

An Update on Resourcing Ministerial Education, and Increases in Vocations and Lay Ministries

Key Points

- The number of ordinands entering training grew by 14% between 2016 and 2017, with a 19% increase in women and a 39% increase in young people (under 32). We expect a further 6% increase in 2018. This shows good progress towards the aspiration of a 50% increase by 2020 as approved by Synod. Training is supported by a new financial framework (RME), which was implemented smoothly.
 - Ministry Division has been monitoring the development of lay ministries across the dioceses and is working in collaboration with them on a national framework for lay ministries, including discussion on how lay ministries are authorised, trained, and supported.
 - Ministry Division continues to run a national selection process to ensure and monitor the quality of candidates, and national inspections of TELs to ensure the quality of the training they receive. The outcomes of selection are now monitored to track increases in diversity of candidates.
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Introduction: Previous Motions and Reports

1. At the February 2016 sessions, the Synod passed a motion welcoming the Resourcing Ministerial Education (RME) funding proposals and requesting a report from Ministry Council by July 2018 on the progress made to secure a step change in the number of ordinands, and continued improvement in their quality and deployability, and on progress made to secure a step change in the number and variety of authorised lay ministers.
2. An interim report was made to the July 2017 sessions in GS Misc 1170 on the process of consultation about the details of the RME funding arrangements and their implementation. Since then, the first round of RME funding has been successfully implemented for those starting at Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) in September 2017.
3. Part one of this paper shows the increase in the number of ordinands entering training in 2017, and changes in their composition. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of younger ordinands and especially younger women, as envisaged in the RME proposals, with progress also being made towards increasing diversity.
4. Part two provides an update on developments in lay ministries across the dioceses since 2016, and on the agenda promoted through Setting God's People Free and Serving Together, with reference to licensed and authorised lay ministries.
5. Part three provides a brief update on adjustments to transitional arrangements and advice being given in light of the first year of operation of RME.

Part I: Growing Vocations Everywhere

- The number of ordinands entering training grew 14% between 2016 and 2017, from 476 to 544, the highest number of starters in ten years.

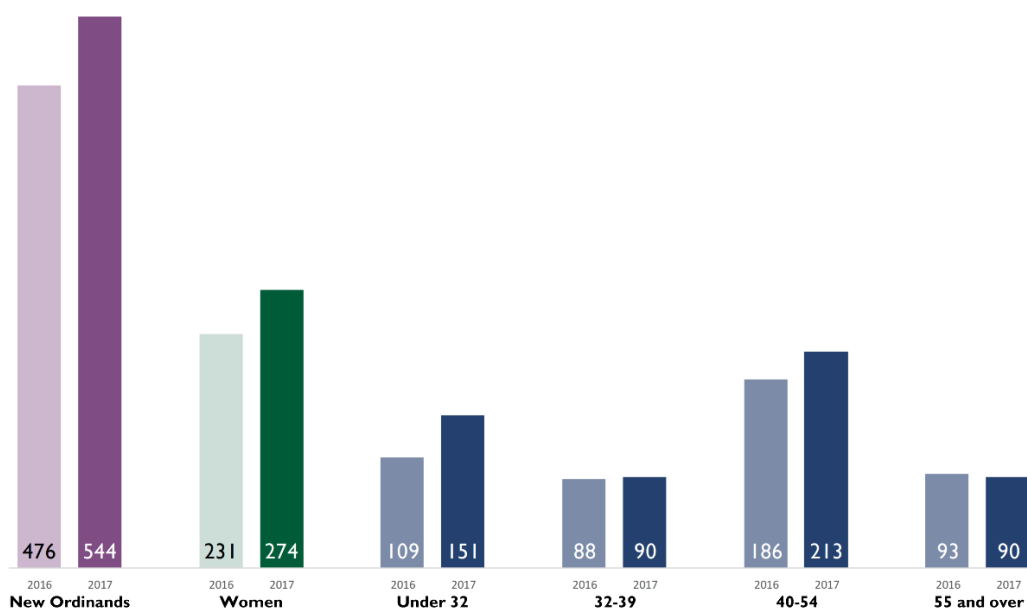


Chart showing the 14% increase in ordinands, 19% increase in women, and changing age profiles between the 2016 and 2017 cohorts.

