

Serving Together

The Report of the Lay Ministries Working Group 2015/16

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report focusses attention on nationally licensed, locally authorised and locally commissioned lay ministry in the Church of England¹. In September 2014 the Resource, Strategy and Development Unit published the report “Resourcing the Future; Future Leadership Requirements” which gathered information about future ministerial and leadership needs and noted that volunteer lay ministry was extensive and growing. In February 2015 follow up proposals were made in the report “Resourcing Ministerial Education”. The final proposal of that report included an aspiration to see the number of volunteer lay ministers grow over the next 10 years by 48% (a net increase of 5,678) and paid lay ministers grow by 69% (a net increase of 831).

1.2 Lay Ministries Working Group

The Lay Ministries Working Group was established in October 2015 to make some detailed proposals to Ministry Council about how to develop lay ministry both in terms of quantity and quality, having first gathered a more detailed understanding of the current situation. The Terms of Reference of this group are attached as Appendix One. The group has sought to work as consultatively as possible during the past year with the limited resources at its disposal. Alongside forty-five days of work from a project consultant and four meetings of the Working Group there have been two regional consultations with people involved in the training and selection of lay ministers, ten focus groups with lay ministers, one diocesan consultation and consultations with attendees at a national gathering of Youth Ministers. To supplement this we received thirty responses to a questionnaire sent to dioceses, one group member was happy to share her findings from visits made to dioceses as research for a different organisation and a colleague offered ideas from a gathering of Pioneer Ministers.²

1.3 A Perspective from the Dioceses

For many diocesan officers with oversight for lay ministry, there has been a growing sense that there is a widening gap between what is happening on the ground in lay ministry and the capacity, capability and for some, the will, of the structures of the national institution to reflect on it and provide a sense of direction and coherence. One reality for many dioceses is that there are more lay people stepping into significant lay leadership roles in parishes which have less and less proportionate ‘share’ of an incumbent. These lay people have little or no training, little or no support. The incumbent has increasing workload in people management with little or no training

¹ The Terms of Reference for the Lay Ministries Working Group use the term or title “Lay Ecclesial Ministries” as shorthand. This name was picked up from some work done in the Catholic Church in the USA (see the work of Zeni Fox “New Ecclesial Ministry” 2002 and “Lay Ecclesial Ministry” 2010. The term was not liked by participants in our consultations and did not gain any traction. The Working Group therefore have stopped using it.

² The regional consultations involved representatives of twenty-one dioceses as well as people representing CMS, WATCH, St Mellitus College and Ripon College, Cuddesdon. Focus groups were held in Cumbria, Bristol, Salisbury, Chester and Oxford. Chris Corteen held a consultation in Salisbury Diocese. Helen Bent has kindly offered her research from visiting Dioceses on behalf of Praxis and the RSCM. Mike Kelly offered ideas from consultations held at a Youth Ministers Gathering. Dave Male offered ideas from a Pioneer Ministers Gathering.

and support and often the parish is in crisis. Another reality for many dioceses is that there are lay people with significant leadership skills who are offering time and talents to the church at all levels and the organisation has unwieldy and out of date mechanisms for training and supporting them. Into this context, the institution at national level is currently seen to be prioritising working on increasing ordained vocations and changing the selection criteria for ordination training whilst in the background two confusingly similar working groups have been tasked to “do something about lay people and ministry”³.

1.4 The Vision of the Working Group

The Lay Ministries Working Group has come to the conclusion that in order to enable the Church’s aspiration for growth in the quality and quantity of lay ministry three things need to happen that reinforce the Lay Leadership Task Group’s call for culture change;

- Firstly, corporate and institutional reflection on the current practice of lay ministry needs to gain momentum, strength and a sense of purpose. From a practical point of view this will enable the practice of lay ministry to be strong and healthy in the future. From an emotional stance this will enable relationships between parishes, dioceses and the national church institutions to be stronger and healthier in the future.
- Secondly, the belief that ministry is best understood and practiced as a collegiate and corporate endeavour needs further encouragement and embedding through practical action. In such a complex context these actions will mostly be small steps which give slight nudges. However, over time these will build into a powerful change of culture and practice.
- Thirdly, we need to shift our discourse about lay ministry from it being something to do with a role and an identity to it being something to do with undertaking tasks and acts of service⁴. In the current context this means that the key piece of work to be immediately engaged with is a cultural and practical shift from a focus on licensing, admission and categorisation to a focus on developing the value and quality of lay ministry.

Overview of this report

Lay ministry is about commissioned tasks in service of the church and the gospel. The recommendations in this paper are focussed on developing the value and quality of that service.

1.5 Perspective on Ministry

Ministry has a corporate nature. It is a shared endeavour, co-created and co-maintained by all the people of God and the grace of God persistently animates it. This grace gives orientation, purpose, will, and the abilities needed to accomplish the tasks of ministry.

The overwhelming majority of New Testament scholarship now supports the understanding of ministry as the commissioned and accountable service of an envoy. In this, ministry is both distinct

³ The Lay Ministries Working Group have been working in parallel with the Lay Leadership Task Group which has reported to Archbishop’s Council.

⁴ With this in mind this report purposefully speaks of lay ministry rather than Lay Ministry.

from, and connected to, discipleship. Service and witness are vital and revitalising components of discipleship and there are some disciples for whom being commissioned and supported for a specific act of service and witness is a meaningful and effective means by which they play their part in this shared endeavour⁵.

Ministry is always to be understood as the servant of mission. The work of God in drawing people and all creation into a reconciled, free, loving relationship with God and with each other is the purpose of Christian faith and action and all the ways in which we structure ourselves. Key to understanding the dynamic of how this happens is the incarnation which gives an understanding of the ways in which God works and a pattern to follow. Some further work on understanding all forms of lay ministry in light of the incarnation and as incarnational needs to be done.

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out his workers into the harvest field
Luke 10:2

One of the key texts for the Renewal and Reform programme within the Church of England, in which this piece of work sits, is Luke 10:2. This is a rich, multi-layered text which could easily bear the weight of more study. Briefly, in its context it speaks of three things worthy of more attention. Firstly, the imperative to continually extend the reach of ministry – first the twelve disciples, then an advance party of messengers, then seventy-two workers. Secondly, the need to discover the nature of ministry that owns a sense of solidarity with the suffering of Christ in contemporary culture. Thirdly, the agrarian image of using hired labourers who know their craft and the subsequent narrative of disciples who have a strategy and learn from their practice speaks of the issue of training and support.

1.6 Structure of this report

This report continues with some comments about the current context of lay ministry. We then consider some of the key issues that need addressing and make some detailed recommendations to Ministry Council to address them. These are then précised to give an overview of the coherence and timeframe for the developing work. There then follows four appendices which offer some more detailed work in specific areas.

2. Current Context

The Working Group has considered the current context in relation to lay ministry in order to fulfil two parts of our Terms of Reference:

1. To review current developments in traditional and emerging forms of lay ministry in the light of the Resourcing the Future and Resourcing Ministerial Education diocesan consultations.
2. To investigate what hinders the exercise of lay ministries and propose changes to current practice in order to remove these hindrances.

