

Cover note

Ordained Vocations Statistics report and Ministry Statistics in focus: Stipendiary clergy projections

These two reports are being released at a crucial turning point for the Church of England. The Church is discovering again its vocation to focus both forward and outward. Like the disciples first given the Great Commission, the Church looks towards a hopeful future and a plentiful harvest. Doing this involves realistically looking at the current state and how we have arrived here. These two reports provide information about the profile of ordained ministers and candidates in the past, and to use that information to map out possible future scenarios. They are intended to be read alongside each other to provide one perspective on ordained ministry.

The information contained has been presented in two reports as it comes from different data sources. “Ministry Statistics in focus: Stipendiary clergy projections” uses information from the Church Commissioners’ clergy payroll system to create projections of future scenarios. This analysis provides an understanding of the current age profile of clergy and trends in those joining and leaving stipendiary ministry, and from that how clergy numbers might change in the future. The number of clergy is set to decline if the number of ordinations and average retirement age remains the same. Clergy delaying retirement by a year would help slow the rate of decline in numbers, but cannot prevent it. This provides momentum to the call for a 50% increase in the number of candidates for ordained ministry.

The information in “Ordained Vocations Statistics” is taken from Ministry Division monitoring records. It describes the profile of recommended candidates over the past decades including detail about age, gender, ethnicity and ministry type (incumbent, assistant, etc.). Information about each diocese and national averages are included in order that dioceses can benchmark their condition against other dioceses. The report highlights the particular disparity that still exists between the ethnic equality the Church aspires to and the reality. The age profile of male and female candidates is also surprising, and in particular, the number of young women ordinands is still low. Candidates, both women and men, from all traditions in the Church of England are being encouraged to come forward and there is an aspiration over the next few years that the proportions of young women and young male candidates should come to be similar.

The current statistical profile of candidates for ordained ministry means that the 50% increase would be achieved much more easily if the number of young women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people increased markedly. Anecdotally, social diversity is also likely to be low, although no statistics are collected that enable analysis of this factor. These changes come together in the projection of a 50% increase in candidates illustrated in “Ministry Statistics in Focus”. This projection models a 50% increase in the overall number of clergy being ordained, made up from a marked increase in young women, thus giving an overall

increase in those under 32, and likely will include an increase in BAME. This produces a more balanced cohort with increased diversity that avoids a peak of clergy near retirement.

God is calling people to ordained ministry. This call is worked out through a prayerful relationship to God, through the opportunities they have to experience ministry, through others who discern and encourage and through our formal structures of selection. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church as the body of Christ discerns what is needed in order to be an effective participant in the mission of God in the world. Keeping in mind that it is God who calls and we cannot recruit candidates who are not called, the Church of England is seeking an increase in the numbers coming into ordained ministry: for a hopeful future, for a plentiful harvest.

Report locations:

[Ordained Vocations Statistics Report](#)

[Ministry Statistics in focus: Stipendiary clergy projections](#)

Ordained Vocations Statistics Report by diocese:

Bath & Wells	Exeter	Peterborough
Birmingham	Gloucester	Portsmouth
Blackburn	Guildford	Rochester
Bristol	Hereford	Salisbury
Canterbury	Leeds	Sheffield
Carlisle	Leicester	Sodor & Man
Chelmsford	Lichfield	Southwark
Chester	Lincoln	Southwell & Nottingham
Chichester	Liverpool	St. Albans
Coventry	London	St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich
Derby	Manchester	Truro
Durham	Newcastle	Winchester
Ely	Norwich	Worcester
Europe	Oxford	York