- The number of women entering training for ordination grew 19% from 231 in 2016 to 274 in 2017. Women entering training in 2017 made up just over half the total intake, with 169 women (61%) training for a stipendiary post, up from 135 (58%) in 2016. The number of young women (under 32) was 54 (20%), up from 29 (13%). Overall the number of women entering training in 2017 was greater and rising faster than at any point in the last ten years.
- The number of young people (under 32) entering training for ordination grew by 39% from 109 in 2016 to 151 in 2017. The overall age profile is getting younger, with 28% of the 2017 intake under 32, up from 23% in 2016.
- 33 of the 2017 cohort were of Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic heritage, representing 6%. This is slightly above recent figures, which have fluctuated between 4% and 5% of starters since 2010.
- This growth is thanks to the efforts of the whole Church, and especially of diocesan vocations teams. Ministry Division has supported dioceses by researching and sharing good practice. This has included a well-received good practice guide, a successful national conference, and monthly newsletters.



Vocations teams from across the whole Church have been sharing good practice.

11. As part of the relaunch of the Church of England’s website, Ministry Division has dramatically improved the quality of information about vocations to ministry available online. This includes explaining the selection process and criteria in a way which is easier to understand, showcasing the wonderful diversity of ministers and ministries within the Church, and using stories to improve relatability.

The vocations landing page on the Church of England website received over 17,000 views in its first 100 days, with over 54,000 views across all vocations content in this period alone. A priority now is to capitalise on this web traffic, by encouraging Christians exploring a vocation to ministry to sign up online to receive prayers, reflections, and information to support their discernment.

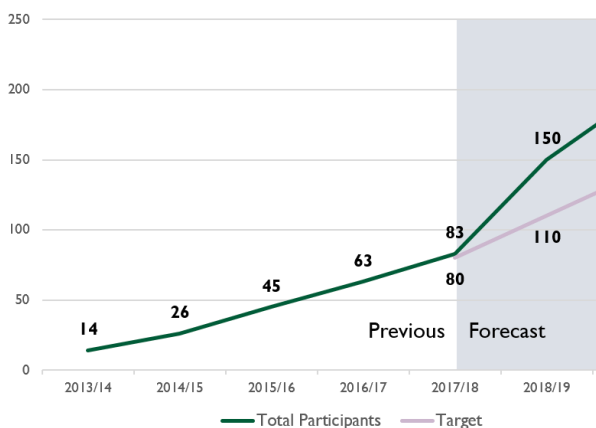


Example of a new page on the Church of England website to help people understand the discernment process.

12. Ministry Division appointed a Development Manager for the Ministry Experience Scheme, with funding from AllChurches Trust, who has successfully grown the reach of the scheme so that three quarters of all dioceses are involved. This translates to placements for up to 150 young people.

The Ministry Experience Scheme provides the opportunity for young people aged under 30 to test a vocation to ministry through a supervised parish placement and theological study. The scheme has a near equal gender balance and growing BAME participation. Two thirds of participants go on to ordained or lay ministry, and our selection advisers find they generally come better prepared and with a wider range of experiences to draw upon.

92% of participants say they finish the year with a strong and clear sense of calling, with 93% saying they now know the next steps to take to pursue that calling. Ministry Division intends to continue to promote the Ministry Experience Scheme as a core pillar of diocesan vocations work, given the high quality of candidates it produces.



Graph showing growth in participants of the Ministry Experience Scheme.

