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Research and Statistics

# Ministry Statistics in focus:

Stipendiary clergy projections

2015-2035

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# Ministry Statistics in focus: Stipendiary clergy projections

## Summary

[Ministry Statistics 2012-2015](#), published in June 2016, provided summary statistics of the number of clergy serving in the Church of England, and how that has changed over the period 2012 to 2015, including trends in total numbers in stipendiary and self-supporting ministry, age profiles, gender splits and ethnicity. This short supplementary report explores projections in the stipendiary element of ordained ministry.

Stipendiary clergy account for nearly two-fifths of ordained and active clergy. Clergy in self-supporting roles (16% of ordained and active clergy) and those with permission to officiate (32%), many of whom are retired clergy, often take an active role in parochial ministry. In order to best explore future ministry provision it would be ideal to calculate projections for all forms of ministry. At present, data are not robust enough to enable us to do this. Stipendiary clergy projections should therefore be understood in the light of the full ministry picture.

The stipendiary clergy projections start with an assumption of the patterns of clergy joining and leaving stipendiary ministry that we have seen in recent years being indicative of what we will see in the future, then explore a further 3 scenarios changing different aspects of these assumptions.

*The projections illustrate a steady decline in the total pool of diocesan stipendiary clergy if the current trends in ordinations and retirements continue (status quo scenario).*

*If, as is likely, clergy delay retirement by a year this would help slow the rate of decline in numbers, but cannot prevent it (retirements 1 year later scenario).*

*If the Renewal and Reform target of a 50% increase in ordinations by 2023 is reached then it is possible that there will be a stable pool of around 7,600 FTE clergy (ordinations 50% target scenario) by 2035.*

*Though if this rise in ordinations is a temporary peak and ordinations fall again to current levels gradually after 2023 then the pattern of decline will return (ordinations rise and fall scenario).*

In the scenario that sees a sustained increase in ordinations, if we see equal numbers of men and women being ordained, and see the age profile of female ordinands mirroring that of male ordinands, by 2035 the pool of stipendiary clergy could be 43% female compared to 27% in 2015.

This scenario uses an increase in the number of clergy joining stipendiary ministry through ordination to tip the balance between loss and gain, as opposed to increasing numbers re-entering stipendiary ministry from other ministries, or reducing those leaving stipendiary ministry. For this reason the ratio between curates and incumbents within the pool will likely see a shift, with training curates making up a higher proportion of the workforce in this 20 year period (23% in 2035 compared to 14% in 2015).

## **Introduction**

As explored in the methodology section of Ministry Statistics 2012-2015, data about stipendiary clergy come from the Church Commissioners' clergy payroll system. This data source includes vital information about clergy entering into and leaving stipendiary ministry, so provides a basis for projection assumptions. Data for other aspects of ordained ministry such as self-supporting ministry are less comprehensive making it much less meaningful at present to produce a reliable projection.

It is essential, however, that these stipendiary projections are viewed and understood in the wider context of trends in ordained ministry. This report therefore starts with some further information about that wider context, before looking at a range of future scenarios for stipendiary ministry.

## **Current pool of ordained clergy serving the Church of England**

Table 1 reflects how the 20,440 ordained and active clergy in the Church of England are distributed across different types of ministry. Stipendiary clergy account for nearly two fifths of ordained and active clergy. Clergy in self-supporting roles (16% of ordained and active clergy) and those with permission to officiate (32%), many of whom are retired clergy, often take an active role in parochial ministry. In order to best explore future ministry provision it would be ideal to calculate projections for all forms of ministry. At present data are not robust/complete enough to enable projections to be computed for self-supporting ministry or ministry funded by other bodies, however some basic observations about the age distribution of the current pool and those entering self-supporting ministry can give some clues as to the how this ministry might develop alongside the stipendiary projections.

Table 1 Total ordained ministry 2012 – 2015 (Headcount)

Total clergy <sup>1</sup>	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Diocesan stipendiary	1,980	6,150	<b>8,130</b>	2,000	5,940	<b>7,950</b>	2,030	5,770	<b>7,800</b>	2,100	5,630	<b>7,730</b>
Other stipendiary <sup>2</sup>	30	150	<b>170</b>	30	140	<b>170</b>	30	140	<b>170</b>	60	200	<b>260</b>
<i>Stipendiary total</i>	<i>2,010</i>	<i>6,290</i>	<b><i>8,300</i></b>	<i>2,030</i>	<i>6,080</i>	<b><i>8,120</i></b>	<i>2,060</i>	<i>5,910</i>	<b><i>7,970</i></b>	<i>2,150</i>	<i>5,840</i>	<b><i>7,990</i></b>
NSM	1,400	1,430	<b>2,820</b>	1,400	1,420	<b>2,820</b>	1,410	1,420	<b>2,830</b>	1,420	1,420	<b>2,840</b>
OLM	300	220	<b>530</b>	290	200	<b>490</b>	280	200	<b>480</b>	280	190	<b>460</b>
<i>SSM total</i>	<i>1,700</i>	<i>1,650</i>	<b><i>3,350</i></b>	<i>1,690</i>	<i>1,620</i>	<b><i>3,310</i></b>	<i>1,700</i>	<i>1,620</i>	<b><i>3,320</i></b>	<i>1,700</i>	<i>1,600</i>	<b><i>3,300</i></b>
PTO/LTO	1,030	5,350	<b>6,390</b>	1,120	5,350	<b>6,470</b>	1,190	5,270	<b>6,450</b>	1,270	5,210	<b>6,480</b>
Chaplains	300	890	<b>1,190</b>	310	880	<b>1,190</b>	320	860	<b>1,180</b>	320	850	<b>1,170</b>
Other <sup>3</sup>	170	1,260	<b>1,420</b>	170	1,290	<b>1,460</b>	180	1,310	<b>1,490</b>	200	1,300	<b>1,500</b>
<b>Total clergy</b>	<b>5,210</b>	<b>15,440</b>	<b>20,650</b>	<b>5,320</b>	<b>15,230</b>	<b>20,550</b>	<b>5,450</b>	<b>14,960</b>	<b>20,410</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>14,800</b>	<b>20,440</b>

<sup>1</sup> Note figures may not sum due to rounding

<sup>2</sup> Includes Archbishops, clergy in the Channel Islands, Diocese in Europe, and Bishops' Chaplains, but may be excluding others paid locally

<sup>3</sup> Includes principals, tutors, and other non parochial appointments.