2.1 The nature of the Church as mystery

The Church is both like any other organisation and different from any other organisation. Power is exercised both in terms of role and in terms of personality. Our structures are both hierarchical and democratic. We employ, and care for, the people involved in the organisation both through formal mechanisms and through informal means. However, the church is also mysterious in that our primary reason for being and our primary reason for all that we do is directed to and by God.

⁵ See appendix two for further comment on New Testament scholarship.

2.2 The nature of the Church as ordered

The Church is both structured and ordered. Culturally, individuals are asked to involve themselves in an organisation which cares deeply about deepening their unique and individual spiritual life and which cares deeply about retaining a sense of corporate discipline and accountability. Sometimes for an individual these two streams merge, sometimes they appear to run, at best, in parallel like canals running alongside rivers.

The understanding of ministry historically, as mentioned in appendix two, has, at times, encouraged the merging of the two streams and, at times, encouraged the separation of them. In the recent past, ministry was something everyone had which was unique to them and something which placed them, as them, within the organisation. A swing in perspective is now underway in that ministry is increasingly being perceived as service which is representational of the whole organisation. It involves “responsibility for” and “accountability towards”. Licensed lay ministers take vows of obedience to their Diocesan Bishop. Some authorised or commissioned lay ministers make similar promises. And Church Wardens declare before a Bishop or their representative that they will “...faithfully and diligently perform the duties of their office...” (Canon E1).

What’s the range of authorisation across dioceses? Find out in Appendix 5

In our conversations with licensed lay ministers in particular this relational mechanism was very highly valued and seen as something which both gives permission and responsibility. However, this was always seen in the context of Bishops having power in their dioceses and, although they are accountable for the exercise of this power, in relation to lay ministry, this is often exercised unilaterally. Currently, under Canons E6 and E8 a Bishop may revoke the licence of a lay minister “...for any cause which appears to him [sic] to be good and reasonable,” and the Canons then make limited provision for evidence to be collected and appeal against a decision. Culturally, Diocesan Bishops also prescribe or greatly influence the practices and understanding of dioceses concerning where the filters and boundaries are between different categories of lay ministry.

How is ministry activity described? Find out in Appendix 5

Accountability and responsibility are good mechanisms for an organisation that is clear that it wants to be ordered in some way. However, many lay people may not engage with the deeper theological or organisational

Case study

How do you respond to an individual who turns up at a vocations event vocally cross because he sees the diocesan process of selection and training for Reader ministry as unnecessary for him? In his mind God has called him to preach, skilled him to preach and the local church value his preaching. Furthermore, when he was part of the local Baptist church he preached regularly and no-one asked him to train or be licenced.

purposes of these mechanisms and see only the systems and processes and, furthermore, see them as hindrances to them exercising their ministry.

In organisations that have a clear hierarchy, accountability and responsibility can be seen as relational flows which are upwards and downwards one way; one person or part of the organisation is responsible for the well-being and good practice of a group of people; a group of people is accountable towards a person or a part of the organisation. We heard from members of our focus

groups that finding ways to make these relational flows two-way would greatly enhance the systems, processes and sense of collegiality. Greater transparency and continuing communication from the Diocesan Bishop and the House of Bishops about decisions which are made would greatly enable corporate accountability⁶. Better systems and processes to track ministerial practice and reflect on it individually and together would enhance a sense of corporate responsibility.

Other lay people are simply getting on with the task at hand. In 2015 the Jerusalem Trust and Youthscape surveyed youth workers and discovered that the least favoured form of training for existing youth workers was one which gave them a national qualification or accreditation

“I didn’t know I was lay until I joined the Church of England!”
Participant at a Regional Consultation

(<https://youthscape.co.uk/research/publications>). George Lings survey of lay- lay church leadership in Fresh Expressions (Investigating ‘lay-lay’ led fresh expressions of Church July 2014 rev 2016) suggests that 36.5% of leaders of Fresh Expressions are lay-lay; (based on twenty-one dioceses, total equals four hundred) they have neither licence nor authorisation and often minimal training. In many dioceses lay people are assigned tasks and sometimes authorised or commissioned to do so with minimal initial training, minimal ongoing support and minimal understanding of responsibility and accountability.

2.3 Diversity and resourcing

The evidence the Working Group has collected does confirm the common assumption that there is a variety of practice and understanding in relation to lay ministry across the dioceses. Each diocese does things slightly differently for five main reasons;

- the perspectives and theology of the Diocesan Bishop and their Senior Staff and their specific vision for the future.
- a perceived and real uniqueness of context and need.
- the history of the diocese and the memories of past lay ministry and training schemes.
- the availability of resources in the diocese.
- the inability of past common national programmes for lay training and support to gain much traction. The most recent being training pathways through Common Awards MC(14)32 ‘Forming and Equipping the People of God’.

Thirty-four dioceses use some sort of validated pathway through Common Awards to train their Readers or Licensed Lay Ministers. However, there is no evidence of a co-ordinated and common programme of training behind these pathways. The others use stand-alone programmes and the training for Authorised or Commissioned Lay Ministry is predominantly diocesan developed, led, and delivered.

A common feature of current provision is that there are significant and strategic boundaries for an individual moving through a particular system to navigate and these boundaries vary from diocese to diocese. For example, in all dioceses there is some sort of selection event; a panel, an interview, a structured conversation or simply a meeting. There is often, but not always, the requirement to get PCC consent. During training there are often, but not always, assignments to write, modules to pass, end of year reports to receive which may or may not be governed by Durham University Quality Assurance procedures. And throughout it all there is a good working relationship with an incumbent

⁶ The change in understanding and practice of Readers and Communion by Extension in 2010 is a very good example of this. The current situation has caused confusion, misunderstanding, frustration and sometimes anger. It is still the one question most Diocesan officers, NCI personnel and others dread at Reader events!

to maintain who may, or may not, be a skilled collaborative worker willing to encourage lay ministry. There is little observable common ground in dioceses over where the details of the boundaries are placed. For example, although there is a national competency framework for Reader Ministry it is currently impossible to collate the variations between the dioceses that use the framework. Sometimes these boundaries are critical at local level, but opaque. For example, there is often a reliance on key people (often a lay person's incumbent) to make decisions about an individual's future training and ministry without anything more than that person's estimate of a sense of calling to go on.

Sometimes these boundaries are in reality steps up and down a personalised vocations ladder. Time and time again in our consultations we came across the view that one of the key hindrances to flourishing lay ministry is that decision makers often perceived it to be, or practice as though it is, the "consolation prize" for those who cannot, for a variety of reasons, attain ordination. And, more often than not, the exploration of vocation stops after licensing or authorisation, the boundaries disappear and most lay ministers are left free, in practice, to do whatever they see fit.

A recurring theme in our regional consultations and the discussions in our Working Group meetings has been the lack of any sort of national funding for lay ministry training and support. This has been interpreted in two main ways; firstly, as symbolic of a general lack of interest in the Church of England in lay ministry and secondly, as a practice which gives dioceses the power to do what they want, how they want, because they are paying for it.