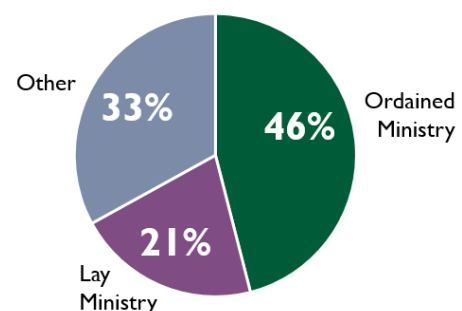
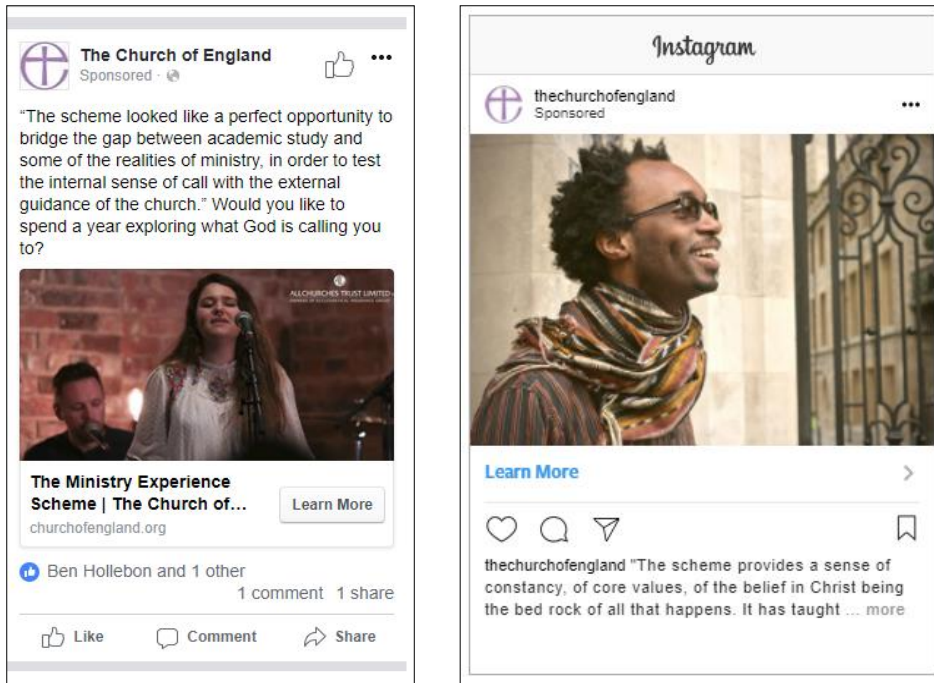


Chart showing destinations of Ministry Experience Scheme participants.

13. Ministry Division has worked alongside the Church's award winning digital team to advertise opportunities for young people to get involved in ministry. The Church's national social media channels reach over 1.2 million people each month.



Examples of social media advertising on Facebook and Instagram.

14. Ministry Division's good practice and publicity have put great emphasis on busting the many myths around ministry which had historically discouraged a lot of women from coming forward, with the Church missing out on their gifts and talents. The 19% increase in women entering training for ordained ministry is a good indication that this effort is bearing fruit.
15. Ministry Division is striving to create a culture of vocation throughout the Church via the Great Vocations Conversation – our challenge to all the Church's ministers to commit to having at least one conversation a month about vocation with someone different from themselves.