**Self-supporting clergy**

The age distribution of current self-supporting clergy (Figure 1) does illustrate an older age profile compared to those in stipendiary ministry (Figure 4), and that is mirrored in the age distribution of clergy recently ordained into self-supporting roles (Figures 2 and 5). For self-supporting clergy, female clergy ordained in 2015 were on average 55 years and male clergy 53, compared to female stipendiary clergy being on average 42 years at ordination and male clergy 37. Total numbers of self-supporting clergy have remained broadly stable over recent years (Table 1).

Figure 1 Self-supporting clergy 2015 age distribution

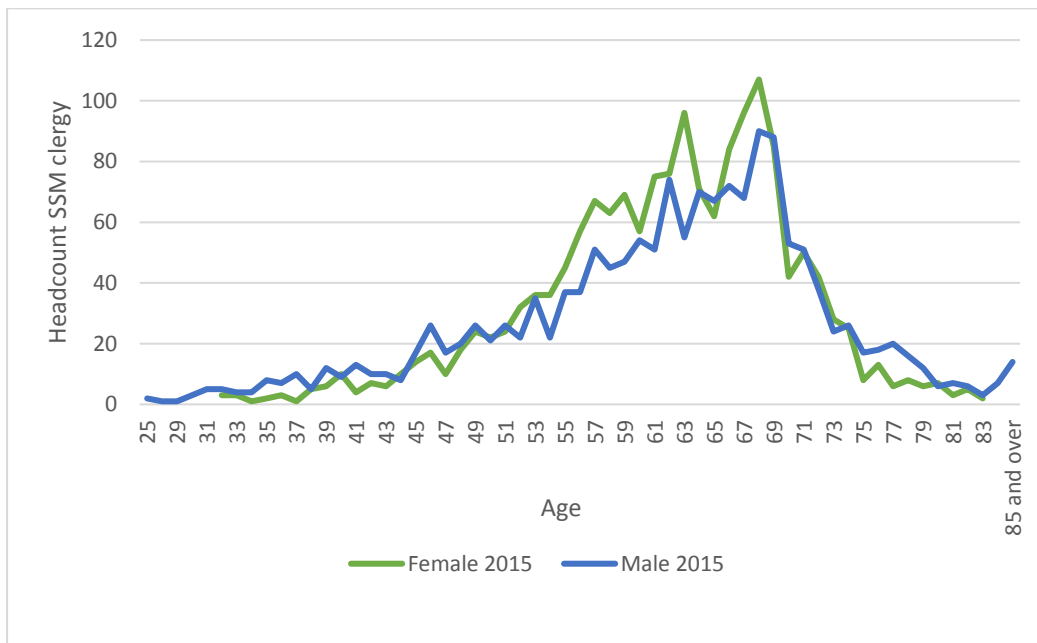
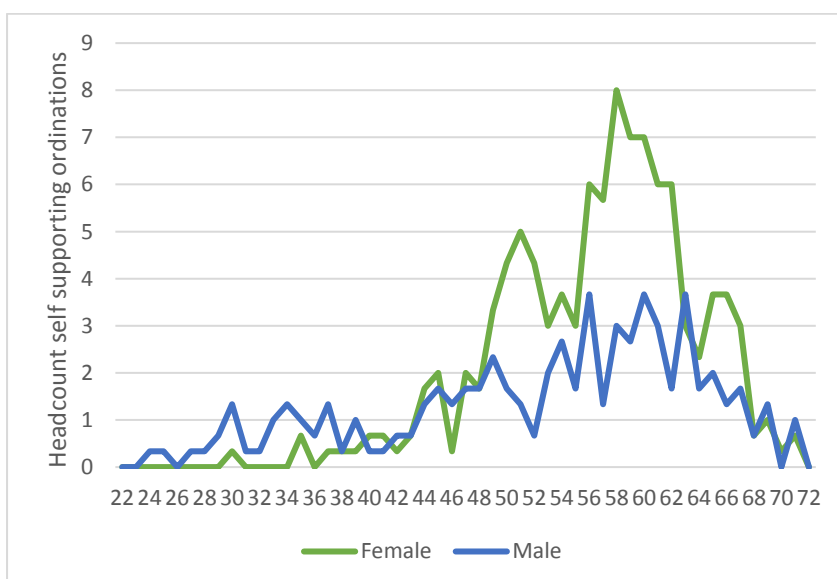


