

Fresh Expressions: State of Play

A detailed account of fresh expressions data retrieved through Statistics for Mission returns

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Fresh expressions within Statistics for Mission returns

Introduction

Statistics for Mission, an annual report provided by the Research and Statistics team in Church House has been collecting data on fresh expressions of Church (fxCs) since 2010. This report presents the first detailed analysis of these data. It analyses data held from 2014 includes a detailed focus on the most recent year that data were collected, 2019.

Data Collection

Statistics for Mission measures key aspects of participation throughout the Church of England. In 2019, almost 16,000 churches within the Church of England were asked to complete the form. Churches are asked to report a variety of variables including attendances, baptisms, marriages and funerals over the year. In 2019 data were received from 89% of churches.

Amongst this data collection, churches are asked to report on fresh expressions that are supported by their church. Churches are asked to report the name and description of any fresh expressions supported, as well as how frequently they meet, where they are held, the age group that the fresh expression is aimed at, and the regularity with which attenders at the fresh expression attend other services at the church itself.

Attendance at fresh expressions is collected through the October Count, which asks for the number of people attending church during the first four weeks of October. Those filling in the form are asked, as far as possible, not to count the same person multiple times in the same week. So, filled out correctly, someone who attends church on a Sunday, and attends a fresh expression in the same week, will only be included in the Sunday church attendance. This does mean however, that fxC attendance values in this report relate to those people who did not also worship in other church services, providing an additional group of attendees to that of traditional church.

One issue with this method of data collection is that the fresh expression attendance is one combined total within the return, and not given separately for individual fresh expressions. This means that if a church reports details of three fresh expressions supported by their church, we only have a combined total reported from the October Count, and are not able to determine the attendance at each individual fresh expression.

Exceptions to this data issue are fresh expressions that are considered an independent church, so they provide their individual Statistics for Mission return and attain their own church code.

Methodology

For the purpose of measuring the number of fresh expressions and their attendance over multiple years with differing response rates, relevant figures have been weighted to provide a national estimate to account for churches that did not provide a return. This weighting has been done in line with that in Statistics for Mission reports, which estimates attendances for churches that do not submit a return.

Summary

Number of fresh expressions of church

- Data from Statistics for Mission suggests that there were around 9,100 fresh expressions of church in 2019. Nationally, the number of fresh expressions is increasing - the figure for 2019 is 25% larger than the one recorded in 2014 (7,300).
- A large proportion of dioceses (64%) are significantly growing fresh expressions of church, with just under 80% of dioceses having at least 10% more fxCs in 2019 than in 2014.
- While three dioceses had 10% less fresh expressions of church in 2019 than in 2014, none of them are in significant decline.
- It is estimated that around 1,200 fresh expressions stopped running between 2018 and 2019.

Attendance at fresh expressions of church

- Additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions of church (not including attendees that already attend wider church) was 49,000 in 2019. Nationally, additional attendance at fresh expressions is increasing – the figure for 2019 is 11% larger than the one recorded in 2014 (44,000).
- 20,000 (40%) of the 49,000 additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions of church were children.
- Around a quarter of dioceses (26%) have a significantly growing additional attendance at fresh expressions of church, with just under half of dioceses (48%) having at least 10% larger additional attendance at fxCs in 2019 than in 2014.
- Around a quarter of dioceses (26%) had additional attendances at fresh expressions that were 10% smaller in 2019 than in 2018. Two of these were shown to be in significant decline.

Fresh expression details

- Around 70% of the entries in Statistics for Mission suggested that they met monthly or more frequently than that. Almost 20% of entries gave an “other” response, which was mostly made up of annual groups, bi-monthly groups, and groups that only meet during term times.
- Over half (53%) of fresh expressions of church are at least sometimes held in church. Almost a third of entries (31%) gave an “other” response for the location of the fxC. Of those that gave a description, 23% of the “other” category met in schools.
- 42% of the fresh expressions in Statistics for Mission suggested that there were not any specific age groups that the fxC was aimed at and that it was open to “all ages”. 16% of all fresh expressions were aimed solely at young people (under 18).
- Three quarters (75%) of fresh expressions suggest that at least some of those attending never attend any other form of church.