How is lay ministry funded by dioceses? Find out in Appendix 5

As suggested in the introduction, it has not gone unnoticed by Diocesan Officers and others that the personnel, financial and time resourcing for considering issues to do with ordained ministry at national and diocesan levels far outstrips any resourcing of considering lay ministry. As a point of detail, a view repeatedly expressed across all our consultations has been that the targets set for increasing the numbers of people offering themselves for ordained ministry have been profoundly unhelpful in encouraging thinking and practice about increasing the number of lay ministers.

What do we know about vocations to lay ministries? Find out in Appendix 5

2.4 Lack of diocesan and national knowledge about lay ministry and pride in how lay ministers are trained and supported.

Evidence from the questionnaire sent out to dioceses suggests that data collection about lay ministry in dioceses is under maintained. A number of returns to the questionnaire stated quite different figures for the number of Readers in the diocese to the figure which earlier in the year had been sent in as an Annual Return to the Central Readers Council. We had hoped to use the Church of England Portal Contact Management System to harvest some data about lay ministers. However, despite the fact that approximately half of the dioceses are now using this system to collect data we quickly recognised that these data are only as good as the capacity of Dioceses to input it, and work in this area is in its infancy and is patchy at best.

How many lay ministers are there? Find out in Appendix 5

During the Regional Consultations there emerged a corporate sense of mild embarrassment about the lack of knowledge of the basics of how lay ministry is organised both at home and in other

dioceses and the lack of quality of support for lay ministers. Early on in the project, the Project Consultant reviewed every diocesan website. Imagining that they were a lay person, either with an existing licence or authorisation or with some skills, time and a sense of vocation to ministry, she looked for some basic information about the practices in each diocese in relation to lay ministry. The information was often sparse, hard to find and in some cases, out of date. All of the Diocesan Officers the Working Group has been in contact with saw this project as a critical and timely piece of work in order to encourage better knowledge as well as better practice.

Some dioceses are experimenting with new forms of lay ministry and new ideas. And whilst this was welcomed by Diocesan Officers, a sadness at the lack of corporate sharing and learning from the new was also expressed.

2.5 Readers – continuity and change

This report is written during the year of the 150th celebrations of the revival of Reader ministry. The longevity of Reader ministry makes it a complex feature of the landscape. Some people see it as a problem to be solved, others as an opportunity to build on. Some see it as a form of ministry deeply embedded in the maintenance of traditional church and a lay version of ordained ministry, others as a pioneer ministry on the edges, conducted by people who are “out of orders”. In some dioceses Reader ministry is well defined and to be a Reader is to carry out specific tasks, usually leading worship and preaching. In other Dioceses Reader ministry is a catch-all category for lay ministry. This, and the potential barrier put in place by the name Reader, have led to a number of dioceses using the title “Licensed Lay Minister” more regularly, though this description is arguably less esoteric and leaves little room for none-Reader licensed lay ministers to use the title.

In recognising the complexity of the situation The Central Readers’ Council Executive has proposed that, because Readers form the majority of licensed lay ministers, the Council would take a lead in proposing that it, and any other bodies representing lay ministers, should come together into a new lay ministry council, responsible to the national Ministry Council, and representing a wide range of episcopal-licensed lay ministers authorised by bishops, such as evangelists, teachers of the faith, chaplains, pioneers, congregation leaders, pastorals, youth and children’s workers, community workers, worship leaders and others.

2.6 Binary thinking and change

Binary, dualistic thinking is a key feature of the current thought-life and practice of the church. There is church and world, ministry and discipleship, sanctuary and pew, Sunday faith and practice and faith and practice in the working week, academic training and practical learning, the NCIs and dioceses and parishes and, of course, ordained and lay. All binaries are, we believe, co-created and co-maintained. Clericalism as a particular formula and dynamic for getting and exercising power within the binary of lay and ordained is equally co-created and co-maintained. It, and all of its shadows, are pervasive and a large part of our current common life. Built deep into the thinking of this report lies a recognition of the inherent disobliging nature of clericalism. Also built deep into this report is a desire to strengthen our sense and our practice of being at an endeavour together and corporately.

The Working Group have also noted that many lay ministers practice ministry in ways which challenge binary thinking on a number of levels. For example, one Reader at a focus group summed up much of the conversation about the nature of Reader ministry by saying “the ministry leaks into all of my life”. Some deeper listening to this experience and reflection on it is another way in which we can develop and strengthen our understanding of ministry.

Systems thinking, as with the theology of the incarnation, is predicated on the assumption that all is related. To change one part is to necessitate change elsewhere. It is part of the culture of this report that there are layers of change and all changes have consequences. Some of these consequences might be quite easy to discern, some might be unknown. The Working Group acknowledges that these recommendations build on what has gone before, in ways which are predictable and ways which are not, and at the same time, lays foundations for mission and ministry in the future in ways which perhaps are predictable and ways which are perhaps not. In approaching changes to lay ministry we need to be both proactive and reactive, both energetic and reflective, both organised and able to be surprised.

2.7 Goodwill

Throughout the life of this piece of work we have encountered huge amounts of goodwill towards and within lay ministry. The sense that we are corporately in this together is owned by vast numbers of people within the Church, whatever current categorisation of ministry they are in. The volunteer hours currently given by lay ministers on behalf of the church are considerable. There is, in short, a culture of goodwill which provides a foundation for further development and action.

3. Key Issues and Recommendations

The Lay Ministries Working Group are asking the Ministry Council to endorse and affirm the espoused shift in culture towards a focus on developing the value and quality of lay ministry and the next steps set out below to help embed that change.

3.1 Understanding

One of the terms of reference for the Working Group is; to develop a theological understanding of lay ministries and the complementarity of lay and ordained ministries. This is an ongoing task of the Church as a whole and we hope that this report, along with its Appendix 2, adds to that flow of understanding. We note however that across the Church of England there is diversity of understanding concerning ordained ministry and that a theology of lay ministry may not be either achievable or desirable. It is also true to say that our theology and our practice need to inform each other and be held in constant conversation. We currently know very little about our practice of lay ministry. As outlined above, our data collection is insufficient and our conversations are sparse.

- i. **Theology**, shared understanding is a work in progress.

In order for a shared understanding to grow it is essential that theological thinking is resourced and co-ordinated. This thinking needs to be both general and specific. In general, that visions for lay leadership and discipleship, espoused by the Lay Leadership Task Group (AC(16)54), cohere with the vision for lay ministry contained in this report. Specifically, in addressing such matters as the theology around incarnational ministry both lay and ordained, and practices such as Communion by Extension and lay ministers involvement in baptisms and funeral ministry.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council liaises with the LLTG and the Faith and Order Commission to ensure that leadership and development of work in this area is co-ordinated, planned for and resourced.

- ii. **Practice**, basic data and descriptions of local practices are patchy.

In order to make a realistic assessment of the scale of the challenges and opportunities that surround the exercise of lay ministries there is a pressing need to improve the quality of our data collection and the capacity for creative use of that data. This report provides an initial map but much more work is required.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council request that the Archbishops' Council provide additional resources to accelerate the adoption and effective use of the Church of England Portal, Contact Management System⁷.

iii. Learning, conversations are sparse.