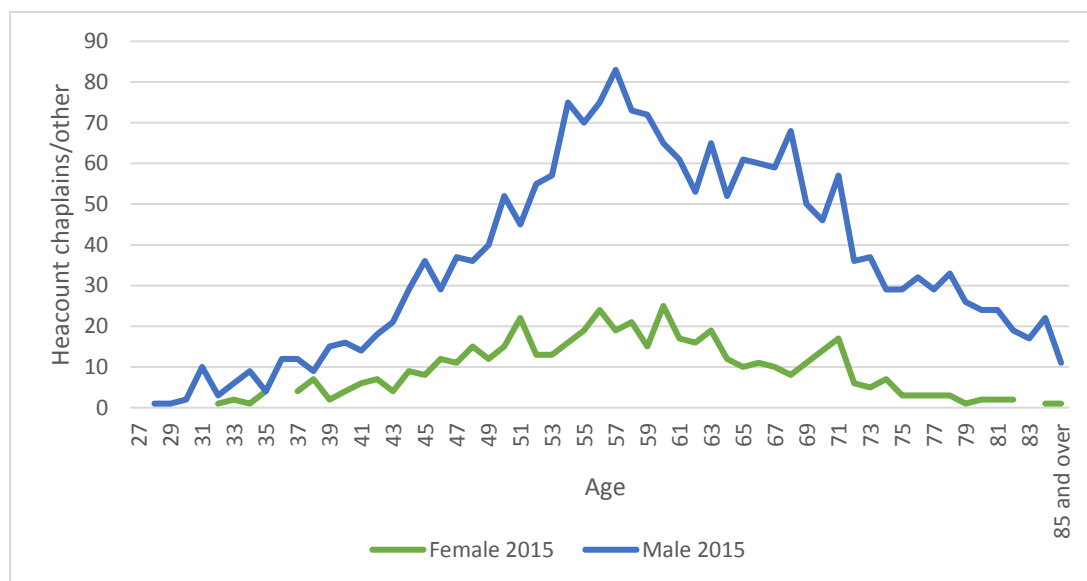
Figure 2 smoothed age distribution self-supporting clergy ordained 2013-2015



## Chaplains

Figure 3 below is based on data for clergy who are known to be in one or more chaplaincy posts and who do not also hold a parochial role. This includes those in education, the Armed Forces, healthcare and other institutions. Many clergy have multiple roles, including less formal chaplaincy. Where individuals have at least one self-supporting parochial role, they have been included in the self-supporting counts in figure 1, rather than in this figure. Total numbers of chaplains have also remained broadly stable over recent years, though there is often movement between parochial and chaplaincy roles.

Figure 3 Chaplains 2015 age distribution



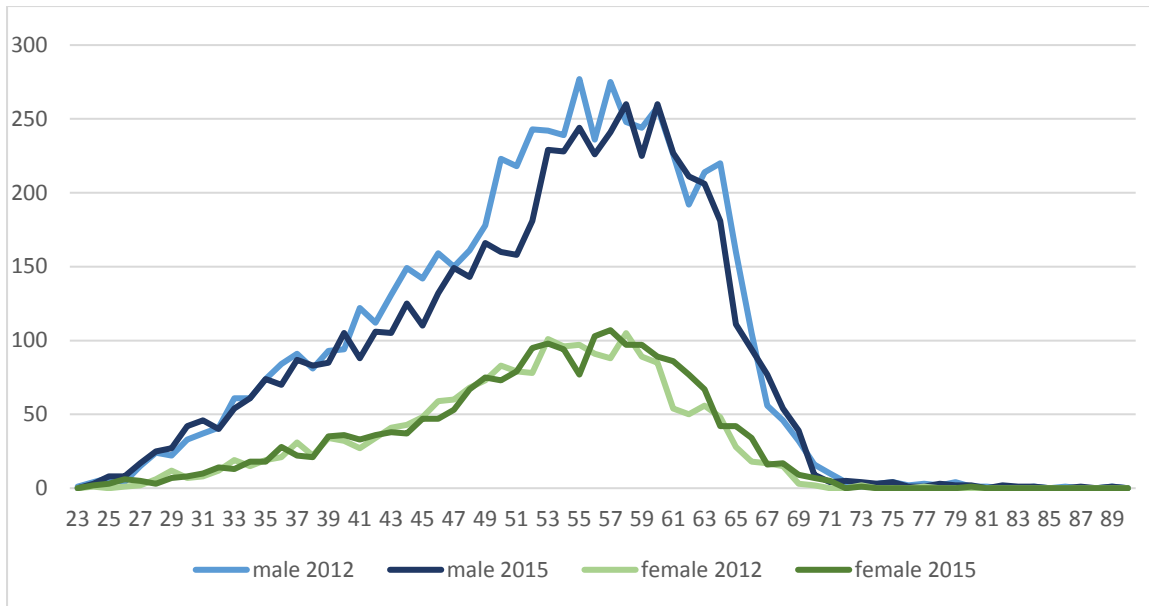
## Stipendiary clergy in 2015

The following analysis considered only the 7,730 (7,466 FTE) diocesan stipendiary clergy on the Church Commissioners' payroll (therefore excludes clergy in the diocese of Europe or those paid by other sources of funding such as locally paid clergy). Whilst total numbers of stipendiary clergy gives some indication of the overall ministerial resource available for deployment in parishes it is interesting to look within that at some specifics around role and gender to later consider how these might change over the next 20 years.

- Proportion curates: 14% of stipendiary clergy FTE are in training curacy posts
- Proportion incumbent/incumbent status: 75% of stipendiary clergy FTE are incumbent/incumbent status
- Proportion female: 27% of stipendiary clergy FTE are female

The age distribution of stipendiary clergy (figure 4) does reveal a 'bulge' of clergy likely to retire during the next 10-20 years, of whom a significant number are male.

Figure 4 Age profile of stipendiary clergy 2012 and 2015 (FTE)





**Clergy entering and leaving stipendiary ministry 2013-2015**

Whilst each year there is a net gain of female clergy to the stipendiary pool, the loss of male clergy is greater, therefore leading to a net loss of clergy overall each year (table 2). There are also some changes in total FTE based on those staying in ministry and switching between full time and part time working and vice versa. In 2015 there was a net drop of 8.4FTE of the 86 people whose FTE changed.