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Number of fresh expressions

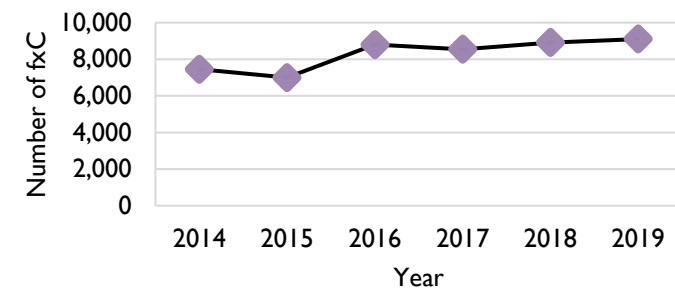
Number of fresh expressions within Statistics for Mission

As can be seen in both Table 1 and Figure 1. Statistics for Mission data for 2019 would suggest that there are 9,100 fresh expressions of church. This represents a 25% increase in the number of fresh expressions since 2014. This also shows a statistically significant positive linear trend over time ($p < .01$), which suggests that the number of fresh expressions is going up.

Table 1. Number of fresh expressions between the years 2014 and 2019.

Year	Number of fresh expressions
2019	9,100
2018	8,900
2017	8,500
2016	8,800
2015	7,000
2014	7,300

Figure 1. Estimated total number of fresh expressions over time



Diocesan Breakdown 2019

Within the Church of England there are an average of 0.58 fresh expressions per church. A diocesan breakdown of these can be seen in Table 2.

Looking into diocesan trends, there are 33 dioceses (79%) that have at least 10% more fresh expressions of church in 2019 than in 2014. 27 dioceses (64%) show a significant positive linear trend ($p < .01$) over the last five years. Suggesting again that, in over half of the dioceses, that numbers of fresh expressions are going up. There were three dioceses (7%) that show a decrease of at least 10% in the reported number of fresh expressions between 2014 and 2019. None of these possessed a significant negative linear trend.

It should be noted that over time the guidance offered within Statistics for Mission has been improved so it could be suggested that some of the increases presented here are due to better reporting of fxC data in Statistics for Mission.

Figures that highlight the change in reported fresh expressions for each diocese over time can be found in the appendix.

Table 2. Diocesan breakdown of the number of fresh expressions in 2019

Diocese	Number of fxC	fxC per church
1. Bath & Wells	250	0.45
2. Birmingham	160	0.88
3. Blackburn	200	0.72
5. Bristol	190	0.92
6. Canterbury	220	0.60
7. Carlisle	170	0.51
8. Chelmsford	370	0.63
9. Chester	240	0.71
10. Chichester	270	0.56
11. Coventry	160	0.68
12. Derby	180	0.56
13. Durham	220	0.82
14. Ely	270	0.81
15. Exeter	250	0.42
16. Gloucester	220	0.58
17. Guildford	210	1.00
18. Hereford	170	0.43
19. Leicester	160	0.50
20. Lichfield	380	0.69
21. Lincoln	190	0.30
22. Liverpool	380	1.59
23. London	270	0.56

Diocese	Number of fxC	fxC per church
24. Manchester	140	0.43
25. Newcastle	140	0.60
26. Norwich	240	0.37
27. Oxford	440	0.54
28. Peterborough	190	0.50
29. Portsmouth	80	0.50
31. Rochester	180	0.71
32. St. Albans	190	0.45
33. St Edms & Ipswich	210	0.45
34. Salisbury	330	0.58
35. Sheffield	160	0.78
36. Sodor and Man	20	0.46
37. Southwark	250	0.71
38. Southwell & Nottingham	210	0.69
39. Truro	170	0.56
41. Winchester	230	0.65
42. Worcester	190	0.68
43. York	250	0.43
44. Europe	50	0.30
46. Leeds	350	0.58
<i>National (Total)</i>	<i>9,100</i>	<i>0.58</i>

Fresh expressions that have stopped running between 2018 and 2019

The way that the Statistics for Mission form now works is that each church has their fresh expressions listed from previous years prepopulated into their form. The person entering the data will then just have to tick whether that fresh expression is still running or not. The main reason for this was to reduce the burden for those completing the form so that they do not need to re-enter full details of fresh expressions that they have entered previously. However, it gives the additional advantage of easier analysis to highlight potential closures of fresh expressions.