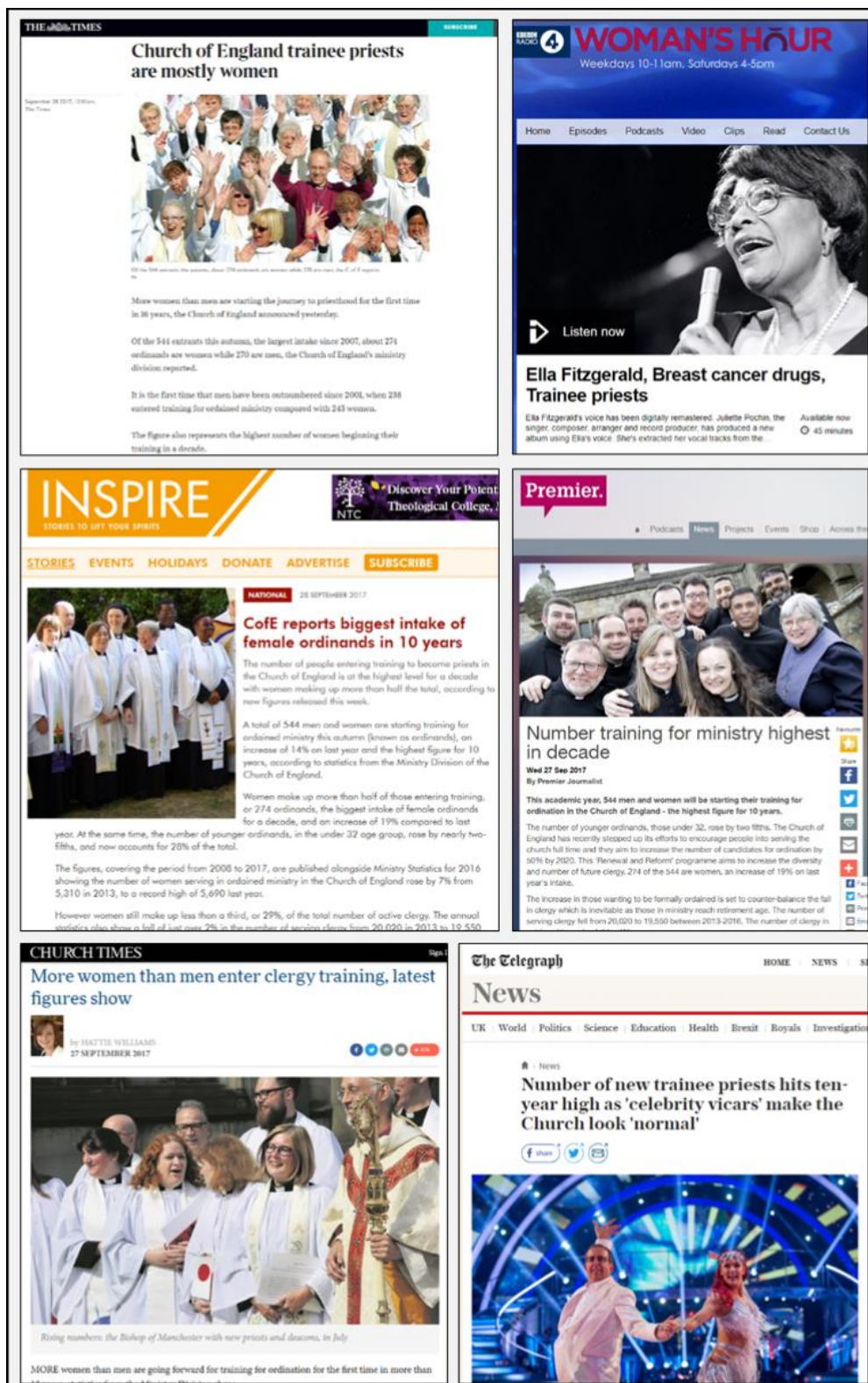
Participants sign up online and are supported through a monthly devotional with prayers, reflections, and ideas. The Great Vocations Conversation emerged from suggestions from dioceses that personal conversations were the biggest factor in encouraging people to think seriously about what God may be calling them to.



Photos of people saying why they're getting involved in the Great Vocations Conversation.

16. The press coverage the Church received around the 14% increase in the number entering ordination training, and particularly around the 19% increase in women, was substantial. It

provided an effective counternarrative to worries of decline, indicating that the hopeful future of Renewal and Reform is becoming a reality, Anecdotally, Ministry Division found the extent of positive coverage offered a great encouragement to diocesan vocations teams.