Table 2 FTE Stipendiary clergy entering and leaving 2013-2015

	2013			2014			2015		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Ordinations	183	97	280	169	114	283	181	123	304
Other entrants	99	50	149	100	58	158	96	57	153
Total entrants	282	147	429	269	172	441	277	180	457
Retirements	227	43	270	203	47	250	214	46	260
Deaths	13	1	14	5	1	6	11	4	15
Other leavers	247	81	328	216	91	307	199	81	280
Total leavers	486	126	612	424	139	563	424	131	555
Net loss/ gain	-204	21	-183	-155	33	-122	-147	49	-98

As set out at the beginning of this report, it's important to consider stipendiary ministry in the wider context of all ordained ministries. Movement to and from stipendiary ministry ("Other entrants" and "Other leavers" in Table 1) represent a substantial proportion of the total. Table 3 reveals that over two thirds of clergy leaving stipendiary ministry (for reasons other than retirement) are reported in Crockford's the following year as having some kind of other role, 19% of them parochial in 2015. The flow works both ways with 40% of clergy joining stipendiary ministry (not through ordination) coming from self-supporting roles.

Table 3 Entering and leaving stipendiary ministry: what do people come from and go on to?

Leaving stipendiary ministry to go to:			
	2013	2014	2015
PTO/LTO	17%	18%	15%
Chaplaincy	15%	13%	18%
Parochial roles	13%	14%	19%
Diocesan roles	7%	9%	7%
Other	8%	8%	10%
Early retirement	15%	8%	5%
Unknown/none	25%	30%	27%

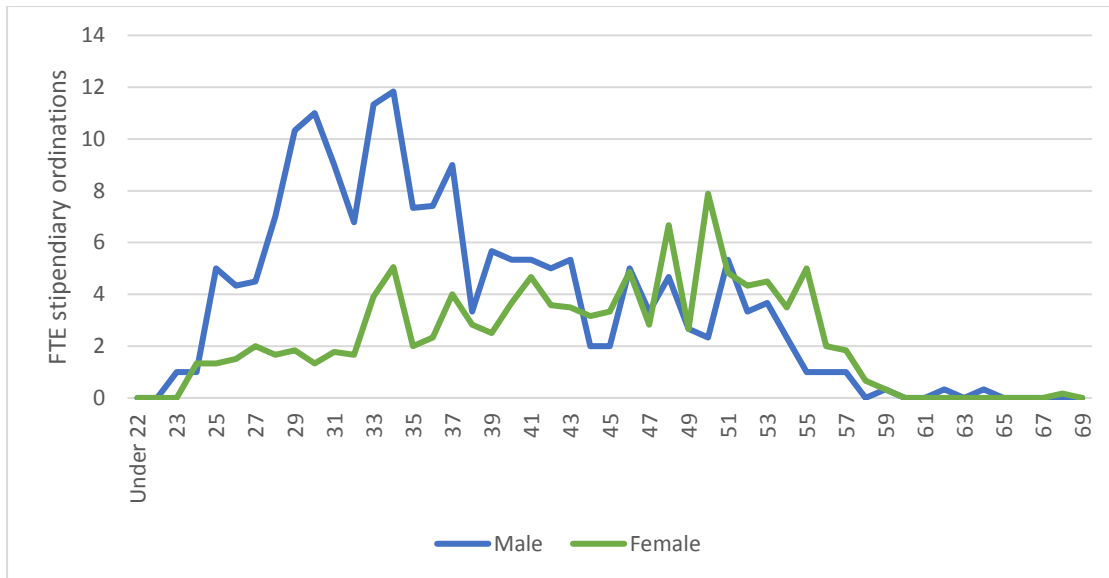
Entering stipendiary ministry from:			
	2013	2014	2015
Parochial roles	42%	45%	40%
Chaplaincy	17%	15%	13%
PTO/LTO	13%	13%	13%
Other	6%	6%	8%
Diocesan roles	2%	2%	4%
Early retirement	2%	1%	0%
Unknown/none	19%	18%	22%

Note data for clergy come from a series of snap shots on the 31<sup>st</sup> December. Table 3 explores the role individuals have in Crockford's on the 31<sup>st</sup> December the first year they do not appear on the clergy payroll, or the year before they join the clergy payroll. Further discussion on data sources can be found in Ministry Statistics 2012-2015.

**Age profile of those ordained to stipendiary posts 2013-2015**

On average males ordained into stipendiary ministry are 39 at ordination and females 42. However, for projections it is important to look at the age distribution of all those being ordained rather than simply using averages. See the “Ordained Vocations Statistics 2014” report for further analysis of recommended candidates.<sup>4</sup>

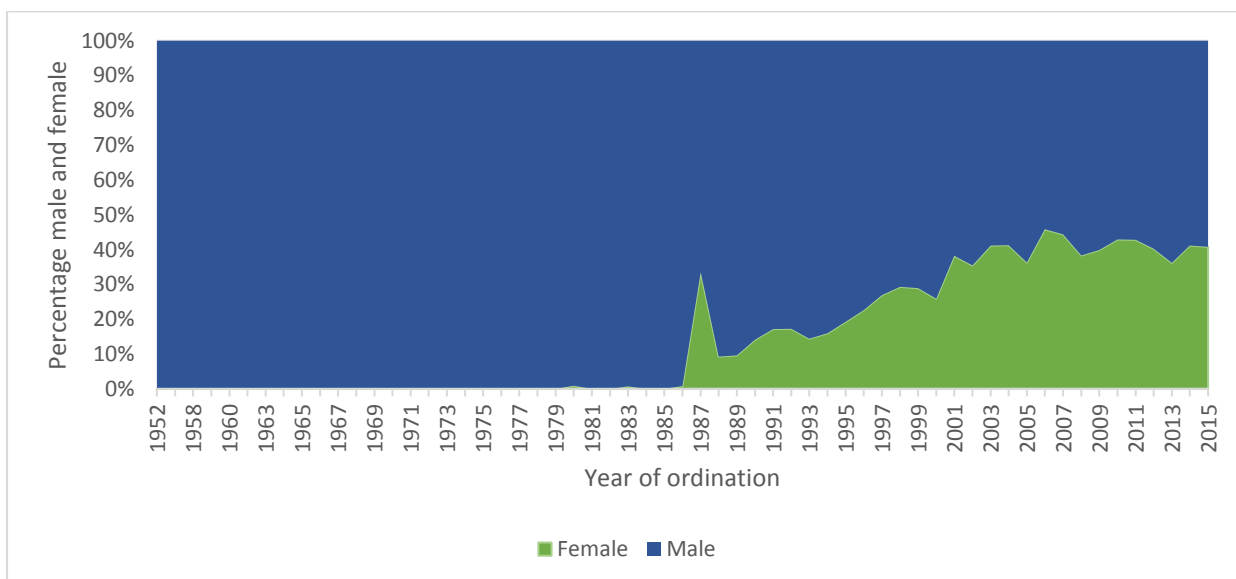
Figure 5 smoothed age distribution stipendiary clergy ordained 2013-2015