Data within Statistics for Mission between 2018 and 2019 suggests that there are 2,400 fresh expressions that are in the 2018 data that are not in the 2019 data. This would initially suggest that there were 2,400 fresh expressions that stopped running between 2018 data collection and 2019 data collection. Whilst this is possible, there will almost certainly be some of these that are still running, seemingly missing for a variety of reasons, one example being a change in the name. It is therefore currently difficult to give an accurate indicator of the number of fresh expressions that stop running each year. However, given that the total number of fxCs in 2019 is higher than in 2018, it must be concluded that there are a higher number of new fxCs than fxCs that have stopped running.

One piece of work that does give insight to the 2,400 fresh expressions that are in the 2018 data but not in the 2019 data collection comes from the data collection work conducted by the Fresh Expressions Lifecycle Survey¹. This survey explored challenges that fresh expressions face and ultimately the reasons as to why they are no longer running. To investigate this, those who entered the data for the 2,200 fresh expressions that were not in the fresh expressions data were invited to complete the 'Fresh Expression Lifecycle Survey' (around 200 fresh expressions no longer had any contact details). Of the 2,400 fresh expressions, around 350 fresh expressions confirmed that they were no longer running (with just under 300 filling in the survey), 250 had "undeliverable contacts", just under 200 were "Still running, but no longer a fxC", just under 550 were classified as still running (whether that be because they had issues surrounding the word 'fresh', having a "new name", or simply being reported elsewhere).

The work of the Fresh Expressions Lifecycle Survey does suggest that not all of the 2,400 fresh expressions that are no longer in the 2019 data but were in the 2018 data are no longer running. Of the responses to the survey invitation, only 50% of the fxCs were actually no longer running (or still running but no longer fxCs). So, using this work as a figure to estimate, it would suggest that there are 1,200 fresh expressions that did stop between 2018 and 2019.

¹ *Fresh Expressions Lifecycle Survey*, written by Dr. Samuel Nunney, Research and Statistics Unit for the Church of England, available upon request.

Fresh expression attendance

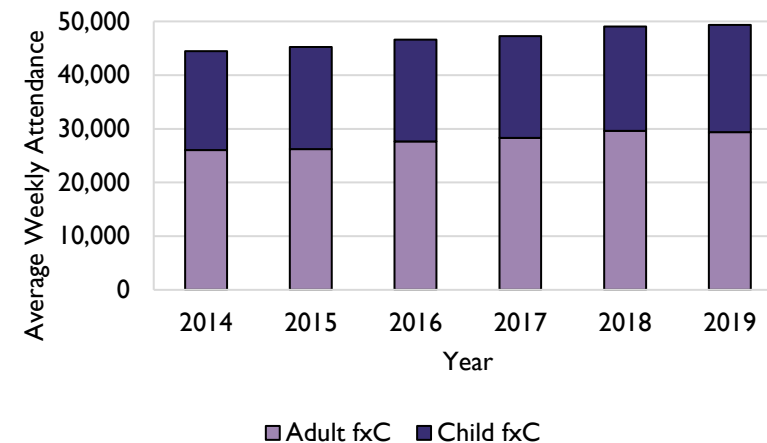
Fresh expression attendance within Statistics for Mission

Attendance reported here is average weekly attendance as reported within the October Count. The October Count asks those filling in the form not to double-count attendees. This means that if someone attends a Sunday church service and a midweek fresh expression, they will not be counted in the fresh expression section. This means that all attendances reported here should be additional weekly attendance after excluding those who have already attended another church service.

Table 3. Additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions reported within Statistics for Mission between the years 2014 and 2019, as well as the relevant percentage to the broader average weekly attendance to church.