Examples of coverage in *The Times*, *BBC Radio Four*, *Inspire Magazine*, *Premier Christian Radio*, *The Church Times*, and *The Telegraph*.

17. Ministry Division continues to run an effective national selection process to ensure that the quality of candidates selected for training for ordained ministry remains high. Capacity has been expanded to respond to the increased number of candidates. Candidates work closely with their diocesan vocations team and Directors of Ordinands before attending selection panels.

Ministry Division provides training for Diocesan Directors of Ordinands to help them prepare candidates in advance, and for those who interview candidates at Bishops' Advisory Panels.

18. To ensure quality of training, we will only fund training on approved pathways at accredited institutions. Ministry Division continue to administer a national quality assurance framework to maintain high standards.

Part 2: The Growth of Lay Ministries

19. Following the 2016 motion, work on developing lay ministries continued through working groups leading to two reports: Setting God's People Free and Serving Together. These groups have supported the development of lay ministries in dioceses by developing a common vision and sharing good practice, recognising that in contrast to ordained ministries, responsibility for the shaping of lay ministries is almost entirely a matter for bishops and dioceses, as they respond to local mission needs and culture.
20. Serving Together called for a sustained work of theological reflection about lay ministries in their own lights and not as a correlative of ordained ministries, as well as greater commonality between dioceses over the authorisation and recognition of lay ministries and their training.

This call is being met through theological resources developed by the Faith and Order Commission to help dioceses, local groups and churches think about the place and value of lay ministries and their relation to discipleship, witness and the work of proclaiming the Kingdom. Starting with theology ensures the growth of such ministries is rooted in theological principle, not just practical need, and that it reflects an authentic approach for the Church of England and its received understanding of ministry.

21. During 2017 and 2018, dioceses have joined a process of reflection both through the Setting God's People Free learning communities and through contacts developed around the Serving Together agenda. Ministry Division now hosts an annual Serving Together consultation in June, which this year focused on mapping the range lay ministries emerging across all dioceses. This mapping exercise revealed that most dioceses are exploring new or reimagined forms of lay ministries, often in response to mission needs.

The June 2018 consultation identified four priorities for the coming year, if the growth of lay ministries is to continue along the lines of Setting God's people Free and Serving Together:

- a) Theology: to celebrate lay ministries and develop a richer understanding of them
- b) Strategy: for dioceses and the church nationally to set a strategy for development
- c) Authorisation: to clarify support and accountability for different kinds of ministry
- d) Learning: to increase the resources for and improve the quality of training



Ministry Division hosts an annual consultation day for those responsible for diocesan strategy for lay ministries.

22. The overall number of licensed Readers remains high (5,300). Readers play a crucial role in the liturgical and pastoral life of many parishes, with increasing numbers also involved in other contexts such as fresh expressions or chaplaincies. However, the number of Readers admitted has fallen to an average of around 280 per year over the last five years, in contrast to over 400 a decade ago.

The Central Readers Council is reviewing the focus of Reader ministry, which will inform a reappraisal of the distinctiveness of Readers as teachers of the faith and enablers of learning for disciples.

