

DIOCESAN JOINT WORKING

1. The Dioceses Commission last reviewed joint working between dioceses in 2013. It was conscious that a lot of water had flowed under the bridge since then, not least as dioceses as part of the *Renewal and Reform* programme have, through peer review discussions, opened up new relationships with other dioceses (albeit largely with ones with whom they don't necessarily share a boundary). The Commission therefore felt that it would be timely to map the extent of working across diocesan boundaries, taking account of the extent to which these developments may have changed working patterns. The Commission's main interest in this area was the extent to which joint working could facilitate mission and whether there are trends emerging.
2. There was a rather patchy response to the Commission's brief survey, with only **20** replies out of 42 (48%), This compares with 25 responses in 2013.
3. Of these 20, 16 had some form of joint working in place (2 only of an informal nature).
4. It is possibly rather hazardous to draw too many hard and fast conclusions from this relatively limited sample. Some features are nevertheless worthy of particular comment:
 - 'Hard-wired' arrangements in **Finance** seemed be on the wane. The Coventry & Leicester working has stopped, as has the arrangement between Durham & Newcastle. Guildford had also withdrawn from joint working in this area with Portsmouth & Winchester. Indeed Portsmouth & Winchester now remains the only extant example for Finance. However, Hereford and Worcester seem to be on the cusp of entering into a new arrangement in this field.
 - There seems to be growing co-operation in the area of **Theological Training**, one such example being growing links between Exeter and Truro.
 - **Continuing Ministerial Development** is another area with the West Midlands Training Partnership bringing together expertise and resource in the dioceses of Birmingham, Coventry, Gloucester, Hereford, Lichfield and Worcester.
 - Although their joint working has evolved and may be rather less intense, the arrangements between **Durham and Newcastle**; and between **Portsmouth and Winchester** stand out in terms of their depth, continuing to embrace such areas as **Education**.
5. As in 2013 the main benefits seem to be:

- **Economic:** sharing the cost of specialist employees; better utilisation of resources;
- **Resilience:** broadening skill sets in particular areas; ability to recruit from a wider pool; better cover arrangements;
- **Mutual support / shared wisdom.**

6. The challenges seem to include:

- **Geography:** the sheer distance that can be involved
- **Differing diocesan priorities & strategies**
- **Different diocesan policies:** eg. staff terms & conditions
- **Line management of staff:** eg. different management structures
- **Changing personnel at senior level / establishing relationships**

7. The Commission discussed these findings at its December 2018 meeting, and agreed to follow up some newer examples of joint working with the dioceses concerned. It nevertheless noted that there seemed to be less energy around formal initiatives of this kind.

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The Dioceses Commission

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