Year	Total weekly attendance at fresh expressions	% of total AWA
2019	49,000	6%
2018	49,000	6%
2017	47,000	5%
2016	47,000	5%
2015	45,000	5%
2014	44,000	5%

Figure 2. Total additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions over time (split by adult attendance at fresh expressions and child attendance at fresh expressions).



As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 2, the additional attendance to fresh expressions in 2019 was 49,000 people per week. 29,000 of this attendance comes from adult attendance while 20,000 are children attending. Between 2014 and 2019 fresh expression attendance rose by 11%. This is a statistically significant positive linear trend over time ($p < .01$), which suggests that additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions is going up.

It is also worth noting that alongside the 11% growth in additional fresh expression attendance, the total average weekly attendance across the wider church has dropped by 12% over the same time period. So, while it may not be seen as a huge increase in fresh expression attendance, it is in clear contrast to attendance figures in the wider church.

A further contrast between additional fresh expression attendance and attendance figures in the wider church comes from the percentage of children attending. In 2019, the percentage of children in the additional fresh expression attendance is 40%. For the same year, the percentage of children in the wider church's average weekly attendance (AWA) is 14%. This could suggest that churches are responding to falling numbers of children by providing fxCs aimed at them.

Diocesan Breakdown

The diocesan breakdown for additional weekly attendance for 2019, including the percentage contribution to the broader average weekly attendance at church can be seen in Table 4.

Looking into diocesan trends, 20 dioceses (48%) show an increase of at least 10% in the additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions between 2014 and 2019. 11 dioceses (26%) show a significant positive linear trend ($p < .01$). This would suggest that around a quarter (26%) of dioceses have a statistically significant increase in attendance at fresh expressions. There were 11 dioceses (26%) that show a decrease of at least 10% in the additional weekly attendance at fresh expression in the last 5 years. Two of these (5% of all dioceses) showed a significant negative linear trend, suggesting that additional weekly attendance at fresh expressions was going down.

Figures highlighting the trends in additional weekly attendance in reported fresh expressions for each diocese over time can be found in the appendix.

Additional attendance at fxCs contributed 4% of the diocesan average adult weekly attendance in 2019, and 19% of child attendance. A few dioceses have unusually large fxC contributions to their attendance:

- The diocese of Carlisle had 42% of its children attending church within fresh expressions. It should be noted that this is in large part due to Network Youth Church, who have just under 400 children attending weekly (in addition to large numbers of young adults). This one fresh expression accounts for 50% of all additional child attendance within fresh expressions in Carlisle and 22% of all children attending church in the diocese.
- The diocese of Hereford had 47% of its children attending church within fresh expressions. In this case it is important to look at the Open the Book groups. In this diocese there are 16 churches that list Open the Book as one of their fresh expressions, and these 16 churches between them report almost 350 children attending fresh expressions weekly. This group of churches account for 55% of all additional child attendance within fresh expressions in Hereford and 25% of all children attending church in the diocese.
- Similarly, in the diocese of Worcester, additional weekly fresh expression attendance accounts for 40% of the child attendance in the diocese and this can also be down in some part to Open the Book groups. There are 16 churches in Worcester that report Open the Book as one of their fresh expressions. These 16 churches report just over 300 children attending their fresh expressions, equating to 55% of all additional child attendance within fresh expressions in Worcester and 22% of all children attending church in the diocese.

A further point to note is that one of the two dioceses in significant decline in terms of additional fxC attendance between 2014 and 2019 is the diocese of Leicester. This would appear to be in direct contrast to works published by the Church Army Research Unit². This contrast has been the topic of a review paper³ that highlights the differences between figures presented here and in the CARU report, alongside some suggestions for methodological tweaks to CARU figures that would make comparisons more sensible.

² Summary report, *God at Work* and more detailed report, *Fresh Expressions of Church in the Diocese of Leicester*, both written by the Church Army Research Unit, available from https://www.churcharmy.org/Articles/556738/What_we_do/Research_Unit/God_at_Work.aspx Accessed 25/01/20.