In order to carry a shared understanding of the role of lay ministries into the future our theology and practice needs to be brought into regular and continued dialogue. Our conversations are currently very sparse, as has been signalled by the disproportionate appreciation of participants when asked to take part in this limited review.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council ask the House of Bishops Standing Committee to commit time to its agenda in early 2018 to discuss the fruits of 1.i & ii above in advance of a report to General Synod. In addition, for diocesan bishops to designate lay ministry champions with the capacity and the necessary authority to actively engage with national conversations in the intervening months (see more below).

3.2 Authorising and supporting

The Working Group's Terms of Reference are realistic in recognising that the current diversity in practice and understanding needs to be affirmed. Indeed, a watchword for the consultation has been flexibility. However, in a national and ordered Church some unity is also desirable. The Group propose that this unity may be found in some shared principles in the use of licensing and authorisation, in the hope that this will support the growth of quality service.

i. Oversight, clarity is desirable.

The Group want to affirm the bishops in their local practises of ordering lay ministry whilst recommending that they take greater responsibility for the processes of good Human Resources Management in relation to lay ministers (in parallel with current Safeguarding arrangements). This should include greater clarity on:

- vocations work and selection
- training and support
- evaluation and feedback
- employment and compensation
- discipline and grievance

It is not the Working Group's expectation that the bishop will have direct responsibility for activity in each of these areas. Rather, that the diocesan bishop will know who does have direct responsibility for activity in these areas and that they are adequately equipped with either national or local

⁷ It has been noted that the system is based on different layers of access. In some dioceses all staff are given access to all layers, in other dioceses access is given in a hierarchical way. This can mean that people employed at an administrative level where input and retrieval of data is a key task sometimes do not have the permission to do this with all of the data.

guidance for this role. There is much work currently being undertaken nationally in each of these areas in relation to ordained ministry and a relative and real deficit in relation to lay ministry.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council:

- Extend the scope of national work on vocations to incorporate more holistic messaging about the nature of vocations lay and ordained, replacing the present limited focus on clergy numbers. This work should be adequately resourced in order to enable the production of materials for dioceses analogous to work currently being prepared detailing the ‘Clergy Offer’, which outlines a set of expectations and understanding around the nature of ordained ministry today.
- Extend and coordinate the reviews of selection and formation criteria, promoted by the Lay Leadership Task Group and the Evangelism Task Group, to include lay ministries licensed under Canon.
- Encourage dioceses as an immediate first step to work through the set of ‘Questions and Suggestions’ on the theme of ‘Identification and Selection’ (see appendix three).
- Charge the Continuing Ministerial Development Panel to develop proposals to implement schemes and mechanisms for continuous training and learning opportunities which are mostly task orientated and widely available to both lay and ordained. This will act as a counter balance to current training practices which front-load learning.
- Encourage dioceses to work towards all licensed and authorised lay ministers having a role description and a mandatory annual review. The creation of an online hub to resource this is recommended below and one possible resource is attached as Appendix Four. Other resources, such as those created for the management of volunteers by the Church Urban Fund (<https://www.cuf.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/working-with-volunteers>) are also noted.
- Ask the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee to report to the Council on:
 - the employment conditions and remuneration of Children and Youth Workers.
 - provide advice on the introduction of a Lay Ministry Discipline Measure, including questions of Admission and Re-licensing.

ii. Mission, authorisation is primarily a response to missional need

The Group takes the view that licensing or authorisation of an individual should primarily be a response to a particular missional need in a community or church context. It is therefore task rather than role orientated. This involves a change in emphasis when discussing lay ministries that warrants further exploration to consider the theological and practical implications of this position.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council:

- Ensure that national leadership and resources are applied in this area (potentially covered in 1.i. above). The Working Group acknowledges that this will entail some detailed reflection on the relationships between lay ministry, the permanent diaconate and Ordained Local Ministry.
- Ask the Head of Projects and Developments, Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar, in consultation with those doing the work of engaging with theology (3.1.i) to prepare a report for the

Council on the possibility of more regularly licensing or authorising lay people to take funerals.

- Encourage Dioceses to develop their strategy, understanding and practice of encouraging the vocations of, and training of potential and existing, lay ministers as responses to particular missional need in a community or church context.

iii. **Canons**, simplification in light of i&ii is desirable.

The Group welcomes the work of the Simplification Task Group in attempting to make the Canon's more flexible whilst recognising that more work needs to be done, particularly around those who are admitted under lifetime vocational ministries and not just for a season, and finds a mechanism to embrace all aspects of Lay Ministry.

3.3 Resourcing

i. **Informed**, poorly articulated goals may reinforce existing patterns of abundance and poverty.

The Group views the figures set out in the report on Resourcing the Future in 2014 as an inadequate basis from which to advance a national strategy for the growth in lay ministries. Our report outlines that the nature of lay ministries is so diverse and so dependent on local particularities that a simple aggregated percentage of diocesan leaders' aspirations for numerical growth is misleading.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council:

- Build on the work started by the Working Group, and proposed in 1.ii. above which will result in a strategy to report on lay ministries and their diversity in order to facilitate a more grounded goal for growth and to enable meaningful reporting to Synod in 2018. This work should be led by the Vocations Team and the Research and Statistics Department.
- Ask the FxC Embedding Group to report to the Council on its aspirations for the growth of lay pioneer ministers and ensure that these are aligned with a holistic strategy for the growth of all lay ministries.
- Consider how the voices of lay ministers not currently represented are more clearly heard and enabled to contribute to this discussion, potentially involving the setting up a form of Lay Ministries Council.

ii. **Capacity**, learning opportunities are few and poorly communicated.

The Group is clear that there is a very limited capacity in both dioceses and nationally for mutual learning about the practice of lay ministry and what may help it to flourish. This is most acutely illustrated by even a cursory look at most diocesan websites which present a confused and often significantly out of date picture of practice and understanding.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council:

- Make full use of the learning opportunity afforded by the diocesan Peer review process and ask the Commissioners' Resource and Strategy Unit to review their practice to include closer scrutiny of the deployment and resourcing of lay ministers.
- Allocate resources to enable the production of an online hub of resources to support the identification, selection and effective management and deployment of lay ministers.

- Allocate resources to building up, in collaboration with colleagues across the NCIs, a national understanding of what Dioceses want and need in terms of lay ministry.

iii. Leadership, a watchful eye is required to maintain focus

The Group recognises that for progress to be made in each of the areas outlined above that adequately resourced leadership is essential. It fears that without a watchful eye any progress on supporting the growth of lay ministry will rapidly dissipate.

The Working Group therefore recommends that the Ministry Council:

- Create a national post based in Ministry Division with an operational budget to enable the development of a national conversation and learning community about lay ministry. The post would help:
 - i. Ensure that Diocesan Lay Ministry Champions are regularly brought together, alongside NCI staff, to continue the conversations started by the work of this Working Group.
 - ii. Ensure coherence around discussions across multiple Renewal and Reforms work streams, including Vocations, Selection, Resourcing Ministerial Education, Simplification, Lay Leadership etc. that touch on lay ministries.
 - iii. Facilitate the emergence and adoption of national best practice, particularly in relation to Human Resources Management processes outlined.
 - iv. Provide regular communication to stakeholders, including maintaining web resources as good practice models and case studies become available.
 - v. Prepare the report for Synod in 2018 detailing progress in vocations and beyond that commentary on questions of quality.
 - vi. Provide staff support any developments around any Lay Ministry Council and in particular the preparation of regular reports for the Council detailing progress in the areas outlined.

