lay and ordained leaders in parishes in the vital work of reaching more children and young people with the good news of the Gospel.

"These latest plans have the potential to be a rich source of learning for the Church as we seek to engage more effectively with children and young people in ways which more fully reflect the diverse communities we serve."

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