³ *Fresh Expression attendance: a comparison of Statistics for Mission 2018 and Church Army's Research Unit's Leicester Report*, written by Dr. Samuel Nunney, Research and Statistics Unit for the Church of England, available upon request.

Table 4. Diocesan breakdown of the additional attendance at fresh expressions in 2019 (including adult and child attendance and with the percentage of the diocesan weekly attendance in parentheses).

Diocese	Total fxC att.	Adult fxC att.	Child fxC att.
1. Bath & Wells	950 (5%)	600 (4%)	350 (13%)
2. Birmingham	1,000 (7%)	600 (5%)	400 (19%)
3. Blackburn	1,100 (5%)	650 (4%)	450 (14%)
5. Bristol	750 (6%)	400 (4%)	350 (17%)
6. Canterbury	1,750 (9%)	1150 (6%)	600 (23%)
7. Carlisle	1,600 (13%)	850 (8%)	750 (42%)
8. Chelmsford	1,600 (5%)	900 (3%)	700 (14%)
9. Chester	1,450 (5%)	850 (4%)	600 (17%)
10. Chichester	1,250 (4%)	800 (3%)	450 (11%)
11. Coventry	800 (6%)	450 (4%)	350 (18%)
12. Derby	950 (7%)	600 (5%)	350 (22%)
13. Durham	950 (6%)	550 (4%)	400 (22%)
14. Ely	1,500 (9%)	900 (6%)	600 (23%)
15. Exeter	1,100 (5%)	600 (3%)	500 (25%)
16. Gloucester	750 (5%)	450 (3%)	300 (16%)
17. Guildford	1,900 (9%)	1050 (6%)	850 (23%)
18. Hereford	900 (10%)	300 (4%)	600 (47%)
19. Leicester	850 (7%)	500 (5%)	350 (25%)
20. Lichfield	1,800 (7%)	1100 (5%)	700 (22%)
21. Lincoln	800 (5%)	550 (4%)	250 (15%)
22. Liverpool	1,550 (7%)	950 (5%)	600 (16%)
23. London	2,550 (4%)	1700 (3%)	850 (8%)

Diocese	Total fxC att	Adult fxC att	Child fxC att
24. Manchester	850 (4%)	450 (2%)	400 (8%)
25. Newcastle	800 (7%)	450 (4%)	350 (24%)
26. Norwich	1,050 (6%)	700 (5%)	350 (24%)
27. Oxford	2,150 (5%)	1400 (4%)	750 (13%)
28. Peterborough	1,000 (7%)	650 (5%)	350 (18%)
29. Portsmouth	700 (7%)	450 (5%)	250 (21%)
31. Rochester	900 (4%)	550 (3%)	350 (9%)
32. St. Albans	1,700 (6%)	850 (4%)	850 (16%)
33. St Edms & Ips	650 (5%)	450 (4%)	200 (14%)
34. Salisbury	1,800 (8%)	1100 (6%)	700 (28%)
35. Sheffield	1,000 (7%)	600 (5%)	400 (16%)
36. Sodor & Man	50 (4%)	30 (2%)	20 (17%)
37. Southwark	1,750 (5%)	950 (3%)	800 (11%)
38. South & Notts	800 (6%)	450 (4%)	350 (19%)
39. Truro	500 (5%)	300 (3%)	200 (24%)
41. Winchester	1,300 (6%)	650 (3%)	650 (22%)
42. Worcester	1,050 (10%)	500 (5%)	550 (40%)
43. York	1,150 (5%)	800 (4%)	350 (13%)
44. Europe	150 (2%)	120 (1%)	30 (3%)
46. Leeds	2,000 (6%)	1250 (4%)	750 (17%)
<i>National (Total)</i>	<i>49,000 (6%)</i>	<i>29,000 (4%)</i>	<i>20,000 (17%)</i>