In each of these areas the Working Group recommends that a report on progress is made the Council at its meeting in February 2017 and that the work is substantially reviewed by the House of Bishops and General Synod in early 2018.

4. Conclusion

The Working Group would like to thank Ministry Council for the opportunity to complete this vital piece of work. We have endeavoured to work alongside our lay ministry colleagues and alongside the Lay Leadership Task Group to meet our Terms of Reference.

It is our firm belief that putting resources into intentional national and local conversations about lay ministry and putting resources into ensuring consistency of quality in the ministry that is undertaken will substantially shift the culture of the Church and help us to respond to what God is asking of us, both now and in the future.

We wish the people taking on the next stage of implementation of these proposals well.

Co-chairs: Des Scott, Deputy Chief Executive, Church Army

Bishop Robert, Sodor and Man

Appendix One

Lay Ministries Working Group Terms of Reference and Membership

- a. To review current developments in traditional and emerging forms of lay ministry in the light of the Resourcing the Future and Resourcing Ministerial Education diocesan consultations
- b. To develop a theological understanding of lay ecclesial ministries and the complementarity of lay and ordained ministries
- c. To investigate what hinders the exercise of lay ministries and propose changes to current practice in order to remove these hindrances
- d. To propose a framework for lay ministries in the Church of England which respects diversity of expression between dioceses and encourages shared learning, good practice and interconnectedness across the Church of England
- e. To review the resources currently allocated to lay ministerial education and development and to propose changes
- f. To liaise with the Facilitating Lay Leadership Working Group and support its work and receive support from it
- g. To present a report to the Ministry Council including a plan for implementation of proposals

In order to define the subject of this review more clearly it has been proposed that the term lay ecclesial ministries be used. 'Lay Ecclesial Ministries' is the title given to forms of ministry, paid and unpaid, undertaken by lay people and licensed or authorized by a Bishop. They include those of evangelists, readers, teachers of the faith, chaplains, pioneers, lay congregation leaders, pastoral assistants, youth and children's workers, community workers and worship leaders. Their focus is to share in the evangelistic, pastoral, formational and liturgical ministry of the church, working in collaboration with clergy to build the Kingdom of God.

Co-chair Bishop Robert, Sodor and Man

Co-chair Des Scott, Deputy Chief Executive at the Church Army

Helen Bent, Head of Ministerial Training, Royal School of Church Music in partnership with Praxis

Chris Corteen, Lay Chair Salisbury Diocesan Synod

Mike Kelly, Youth Ministry Officer, Leicester diocese

Esther Elliott, Lay Ministry Project Consultant and staff lead

Tim Ling, Head of Ministry Development

Appendix Two – Understandings of Ministry and Discipleship

Service and servanthood are part of the DNA of every Christian disciple and of the Church but during the last couple of generations, the buzz word in church has been ‘ministry’ (which literally means the same thing) and quite a trade was established in making Christians feel guilty if they weren’t ‘ministering’, while fewer people outside wanted to join in this energetic ecclesial activity. Thankfully we are shifting our attention to helping Christians to be Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The more our talk revolves around ‘ministry’, the more we devalue and disable Christian disciples whose calling is not to **do** something for the benefit of the church but to **be** Christians. Put simply, discipleship is what all Christians are called to – we are all disciples of the Lord – whereas ministry is a summons by the Lord to some activity and, in particular, an activity for and/or on behalf of the Church.

The concept of ministry has a range of interpreters. At one end of the scale are those who divide the Church into the few who minister and the majority who don’t; at the other end are those who assume that every Christian is a minister with at least one ministry. A couple of generations ago we were at one extreme and ministry normally meant ordination; then opinion swung to the other extreme, and ministry came to mean activities every Christian should engage in, calling each little act of service ‘our ministry’. Both are fatal traps into which we easily fall. *‘When all is ministry, ministry fades away.’*⁸

Ministry may be defined as the willingness of God to serve, demonstrated in the obedient self-offering of Jesus Christ who came among us as Servant and Lord. That ministry committed to the Church is expressed in the priority of worship and in a willingness to give place to others and, particularly, to all who are in any way weak or powerless.⁹

Basically, ministry describes our being servants of God - a calling for all Christians. But there is more to be said about this word and, in order to make sense of the New Testament and of God’s work in today’s world, we need to make clearer the distinctions between the service offered by all Christian disciples and commissioned ministry.

How has the Church’s understanding of ministry (or *‘diakonia’* in the Greek of the New Testament) shifted in recent years? From early times, the concept was reasonably understood as a servant’s commission; that understanding remained unchallenged at the Reformation, until the twentieth century. However, there was a pronounced change between the early 1950’s and the 1960’s when the traditional assumption that ministry was provided (in the words of St Paul) by God *‘to equip the saints’*¹⁰ was overtaken by a loud and prevailing assertion that ministry is the prerogative of *all* the baptized.

This encouraged many to declare that baptism is a universal sign of gifting for ministry, that ‘every-member ministry’ or ‘the ministry of the baptized’ was a New Testament doctrine, and that the terms ‘discipleship’ and ‘lay ministry’ meant the same thing. The natural corollary of this was that all Christians should seek out their own ‘ministry’.

So ‘ministry’ became a word that found its way into every thought for the renewal of the Church’s

⁸ T.F. O’Meara: *Theology of Ministry*, Paulist Press, 1983.

⁹ Mark 10.45; Luke 22.26,27; John 13.14,15; 2 Corinthians 11.29,30; 1 Timothy 6.17,18; 1 John 4.19 21.

¹⁰ Ephesians 4.12.

life: in one commentator's words, *'Ministry is a greedy concept.'*¹¹ This thinking still remains stubbornly embedded. The failure to distinguish the two ways in which we understand the word *'diakonia'* as (1) the service offered by every disciple and (2) the ministry to which some have been committed has led both to confusion in our thinking about lay ministry, and to devaluing the discipleship shared by all Christians. Ray Anderson commented that

*'mission keeps ministry from becoming a mirror in which the church, like the mythical Narcissus, sees its own reflection and ends up withering away until it becomes a potted plant - a narcissus!'*¹²

As well as becoming a word that found its way into every aspect of the renewal of the Church's life and mission, ministry acquired, in most church-people's hearing, the sense that it is to do with service *within* the Church or *on behalf of* the Church. Thus the nagging question which hung over every Christian, 'What's your ministry? What are you *doing* for the Church?'

The Church today, it is said, is like a helicopter: don't stand too close or you may get sucked into its rotas! This persistent emphasis on every disciple being a minister shifted the focus of attention subconsciously from the bedrock of Christian discipleship to a preoccupation with 'ministries'. It's not that all of these are unnecessary or under-valued, because sustaining the life of the Church is vital, but the emphasis has shifted. The last generation or so has seen a gradual clericalizing of lay people, diverting attention from the kingdom of God and the world he loves into internal affairs.