23. The overwhelming majority of pioneer leaders in fresh expressions and new forms of church are lay (80%). There are currently estimated to be over a thousand such leaders with varying approaches to their licensing and authorisation. The network of fresh expressions and pioneers have a vision to quadruple their numbers in a decade, which would produce a network of around 5,000 new lay pioneers by 2027.
24. The 2015 Theos report *A very modern ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK* highlighted a significant increase in the number of lay ministers and lay people involved in chaplaincies. Theos estimated that 14,000 ministers, mostly lay and with a wide range of employment or voluntary commitments, licensing and authorisation, were involved in chaplaincies. A very significant proportion of these are Church of England members or ministers, and from a wide variety of backgrounds.
25. Several dioceses have developed authorised ministries for leading worship (but not preaching), especially to provide for services of the Word in smaller churches, with other dioceses expressing a strong interest in following their example. This is different to the growing number of worship leaders in larger churches who have significant spiritual and pastoral responsibility and for whom there is a varied approach across dioceses for their authorisation and licensing.
26. There are around 2,500 full-time or part-time youth and children's ministers, with a further eighty in training at theological education institutions. There is a trend for youth and children's ministers to be employed part-time or on a voluntary basis and to receive training locally and while working. There is some confusion over how they are supported through licensing, authorisation or local recognition across the dioceses.
27. Up to six dioceses are actively considering authorised or licensed funeral minister schemes with training for this specific ministry conducted through a diocesan programme aimed at service in a benefice or deanery. There are up to twelve such ministers involved in trialling local schemes, whereas other dioceses have already deployed Readers or authorised pastoral assistants for funeral ministry as part of their current ministry.
28. Over thirty dioceses have programmes for the training and authorisation (or in a few cases licensing) of pastoral assistants to serve in benefices and occasionally chaplaincies or new forms of church. While there are substantial numbers of these, with healthy recruitment each year, there is no clear pattern of growth and it may be that other more informal ways of serving are becoming more popular.
29. Diocesan plans for mission which seek funding from the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) reflect a growing demand for lay ministers to engage in mission enabling, evangelism and church planting. It is not clear how the demand will be met with supply since there is not a pipeline in the same way as for selection and training of ordained ministers. The most recent figures from the SDF process indicate a demand for around 300 paid lay ministers for current and proposed projects.
30. Other forms of service within the church offered by lay people such as in administration or as churchwardens and other church officers should not be forgotten. Equally they should not be confused with ministries of word, sacrament, pastoral care or in the worship of the church ("ecclesial ministries"). Administration in particular is a crucial form of service which becomes ever more necessary as organisational and institutional requirements increase, and which needs wider recognition alongside the ecclesial ministries which are the focus of Serving Together.

Part 3: Resourcing Ministerial Education

31. The growth in the numbers entering training for ordination has been successfully supported by the new way of financing training, known as Resourcing Ministerial Education (RME).

32. Dioceses are paid a block grant according to the numbers and ages of their ordinands. This represents a substantial change which has been implemented smoothly. Dioceses and TEIs were supported with a handbook, including numerous worked examples, which was very well received. The handbook is also available online.



Examples of pages from the RME Handbook, which included process guidelines and worked examples.

33. Ministry Council conducted a thorough review of how RME was implemented, and how it is working to support ordinands in training. Changes in pathway choices were traced to a combination of factors including changes in age profile, increase in full time non-residential pathways and support for local TEIs, rather than a systematic response to the implementation of RME. Ministry Division did not receive any evidence of an ordinand being unable to follow a chosen pathway due to financial constraints.
34. The review found that dioceses were cautious in their spending, which has meant that a greater than anticipated surplus has built up. Ministry Division is encouraging dioceses to make use of this surplus, which at present can only be spent on Initial Ministerial Education Phase One. An updated edition of the RME Handbook will put greater emphasis on aspects of RME which may have been misunderstood (such as the way block grant generated by one ordinand can be spent on the training of another, and over what time period the block grant is paid).
35. Insufficient funding was provided to support the travel costs of ordinands on regional and full time non-residential courses, largely owing to the growth in popularity of non-residential pathways. For 2018 Ministry Division carried out an early analysis of the likely travel expenditure, so as to provide a more realistic travel component as part of the block grant.
36. Fifteen Band Three ordinands (aged 40-54) following a two-year residential course from seven dioceses were supported by transitional funding in 2017/18. In the next academic year, the financial transitional support to this group is being doubled to ensure that dioceses have confidence when making pathway choices that they will have sufficient funds to choose the pathway best suited to the formational needs of the ordinand, without undue concern for the cost.