Fresh expression detail for 2019

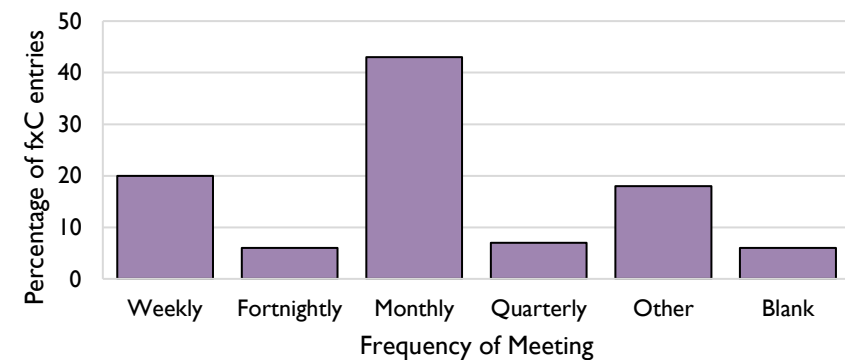
Everything included within this section is using raw data from Statistics for Mission 2019, there has been no weighting or estimation process.

How often do fresh expressions meet?

Table 5. How often entries of fresh expressions in Statistics for Mission meet in 2019.

Frequency of Meeting	Number in Statistics for Mission	Percentage of fxCs
Weekly	1700	20%
Fortnightly	500	6%
Monthly	3600	43%
Quarterly	600	7%
Other	1500	18%
Left Blank	500	6%

Figure 3. A bar chart representing how often entries of fresh expressions in Statistics for Mission meet in 2019.



It can be seen in Table 5 and Figure 3 that the most common frequency for a fxC to meet is 'Monthly'. 69% of the entries within Statistics for Mission 2019 state that their fresh expression met monthly or more regularly than that.

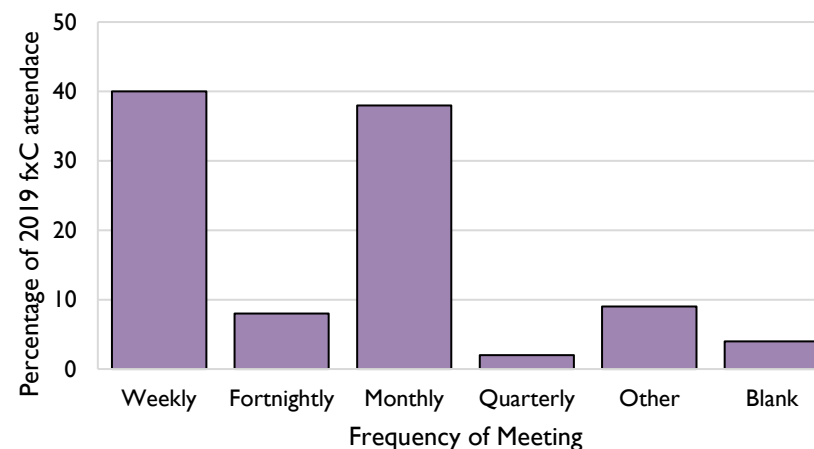
There is a large percentage of entries that selected "Other". Within the data collection process if other is selected, an explanation is asked for. The data included within this open text data set would suggest that "Other" is almost an equal split between groups that meet annually, bi-monthly, weekly during term-times, half-termly and termly.

Attendance at fresh expressions by frequency

The data collection process for fresh expressions of church within Statistics for Mission has previously been criticised for allowing entries to include “quarterly” and “other” as answers for frequency of meeting. This is because one of the classifications of a fresh expression is that it is ‘regular’, which in our guidance is suggested as at least monthly.

It could be suggested that those attending groups classed as “quarterly” should be removed from the national total for reporting. In an attempt to gauge what impact that would have (the associated attendance), attendance at individual fresh expressions has been estimated by dividing attendance by the number of fresh expressions in a return. For example, if a church reports 150 attendees at fresh expressions and it lists three fresh expressions, each fxC is assigned an attendance of 50. This does leave the opportunity to over-estimate attendances in entries that do not meet monthly (or more regularly), it is currently the best method for estimating attendance.

Figure 4. A bar chart representing estimated additional fresh expression attendance by frequency of meeting.