John N. Collins, who led much of the renewed study of the word since the early 1970's,¹³ and many others, have looked at how the various *'diakon-'* words were used within the first century world of the New Testament writers, and recognised that, while they did carry some overtones of humility, they primarily describe honourable, commissioned service. His work has been an important driver behind recognising the vital distinction between the servanthood/service of all baptized Christians and the ministry of those (lay and ordained) to whom has been committed commissioned and reserved service. In other words, we need to retreat from the language of 'every-member ministry' and replace it with 'every disciple a servant'.

Collins concludes that at no point in ancient usage, Christian, pagan or secular, did 'ministry' mean loving service to those in need. Instead, it described the service of an envoy, commissioned and accountable to perform a task. The overwhelming majority of New Testament scholarship now supports this understanding of ministry as commissioned and accountable service. Three important texts in the New Testament need to be read again in the light of this research.

First, one of Jesus' sayings from Matthew's and Mark's Gospels:

*'The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'*¹⁴

The background of the saying is the request of his disciples James and John (Matthew says it was their mother) to sit next to Jesus at his throne in the Kingdom. Jesus begins by explaining,

' "You do not understand what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said, "The cup that I drink you shall drink, and the baptism I am baptized with shall be your baptism; but to sit on my right or on my left is not for me to grant; that honour is for

¹¹ Helen Oppenheimer.

¹² Ray S Anderson: *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*, B.R.F., 2007.

¹³ Diakonia: *Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources*, 1990; *Are All Christians Ministers?* 1992; etc.

¹⁴ Matthew 20.28; Mark 10.45; see also Luke 22.27,28.

those to whom it has already been assigned.”¹⁵

This introduces what follows: the necessity for a disciple both to be humble and also to be ready to follow Jesus into the baptism of suffering. The saying, like the story in which it is set, is in two parts that are inextricably linked by a crucial ‘and’. Yes, ‘*the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve*’ - and here a comma gets in the way, with the risk that we might take the rest of the sentence for granted - ‘*and to give his life as a ransom for many.*’ In other words, the service offered by the Son of Man is not so much his humility but the obedient Servant giving his life as a ransom for many - ‘*the baptism I am baptized with*’. John Collins comments:

‘Mark’s Son of Man is serving or, better, ministering under God. In laying down his life, he is carrying out the sacred commission or diakonia he had received from God.’¹⁶

In the foot-washing story of John 13 Peter’s willingness to follow Jesus into his baptism of suffering is the key that unlocks the foot-washing symbol. Jesus is the Servant of God not simply because he is humble but because he is the Son obedient to the commission of his Father, his baptism of suffering, the commission that led to the cross.

The second passage for reflection is from St Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians, where the Apostle has been at pains to emphasise the link between his personal weakness and his role as an apostle, summed up in describing himself as a ‘minister of Christ’¹⁷

Paul engages in a wide-ranging discussion of ministry extending over several chapters, most of it personal testimony.¹⁸ As a servant, he sees himself as the envoy sent from God with a word from God himself, rather than a representative of the church in Jerusalem or Antioch. Paul came to Corinth as God’s envoy to bring his word of reconciliation in Christ¹⁹; he came with an appeal directly from God, and each time he uses that same word of himself - ‘minister/servant’. In contrast, as an Apostle, Paul is a representative of the church that sent him and carries with him its credentials. As a minister, he is a spokesperson for God; as an Apostle he is a representative of the Church.

The third observation is drawn from the Letter to the Ephesians, chapter four. If only the New Testament had punctuation! When the major updating of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible took place during 1971-2 a comma was omitted from the Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 12. Formerly it had read, ‘*for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry,*’ – referring to two distinct aspects of the effects of the ascended Christ’s gifts to the Church – but it was revised in order to read, ‘*to equip the saints for the work of ministry.*’

There is no textual evidence to prefer one version over another. We have to look elsewhere to understand the author’s intention and we find it in what has been said above about the distinct ambassadorial role of ministry. The hidden persuader behind the change in the RSV seems to have been the growing popularity of every-member ministry in the 1960’s and 70’s, itself an attempt at theological democracy, an understandable rebellion against a foolish hierarchical view of public ministry that put ordination at the top and discipleship at the bottom. Following the RSV revision, this comma was omitted from most other modern translations, and reading the revised text frequently in public worship has encouraged the popular view that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given to the Church in order to make ministers of all disciples, whereas

¹⁵ Mark 10.38-40.

¹⁶ Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 1995

¹⁷ See 2 Corinthians 11.23.

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 2.14 – 6.13.

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians. 3.8,9; 5.18

modern scholarship tells us that the equipping of the saints is one activity, and another is the work of ministry, revealing the secret of the gospel, *'the good news of the unfathomable riches of Christ'*.²⁰

Confusing ministry with discipleship is not simply an arcane difference of opinion over words but a serious issue affecting the way the church operates. In 1963, Kathleen Bliss pointed to the danger when 'jobs' become 'offices', when we fool ourselves into thinking that training for jobs in church means fulfilling a lay vocation. *'For what the laity lack is not the know-how of successful magazine distribution, but basic equipment in understanding what it means to be a Christian.'*²¹

Ministry is always the servant of mission. God's mission is the outgoing love of God the Holy Trinity for his creation expressed in the mission of the Son: namely the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom God has reconciled the world to himself and through whom the Holy Spirit has been given. That mission Christ has committed to his Church as a royal priesthood in making disciples, baptizing, teaching and being his body in the world.²²

Good, called, well-trained, accredited, commissioned and accountable ministers in many areas of witness are vital to equip the Church for the mission of God. Despite the few who scorn the use of the word 'mission', it is where God starts and ends.

Both mission and ministry serve the purpose of drawing people into a relationship with God the Holy Trinity through faith in Jesus Christ so that all may enjoy reconciliation in his love, and that life in our communities, churches and as individuals may be enriched by the Gospel and reflect the joy of the Kingdom of God.

However, commissioned ministers cannot forget the need for foot-washing humility, as leader-seekers on a common journey, not knowing the whole route ahead but having a contagious passion for the destination, humanity's true home in God. They are people who call others alongside in a common search for love, courage, wisdom, hope and life.

Sodor as Mannin

²⁰ Ephesians 3.1-13

²¹ We the People, SCM, 1963.

