**Pioneer Criteria**

The Pioneer Criteria are to be used for the discernment of pioneer ministry, lay and ordained in the Church of England. They are designed to assess whether a candidate has the capacity for pioneering ministry in planting fresh expressions of church.

Some of the Criteria are about assessing a candidate’s potential and recognize that that potential will only be fully realized after training and during ministry. The recognition of that potential is sufficient to allow a candidate to be recommended as a pioneer. However, some of the Criteria call for ‘demonstrable’ ability and as such there has to be clear evidence at the point of selection that a candidate fulfils these Criteria if he or she is to be recommended as a pioneer. These demonstrable abilities are so essential that they need to be clearly and evidently in place at the point of selection.

**A. Missional qualities required**

Candidate must have a realistic and informed vocation to plant fresh expressions of church within contemporary culture. They will be able to show how they have responded to God’s calling to be a pioneer by

1. A demonstrable track record of innovation in their life.

Candidates should have a track record of ‘firsts’ and initiative in having started something new.

Evidence of this will be drawn from a candidate’s experience of:

· Having started a contextually-appropriate church or congregation

· Starting a new project or group around perceived opportunities in any area of life

· Identifying and responding effectively to key opportunities for mission

· Working in creative and non-standard ways to develop an innovative approach to

problem solving and thinking in any area of life

· Demonstrating practices of missional imagination

· Reflecting on situations, learning from them and make appropriate changes for the future in any area of life.

2. A demonstrable willingness to take risks and show courageous faith

Evidence of this will be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· Be a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing

· Take appropriate risks and be prepared to exercise step by step experimentation.

· Negotiate disappointment well and learn from mistakes to improve further actions

3. A demonstrable ability to communicate the faith effectively to those outside the church

Evidence for this will be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· Demonstrate with examples how they have communicated the Christian faith to those outside the Church naturally, sensitively and effectively.

· Demonstrate with examples how they have communicated with and related easily to people outside the church.

· Demonstrate with examples their understanding of the worldviews and mind sets of people outside the church

· Demonstrate with examples an understanding of the interaction between gospel and culture

· Demonstrate with examples how they have helped in forming individuals as missional disciples of Jesus.

**B. Collaborative qualities required**

4. An ability to work collaboratively in creating and working with a team

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to show how they have:

· Developed vision with others for a new project

· Released and equipped others for pioneering ministry

· Identified and invested in future pioneering leaders

· Helped people to share responsibility for the growth and success of the fresh expression

· Looked beyond their own areas of responsibility with a wider regard for the whole.

5. Well-developed abilities to handle complexity and initiate change

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· Live with uncertainty

· Use adaptive practices appropriately in a particular context

· Motivate others to engage with change

· Deal well with conflict

· Shift priorities and emphasis during various stages of development of a project they have been involved with.

6. A clear vision of the place of their envisaged ministry within the wider Church of England’s response to God's mission to the world

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· Understand and be committed to the Church of England as a ‘mixed economy’ church

· Be committed to the reshaping of the Church for mission

**C. Personal qualities required**

7. Have demonstrable maturity and robustness to face the demands of pioneering mission and ministry

Evidence of this will be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· Lay aside personal preference for the sake of the community being served

· Cope effectively with pressure, ambiguity, change and disorientation

· Have a consistency of character in varied circumstances of pioneering

· Demonstrate a willingness to live sacrificially and endure hardship

· Persevere for the long-term rather than take shortcuts for quick results

· Work across different cultures

· Show good emotional awareness

8. A mature and well developed devotional life of a pioneer

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· Demonstrate an established robust, discipline of personal prayer, worship and study which can sustain them in pioneering situations

· Adapt their spiritual practices creatively to reflect and engage with their pioneering context

· Develop their ability to relate prayer and worship to their context

· Have the patience to wait for and identify God’s timing

· Be able to help new disciples grow in their faith

· Attend to the movement of the Holy Spirit in particular mission situations.

9. The ability to learn and reflect theologically as a pioneer

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate’s capacity to:

· To make sense theologically of their pioneering work

· To interpret the Bible in the midst of contextual mission

· To understand how missional ministry is shaped by culture and context.

· Understand contemporary cultures and the practice of planting fresh expressions of church within them