It is felt that removing ‘quarterly’ groups would not be a useful endeavour, reasons as to why can be found below:

- Figure 4 highlights that the attendance at ‘quarterly’ meeting groups is minimal (2% of the reported fresh expression attendance for 2019).
- A church could list three fresh expressions, two that meet weekly and one that is a quarterly meeting. If the church reports 150 attendees, using the current system each fresh expression would have 50 attendees. However, the likelihood is that the quarterly fresh expression may not meet in October (where the attendance is recorded) and in fact both weekly fresh expressions should be allocated 75 attendees each.

Until a way can be found to establish the actual numbers attending each individual fresh expression listing, it would not be advisable to remove any of the attendance figures. The only instance where this could take place is in churches that only list groups that meet quarterly and nothing else, though these are not common. In 2019 there are only 200 returns reporting solely quarterly groups and that only offers an additional weekly attendance of 400 people, equating to less than 1% of the national total.

Where are fresh expressions held?

It is possible to select multiple options on this variable.

Table 6. Where the fresh expressions are held in 2019.

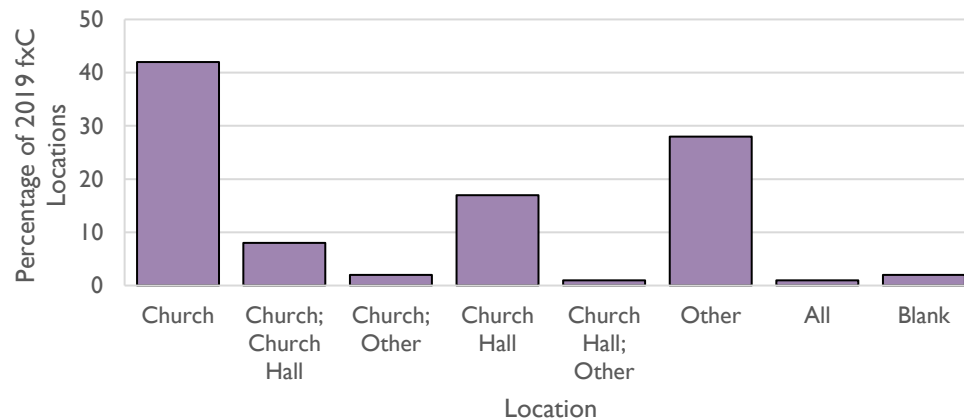
Location	Number in Statistics for Mission	Percentage of fxCs
Church	4450	53%
Church Hall	2150	26%
Other	2600	31%
Left Blank	150	2%

As can be seen in Table 6, 53% of fresh expressions are at least sometimes held in church. 3,500 (42%) entries selected church as the sole location of the fresh expression.

1,400 (17%) of entries selected the church hall as the sole location of a fresh expression, while 2,300 (28%) of entries selected “other” as the sole location of the fresh expression.

Of those that selected “other”, 2,100 (80%) gave a description of where they meet. Of these, 500 are listed as meeting in schools – 23% of those that gave a description.

Figure 5. A bar chart representing the locations of fresh expressions in 2019.



What age groups are fresh expressions aimed at?

It is possible to select multiple options on this variable.

Table 7 shows the different age groups that fresh expressions are aimed at. It suggests that there are no particular age groups that are overrepresented or underrepresented and that 42% of fresh expressions do not have any specific age groups targeted and are open to all.

Table 7. Breakdown of age groups that fresh expressions are aimed at in 2019.

Age/Group	Number in Statistics for Mission	Percentage of fxCs
0-4 years	1450	17%
5-10 years	1600	19%
11-17 years	750	9%
18-39 years	1150	14%
40-69 years	1450	17%
70+ years	1450	17%
Family	1650	20%
All ages	3450	42%
Left Blank	150	2%

3,800 fresh expressions selected just one single age group as the population that it was aimed at (45% of all fresh expressions).

1,400 fresh expressions suggested that they were aimed at solely age groups under the age of 18 (16% of all fresh expressions). Of these 1,400 groups, around 600 (43%) were held in a church, around 350 (25%) were held in a church hall, and just over 450 (33%) were classified as “other”. Around half of the “other” responses were stated to be schools.