**Gender profile of stipendiary ordinations**

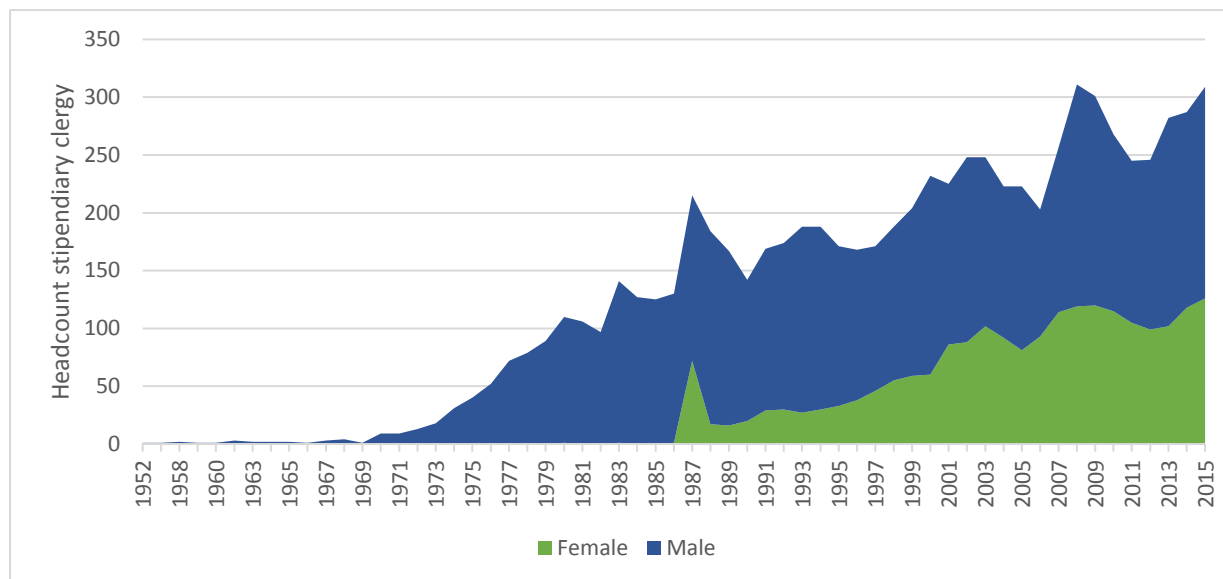
Figure 6 shows the gender distribution of the current pool of stipendiary clergy by their year of ordination, with those entering in the last 10-15 years showing a stable gender split. Over the last 5 years, on average 38% of ordinations have been of female clergy. Figure 7 shows the increasing number of female clergy over time.

Figure 6 percentage stipendiary clergy male and female by year of ordination



<sup>4</sup> Church of England Ordained Vocations Statistics 2014, Ministry Division.

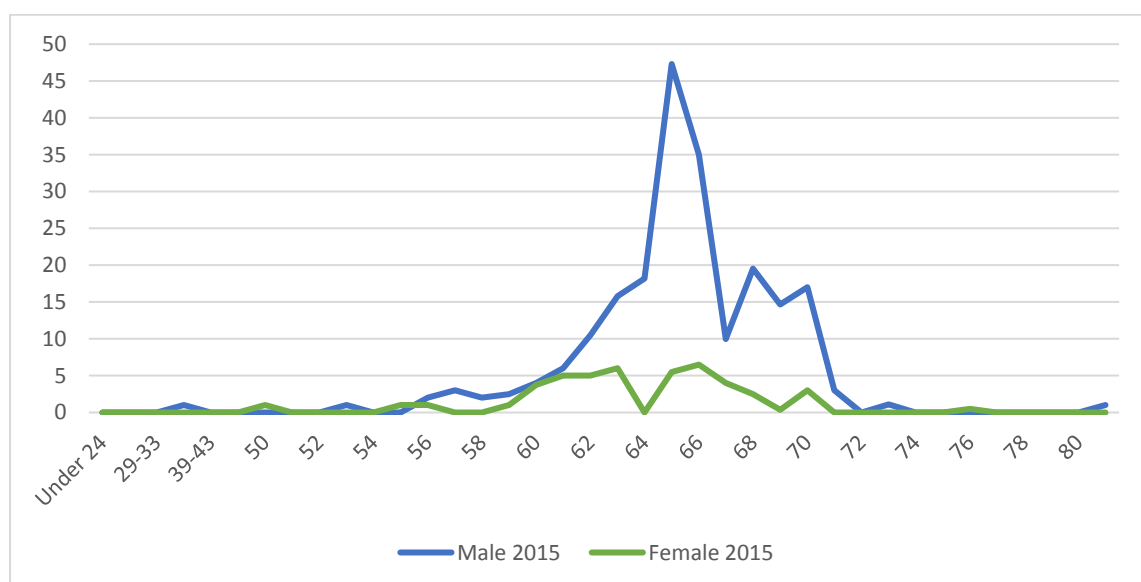
Figure 7 Number of stipendiary clergy male and female by year of ordination



**Age profile of stipendiary retirees**

Whilst the average age of retirement is 65, again there is a large spread of the age at which clergy retire. Projections will therefore need to consider this distribution rather than assume a consistent retirement age.