²² Matthew 28.19,20; John 20.21,22; Romans 1.16,17; 12.4-8; 1 Corinthians 12.12-31; Ephesians 4.1-16; Colossians 1.20; 1 Peter 2.9

Appendix Three – Frameworks for practice; Identification and Selection of lay ministers and Training

| Questions | Suggestions |
|---|---|
| Where is the current starting point in your context for helping people think about their sense of vocation and for identifying potential lay ministers? | That responsibility for this is held at Diocesan level, while the tasks are done at parish level. And that there is consistent funding for lay vocations over time as evidence suggests fluctuations in resourcing match fluctuations in vocations identified. |
| What language do you use to describe what you are about when you are identifying lay ministers? | That there is a move towards language which speaks of ministry as commissioned and accountable service rather than a role within an organisation. |
| What support are you giving to those involved in decision making in the process of identification of potential lay ministers? | That decision makers are valued, affirmed and given skills in their task. That decision making practices are a corporate endeavour and that the power to identify a potential lay minister is not concentrated in one person. |
| In defining and describing the roles which are open to lay ministers in your context are you prioritising the need to build the Kingdom and the identification of missional tasks in local communities? | That all roles, tasks and responsibilities of lay ministers are purposefully orientated towards building the kingdom not maintaining the organisation. That dioceses work with a theology of blessing and abundance rather than a theology of shortage |
| If your context contains roles which involve a national licence and roles which involve a local authorisation or commissioning how do you understand and describe the difference? | That the difference between a national authorisation and a local authorisation or commissioning is based on theological understanding which is well articulated not on differing levels of local behaviour. And, that this theology is shared so that a national view of local authorisation/commissioning can be built up |
| How are you creating connections between your categories of ministry and creating routes through the boundaries you have created between various forms of ministry? | That it is recognized that, for the health of the church and the building of the Kingdom, lay ministry needs both organization and flexibility and imagination |
| What do you have in place to create mutual accountability between all those who participate in the systems and processes for identifying potential lay ministers? | That the identification of lay ministers is a shared endeavour both in relation to the identification of an individual and in relation to diocesan and national practice and learning. That dioceses are resourced by national conversations to intentionally share their thinking and learning about identification of lay ministers with other dioceses. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Are you systematically planning for the future and reviewing your identification of lay ministers in light of what you know or imagine about the future needs of the church? | That dioceses are resourced to reflect on and try out new categories of lay ministry which relate to the future needs of the church. |
|--|--|

| Questions | Suggestions |
|--|--|
| What do you need to do next to orientate your current training opportunities for lay ministry towards the practice of life long vocational journeying and equipping? | <p>That Dioceses review their current training provision for lay ministers with a view to adapting the structure and delivery of training so that individual, lifelong learning pathways are easily created and maintained.</p> <p>That there is a move towards language which talks about lifelong learning rather than initial training.</p> |
| What do you need to do to ensure that your current training opportunities are as accessible as possible? | <p>That Dioceses build up non-course based learning opportunities such as mentoring, apprenticeships, learning communities and web-based learning.</p> <p>That learning about the delivery of and thinking behind non-course based learning opportunities is corporately shared.</p> |
| If you have compulsory training pathways for particular roles how are you ensuring that these pathways are fit for purpose? | <p>That there are opportunities for greater shared understanding of the choices dioceses make when designing training pathways.</p> <p>That over time national and regional conversations will encourage and develop consistency in the content of training for particular roles.</p> |
| How are you ensuring that all the training and learning opportunities you offer meets the missional needs of your diocesan context in both content and delivery? | That dioceses set up a mixed group of trainers, senior staff and training participants to constantly review that the training on offer works with the golden thread of the vision and needs of the organisation. |
| What do you need to do next to ensure that lay ministers and those around them have simple ways in which to review and develop their ministry? | That through the use of an online hub and national conversations Dioceses are resourced to provide training in effective supervision, compulsory role descriptions, working agreements and annual reviews for all lay ministers. |
| What do you have in place to create mutual accountability within the national church in the creation and delivery of training for lay ministry? | That dioceses are resourced to find ways to share their thinking and learning about training for lay ministers. |

Appendix Four – Draft Guidance for Annual Reviews

Annual Review Guidance

Licensed and authorised lay ministry is representative of the church. It should therefore be supported by the church with appropriately structured learning opportunities and accountability. It is not a planning or business meeting or for organising diaries and schedules or producing statistical information.

The annual review is a structured relationship that should enable, support and give confidence to your Lay Ministry as well as valuing your ministry. This should include:

- developing the skills for being effective and providing appropriate learning and training to enable you to flourish in your ministry
- reflecting on issues of pastoral care and the mission of the church
- allowing you the space to inhabit the role and identity and to appropriately exercise both authority and humility
- helping you to recognise any challenges and identify the skills and resources to face these
- prayerful discernment of God's calling on your ministry
- support and encouragement and an opportunity to share concerns. Part of this will involve praying together and for each other.
- providing a safe and confidential place to talk through the challenges and any difficulties of the role.
- encouraging a deeper self-knowledge and spiritual maturity
- having regard for issues of safeguarding and good practice in the exercise of ministry.

Who conducts the Annual Review?

Normally the Incumbent or Chaplain will take on this responsibility of supporting you in your Lay Ministry. The Annual Review is not designed to deal with any issues and difficulties that may have arisen during the year. These should be addressed at the time. The Review is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to look forward taking into account your training and development, any challenges to be addressed and opportunities to enable you to flourish in your ministry. Sufficient time should be given to the Review. It is also important that both you and the reviewer spend time individually before the review to reflect on your ministry. There is a form included to help you to do this and should be completed and brought along to the review meeting or sent to the reviewer beforehand as agreed.

Alternative Arrangements

Should you consider for whatever reason that it is not appropriate or possible for your incumbent to conduct your annual review then you should contact the Diocesan office to discuss an alternative arrangement. This may involve meeting with a mentor to discuss the situation. It will be important to understand that the intention would not be to have another person to conduct your review on a regular basis. It will be crucial to work with the mentor and the incumbent to improve the situation and relationship as appropriate and come to a mutually agreed position.

LEARNING PORTFOLIO

A learning portfolio is a log that gives evidence of learning through a training course and/or through experience and reflection. It is good practice for all in Authorised Ministry to establish and keep such a portfolio of learning. This might involve a brief account of some practical situations, which has been explored in supervision, noting what was learned through reflecting on it.

Lay Ministries

What have we learnt from surveying dioceses?

What's the range of authorisation?

| LLM/Reader | Accredited* Lay Worker | Authorised Lay Minister | Employed | Lay Lay |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Admitted* | | | | |
| A range of titles: 12 refer to Readers, 9 Licensed* Lay Minister (LLM)/Reader, 3 a range including Local Missional Leader, Reader Evangelist, Local Minister. | A range of titles: Lay Worker, Pastoral Worker, Evangelist, Chaplain, Pioneer. | Under 'Authorised Lay Ministers' dioceses discussed: authorisation,* and commissioning,* and supervision by the incumbent. There was considerable variation in the language used. | A large number of people appear to exercise lay ministries without license or authorisation with their 'commissioning' being implicit in their employment by the church, e.g. most Youth ministers. | For another group their ministry is implicitly recognised but comes with no employment, authorisation or license. This commission is essentially local. |
| Not Admitted | | | | |

"Unclear what value the license offers. It could be a fantastic way to invest in people but it needs to be relevant, it needs to be empowering, it needs to be accessible."