Table 7 shows that 1650 groups were aimed at families. Of these 1650 groups, around 900 (53%) were held in a church, around 450 (27%) held in a church hall, and around 350 (5%) were classified as “other”. Just under half of the “other” responses were stated to be schools.

Do fresh expressions engage with those who do not normally go to church?

It is possible to select multiple options on this variable.

Table 8 provides an insight to who engages with fresh expressions of church. 66% of fresh expressions have at least some attendees who regularly attend church beyond the fresh expression. 76% of fresh expressions have at least some attendees that occasionally attend church beyond the fresh expression. Importantly, it suggests that 75% of fresh expressions have at least some attendees that never attend any other form of church. This highlights that fresh expressions are engaging with people that are not attending church.

Table 8. Breakdown of the regularity of attendees in attending church beyond fresh expressions in 2019.

Type of Worshipper	Number of fxCs within Statistics for Mission	Percentage of fxCs
Regular attendees	5550	66%
Occasional attendees	6350	76%
Never attends	6250	75%
Left Blank	650	8%

300 groups (4%) suggested that all of their attendees regularly attended church beyond the fresh expression. Of these groups, just under 200 (58%) were held in a church, around 50 (19%) were located in a church hall and 70 (23%) groups were classified as “other”. Also looking at these 300 groups, 9% of them are aimed at having families attend and 11% are aiming solely on groups of people under the age of 18. Regarding the frequency of meeting of these groups, 90 (30%) of them meet weekly. 40 (13%) of them met fortnightly, and 160 (53%) met monthly.

700 groups (8%) suggested that not one of their attendees attended church beyond the fresh expression. Of these groups, 250 (36%) were held in a church, 150 (21%) were held in a church hall and 300 (43%) groups were classified as “other”. Continuing to focus on these 700 groups, 18% of them are aimed at having families attend and 30% are aiming solely on groups of people under the age of 18. Regarding the frequency of meeting of these groups, 220 (31%) of them meet weekly, 60 (9%) of them meet fortnightly and just over 300 (44%) of them meet monthly.

Over half of the reported groups (4,400; 53%) suggested that they had all three types: some people that regularly attend church beyond the fresh expression, some that occasionally do, and some that never do.

Future work

Fresh expressions of church seem to offer a positive story, positive trends for both number of fresh expressions and numbers in attendance. It is therefore incredibly important to continue monitoring them to see if and how this continues.

There are pieces of work that could be done in the future to enhance the monitoring process:

- Making amendments to the Statistics for Mission for (after 2020, for obvious reasons) to allow for people to offer a “attendance at an average meeting” for each of their fresh expressions. Firstly, this would allow us to establish an attendance for each individual fresh expression. Secondly, this would allow us to have an idea of the total number of people attending fresh expressions and not just the additional contribution.
- One avenue to explore would be to investigate the life span of fresh expressions. It is possible to match the majority of fresh expressions year on year, however, if one changes its name, moves church/parish, or simply there’s a spelling mistake upon entry (though chances of spelling errors are reduced due to the prepopulating of the online Statistics for Mission data entry with previously submitted information), that makes it far more difficult to track and investigate the number of years it has been active.
- There is a possibility of using the online service register as a means to track attendance at individual fresh expressions and their regularity. It could be possible to push for our churches to record fresh expression services on the Online Service Register, this would enable us to attain data on each individual fresh expression.

There is also work that could be completed using the data that are already held:

- How does number of/attendance at fxCs relate to the size of the church (worshipping community, attendance, wealth etc.)
- How does number of/attendance at fxCs relate to clergy provision?
- Do declining churches start more or fewer fxCs than growing churches?
- Are fxCs concentrated in particular areas? E.g. urban/rural or deprived/non-deprived areas?
- Does child fxC attendance correlate with child worshipping community or school engagement?

This highlights lots of interesting and important work that, with appropriate funding, could be done to continue the monitoring of fresh expressions of church.

Appendix: Diocesan fresh expression numbers and attendances