Figure 8 age profile of stipendiary clergy retiring in 2015



Analysis of those who retired in 2015 revealed that the time at which clergy retired (mean 65 years, SD 4 years) was much more likely to be influenced by their age than their length of service (mean 28 years, SD 11 years). Retirement projections will therefore be based on the age of clergy as opposed to how long they have been in service.

Figure 9 number of retirees by number of years since ordination at retirement



## Projections

Having examined the various factors that might influence changes in stipendiary ministry over the next 20 years, the next section presents 4 projection scenarios. These projections start with an assumption of the patterns we have seen in recent years being indicative of what we will see in the future, then explore a range of scenarios changing different aspects of these assumptions.

### Scenarios

**“Status quo”:** This projection model takes the current pool of clergy and applies age distributed joining and leaving rates iteratively over a period of 20 years. For example, based on what has occurred in the previous 3 years, 28% of male clergy and 18% of female clergy aged 65 are likely to retire. Or based on what we’ve seen over the last 5 years, 20% of males ordained and 6% of females ordained are aged 29-32.

**“Retiring later”:** Analysis of current retirees shows that whilst on average clergy retire at 65 there is a wide range around this. It’s likely that as in the secular working sector, clergy will tend to retire later. It is also likely that there will still be a distribution around this, so this “retiring later” scenario assumes that people will retire on average 1 year later that they would have previously.

**“Ordinations 50% target”:** Recent targets as part of the Renewal and Reform initiative aim to see a 50% increase in ordinands by 2020. This scenario therefore illustrates the impact of a 50% increase in stipendiary ordinations (based on the average number of ordinations over the 10 years 2006 to 2015) by the year 2023. It is assumed that by 2023 50% of clergy ordained will be female. It is also assumed that the age distribution of female clergy ordained will match that of male clergy.

**“Ordinations rise and fall”:** In this scenario the target of a 50% increase in ordinations is reached by 2023, but then falls again to 2012 levels. Gender and age assumptions are as in the “Ordinations target” scenario.

## Summary

The projections (Figure 10 and Table 4) illustrate a steady decline in the total pool of clergy if the current trends in ordinations and retirements continue (status quo scenario). If, as is likely, clergy delay retirement by a year this would help slow the rate of decline in numbers, but cannot prevent it (retirements 1 year later scenario). If the target of a 50% increase in ordinations is reached then it is possible that there will be a stable pool of around 7,600 FTE clergy (ordinations 50% target scenario), though if this rise in ordinations is a temporary peak and ordinations fall again to current levels gradually after 2023 then the pattern of decline will return (ordinations rise and fall scenario).