"The license offers a clear endorsement for ministry which is not simply locally determined. However I am concerned that too much is looked to from the bishop and want to encourage more local decision making that operates under clear guidelines from the bishop."*

*Descriptions of key terms may be found in the accompanying glossary

How many lay ministers are there?

| LLM/Reader | Lay Worker | Authorised Lay Minister | Employed | Lay Lay |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>6108*</p> <p>On average: 1 for every 125 usual Sunday attendance (USA)</p> <p>Range from: 1 to 50 up to 1 to 324</p> | <p>204*</p> <p>95 of these from one diocese</p> | <p>4037*</p> <p>On average: 1 for every 134 usual Sunday attendance (USA)</p> <p>Range from: 1 to 21 up to 1 to 348</p> | <p>2,670*</p> <p>Children and Youth workers in parishes</p> | <p>400*</p> <p>36% of the leadership of all FxC</p> |
| <p>*NB the numbers given to the consultation don't match returns to the Central Readers' Council. This national total is from the last CRC return. The available age data clearly indicates this is predominantly a 'third age' ministry.</p> | <p>*NB of the responses provided 16 dioceses were able to give a specific number, 5 were vague, 5 said 'none' and 1 "I don't think so"</p> | <p>*NB this figure is not a national total. It is a total for the 18 dioceses that responded. The national figure is therefore potentially significantly higher. In the 2014 Resourcing the Future report the national estimate was 3000. We don't have age date.</p> | <p>*NB figure from a one off question in the 2013 Statistics for Mission data (with a 46% response rate) we have no other record.</p> | <p>*NB total from 21 dioceses researched by Church Army Research Unit.</p> |

We don't have great quality numbers. The ones that we do nonetheless suggest:

1. this is a huge resource
2. there is considerable diversity across dioceses
3. at a diocesan level LLMs are not evenly distributed with areas of great abundance alongside relative poverty of provision.

Any call for "More Lay Ministers" needs to recognise this diversity.

How is ministry activity described?

| LLM/Reader* | Lay Worker | Authorised Lay Minister |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Preach | Evangelist | Evangelist |
| Lead Worship | Pioneer/FxC/Plant | Pastoral |
| Pastoral | Chaplaincy | Lead Worship |
| Funerals | Pastoral | Chaplaincy |
| Lay theologian | Youth | Preach |
| Evangelist | Children | Youth |
| Chaplaincy | Family Worker | Children |
| Leadership team | Funerals | Pioneer/FxC/Plant |
| Children | Healing and Wholeness | Community Work |
| Youth | | Funerals |
| Pioneer/FxC/Plant | | Discipleship at work |
| Schools | | |
| Supervision of other ministries | | |
| Lay Incumbent | | |

Activities explicitly named in Canons

Most frequent description



Least frequent description

*The most consistent description of the role was: "preaching and leading worship"

How is lay ministry funded by dioceses?

| LLM/Reader | Accredited* Lay Worker | Authorised Lay Minister | Employed | Lay Lay |
|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| <p>Initial training: £1485 on average per person per annum (range £366-£5000)</p> | No pattern of diocesan funding discernible. | Only 8 dioceses reported budget figures. Others that it was for parishes or deaneries to pay. | No pattern of diocesan funding discernible. | Not recorded. |
| <p>Continuing training: £50 average pp pa (range £7-£190)</p> | The most common, yet infrequent, response was that there was 'no specific budget' but some provision from clergy CMD for Church Army Evangelists. | Range from the 8 dioceses £2-£80 pp pa | 32% of Youth Workers responding to a recent national survey reported having no funds to enable continuing training. | |

Money is currently predominantly focused on LLMs or tied in to diocesan posts the majority of which cover multiple responsibilities beyond lay ministry. Focused operation budgets are a rarity.

"The DYO spends some of his time doing this but I am not aware of a particular budget for their training specifically."

What do we know about vocations?

The Resourcing the Future report in 2015 reported aspirations for significant growth in lay ministries over the following 10 years. This included a 48% increase in Voluntary Lay Ministers (a net increase of 5,678) and a 69% increase in Paid Lay Ministers (a net increase of 831). NB dioceses' actual projections were 3420 and 405 respectively.

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| LLM/Reader | Accredited* Lay Worker | Authorised Lay Minister | Employed | Lay Lay |
| 16 of the 30 dioceses reported significant fluctuations in numbers of vocations. Their commentary points to a clear association with vacancies in diocesan posts. | Responses range from 'no data available' to detailed figures. Commentary suggests that licensing tends to be reactive and case by case. Particular growth appears to be associated with initiatives to make 'youth workers accountable' and licensing pioneers. | A number of dioceses report growth in vocations. This appears to relate to initiatives reported as taking place in the last 18 months. Where attention is given to lay ministries they appear! | We don't have figures for employed lay ministers. However, we have received reports of one training course (a historic pathway into such roles) experiencing difficulties in recruiting. | This has been an area of significant growth since the publication of Mission Shaped Church in 2004. |

Our baseline data is weak and responses from dioceses are patchy. However, on the basis of best available data it appears that vocations do not appear to be at a replacement level for LLMs and we can expect a shrinking of this ministry's footprint over the next decade.



Description of key terms

- The term **Admission** is used in Canon Law in relation to specific formal lay ministries. Readers and lay workers are ‘admitted’ and given a ‘certificate of admission’. The Canons provide that “the admission shall not be repeated if the person admitted thereby moves to another diocese” (E 4.6 / E 8.1).
- **Accredited** Lay Worker has been a term used to refer to people who have gone through a national selection process, followed by admission and licensing (under Canon E7) as a lay worker or evangelist (Church Army). This is no longer a category used in the Church of England’s national selection processes, but several **accredited** lay workers are involved in ministry in some dioceses. It is therefore inappropriate and confusing to talk of others in non-canonical lay ministries as ‘accredited’.
- **Licensing** under Canon E8 is official permission, granted by a bishop, to exercise the responsibilities of a lay worker, as specified in Canon E7, in the context of the ministry of word and sacrament in a particular place. Where the lay worker is not on Common Tenure the licence can be given for a specific length of time, and it can be revoked. Canon E7 and E8 apply to accredited lay workers and those with a nationally recognised Inter Diocesan Certificate, though the term ‘lay worker’ has been more widely interpreted in some dioceses.
- If a **licence** is granted to a lay worker otherwise than under Canon E7/8 it is important to recognise that such a licence **does not admit the person to any ecclesiastical office** and only confers authority to undertake the specific task for which he or she is licensed. In such cases it is important that the responsibilities and expectations of this task are detailed in an accompanying ministry/ job description. In employment law terms the person may be an employee, a ‘worker’ or a volunteer, but is not an office holder.
- **Commissioning** is a term frequently used for the process of local recognition of lay ministry. Legally, the word does not involve a technical devolution of authority, but refers to a liturgical activity. However the etymology of the word implies recognition of the sharing of some ministry, and points to the fact that the ministry will be carried out with and on behalf of the church.
- Some dioceses prefer to talk of those undertaking diocesan ministries as **recognised** or **authorized**. These words do not carry official legal overtones. As the use of the term “authorized ministry” does not in itself make clear where the authorising authority or recognition originates (e.g. parish, deanery or diocese), it is helpful to ensure this is clarified if the term is used.
- A number of diocese issue **guidelines** to incumbents setting out for example expectations around ‘occasional preaching’. This is good practice and to be encouraged.