

## MINISTRY STATISTICS 2019 Report

The 2019 Ministry Statistics provide a valuable insight into the diverse and varied ministries being offered across Church of England parishes, chaplaincies and workplaces. Overall they tell a story of real progress resulting from intentional and concerted action both locally and nationally. It is clear that this progress is stronger with regard to some aspects of ministry than others and that overall these statistics offer no grounds for complacency.

We know from our regular interactions with Dioceses that lay ministry in its many and various forms encompasses by far the largest number of recognised ministers in the Church, and as such a lay ministry data project is underway to gather further information. The statistics in Ministry Statistics 2019 focus upon Reader and Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM) which although a small part of the whole remain vitally important. It would appear that Reader and LLM numbers are declining whilst other lay ministries are burgeoning. Further insights into the many other forms of authorised lay ministry currently outside the scope of this overview will be published in a separate report once the ongoing lay ministry data project is completed later this year.

The contribution of lay ministers to the mission and ministry of the church is hugely valued both in terms of sustaining the ongoing life of parishes and chaplaincies but also in the innovation and spiritual entrepreneurship increasingly characterising frontline expressions of the church as a Christian presence in every community.

A key national aim for Ministry has been to sustain the number of stipendiary clergy in the face of fluctuations in retirements, vocations, selection for training and deployment. Each year the national ministry statistics give us an insight into how this is going. It is encouraging that, despite significant numbers of retirements, between 2018 and 2019 the number of stipendiary clergy has remained stable. This has come about as a result of increasing ordinations and changes in retirement patterns. There has been a concerted effort across Dioceses and nationally to encourage vocations to all ministries including ordination and the success of this is evidenced here. In fact 2019 saw the joint highest number of ordinations since at least 1991. Growth was especially strong amongst those being ordained into stipendiary roles while recommendations for self-supporting ordained ministry have somewhat declined.

Our stipendiary clergy continue to be the most recognised public ministers of the church, a role which is both rewarding and immensely challenging. We thank them all for their inestimable service, their dedication and their leadership.

I would also wish to acknowledge and express our gratitude for the very generous contribution of the many thousands of people engaged in self-supporting ministries in the church, both lay and ordained. The statistics remind us once again of the enormous contribution made by the very large numbers of clergy who continue to minister after retirement. Also over a fifth of self-supporting clergy are serving in parishes where there is no stipendiary clergy person, indicating a significant level of responsibility. I am delighted to take this opportunity to give these men and women the recognition they deserve.

In recent years there has been an increasing diversity among our clergy, but we will not be content until those in public ministry truly reflect the whole church and the communities which they serve. For example the proportion of clergy who are female has increased overall but the growth continues to be slow. Also, although the number of female Bishops has increased, that progress is not yet equally reflected in the number of women in other senior posts within the church such as Archdeacons and Cathedral Deans. We are not yet seeing sufficient gathering momentum in the number of BAME and younger ordinands and we will continue to focus on all these areas of diversity.

God continues to call disciples to serve him, his people and his world as recognised ministers in the life of the church. We are glad to be part of the great enterprise of the Gospel and thank all those who have played their part thus far and commit ourselves to continue together in the way.

Thanks be to God

Chris Goldsmith, Director of Ministry