Figure 10 FTE stipendiary clergy projection scenarios

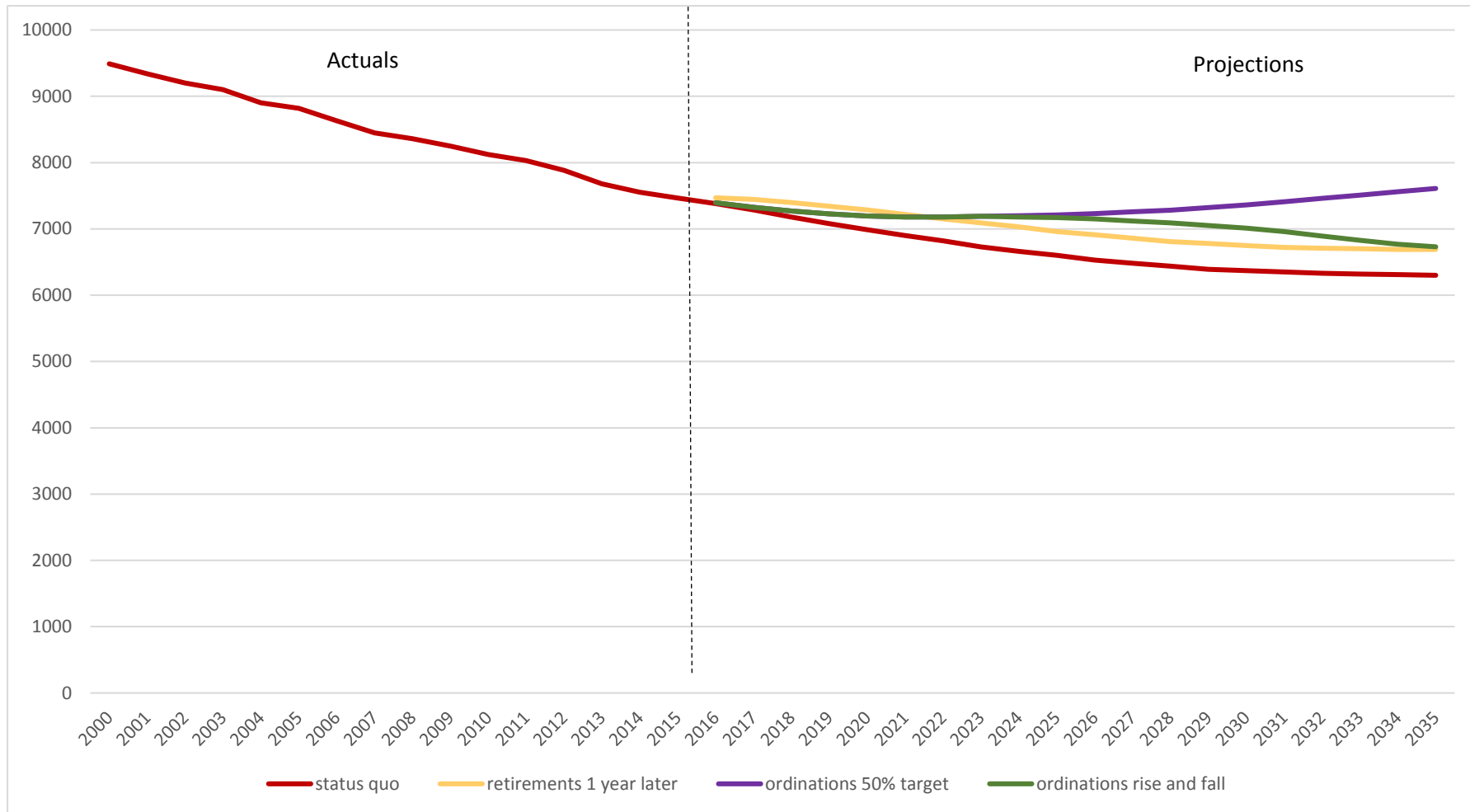


Table 4 FTE stipendiary clergy male and female 2016-2035 for various scenarios

YEAR end	status quo			ordinations 50% target			ordinations rise and fall			retirements 1 year later		
	FTE	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
2016	5,361	2,019	7,381	5,366	2,029	7,395	5,366	2,029	7,395	5,437	2,033	7,469
2017	5,225	2,060	7,286	5,238	2,087	7,326	5,238	2,087	7,326	5,360	2,087	7,447
2018	5,092	2,088	7,180	5,121	2,147	7,269	5,121	2,147	7,269	5,271	2,126	7,397
2019	4,968	2,113	7,081	5,016	2,209	7,224	5,016	2,209	7,224	5,180	2,161	7,342
2020	4,850	2,137	6,988	4,917	2,275	7,192	4,917	2,275	7,192	5,092	2,194	7,286
2021	4,740	2,160	6,900	4,830	2,350	7,180	4,830	2,350	7,180	5,000	2,220	7,220
2022	4,640	2,180	6,820	4,750	2,430	7,180	4,750	2,430	7,180	4,910	2,240	7,150
2023	4,540	2,190	6,730	4,680	2,510	7,190	4,680	2,510	7,190	4,830	2,260	7,090
2024	4,460	2,200	6,660	4,610	2,590	7,200	4,610	2,570	7,180	4,750	2,280	7,030
2025	4,380	2,220	6,600	4,550	2,660	7,210	4,550	2,620	7,170	4,670	2,290	6,960
2026	4,300	2,230	6,530	4,500	2,730	7,230	4,490	2,660	7,150	4,600	2,310	6,910
2027	4,240	2,240	6,480	4,460	2,800	7,260	4,430	2,690	7,120	4,540	2,320	6,860
2028	4,190	2,250	6,440	4,420	2,860	7,280	4,390	2,700	7,090	4,480	2,330	6,810
2029	4,140	2,250	6,390	4,400	2,920	7,320	4,350	2,700	7,050	4,440	2,340	6,780
2030	4,110	2,260	6,370	4,380	2,980	7,360	4,310	2,700	7,010	4,400	2,350	6,750
2031	4,080	2,270	6,350	4,370	3,040	7,410	4,270	2,690	6,960	4,370	2,350	6,720
2032	4,060	2,270	6,330	4,360	3,100	7,460	4,220	2,670	6,890	4,350	2,360	6,710
2033	4,040	2,280	6,320	4,360	3,150	7,510	4,180	2,650	6,830	4,330	2,370	6,700
2034	4,020	2,290	6,310	4,360	3,200	7,560	4,140	2,630	6,770	4,320	2,370	6,690
2035	4,010	2,290	6,300	4,360	3,250	7,610	4,110	2,620	6,730	4,310	2,380	6,690

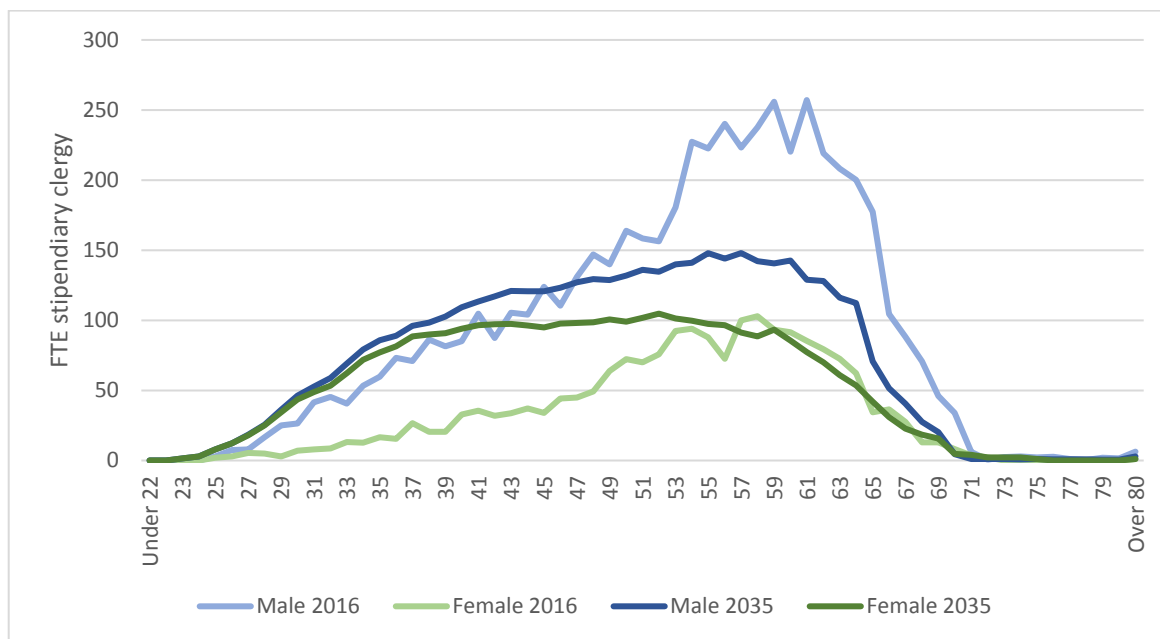


### Profile of stipendiary clergy in 2035

In order to increase the number of ordinations as in the “ordinations increase” scenario there will need to be a shift in the gender, age and ethnicity profile of ordinands, with more younger people, more women and more BAME candidates coming forward. The profile of stipendiary clergy in 2035 is therefore likely to show a younger distribution, and a much more balanced gender split.

- Proportion female: 43% of stipendiary clergy FTE are female

Figure 11 Age profile of stipendiary clergy 2016 and 2035 (FTE)

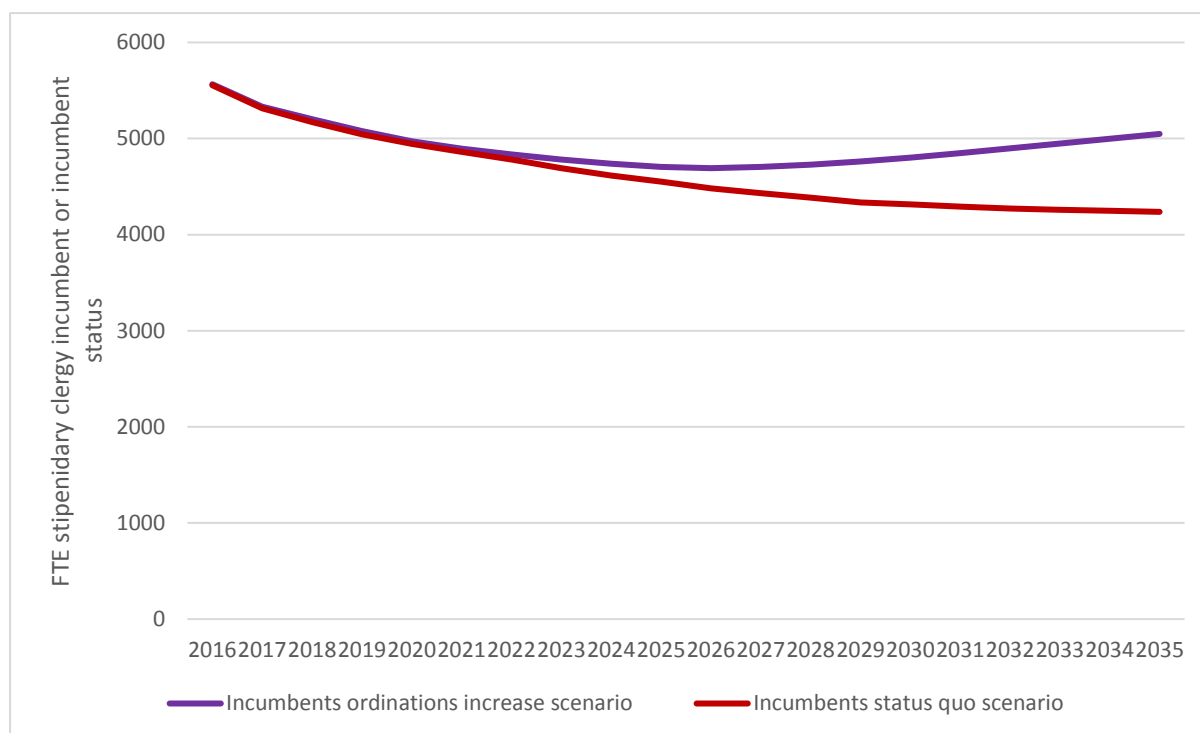


The “ordinations increase” scenario increases the number of clergy joining stipendiary ministry through ordination to tip the balance between loss and gain, as opposed to increasing numbers re-entering stipendiary ministry from other ministries, or reducing those leaving stipendiary ministry. For this reason the ratio between curates and incumbents within the pool will likely see a shift, with training curates making up a higher proportion of the workforce in this 20 year period.

- Proportion curates: 23% of stipendiary clergy FTE likely to be in training curacy posts
- Proportion incumbent/incumbent status: 66% of stipendiary clergy FTE are likely to be incumbent/incumbent status

Figure 12 illustrates projections of clergy in incumbent or incumbent status roles. The projections assume that the number of senior staff (archdeacons, cathedral clergy and bishops) remains steady over the 20 years. The status quo scenario shows a steady decline in clergy of incumbent/incumbent status. However, whilst the ordinations scenario shows a similar decline for the first half of the period, as the clergy work their way through training curacies an increase will begin.

Figure 12 FTE incumbent/incumbent status stipendiary clergy projections



**Methodological notes**

As with all projections there are no limits on the assumptions that can be changed within the model. The scenarios presented address those aspects that seem most likely or can be influenced by policy decisions.

Other factors:

- A number of clergy each year move between stipendiary ministry and other forms of ministry such as self-supporting ministry, overseas ministry, chaplaincy and other roles that don't have a conventional clergy stipend. As reflected in Table 2 movement occurs in both directions. All projection scenarios assume status quo on these movements, though it is possible that these trends could change over time.

Limitations:

- This is based on data for those on the Church Commissioners' clergy payroll, so excludes trends from Europe.
- The projections also exclude clergy who may be paid locally for parochial roles, paid by dioceses/NCIs, or employed by other sectors as chaplains.