

Invitation to Tender

Understanding the Wellbeing of Working-Class Clergy

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Key dates:

Deadline for submissions: 16th September 2022

Project completion: 31st March 2023

1. The Ministry Development Team

The Ministry Development Team is a department of the Church of England's National Church Institutions (NCIs) and directed by the Ministry Council. The task of the Ministry Development Team is to renew lay and ordained ministry throughout the Church of England. We do this by providing advice and support to dioceses, bishops and numerous theological education institutions. We oversee the selection, training and deployment of ordained ministers, ensuring the Church is well equipped to serve God in living out its mission for many generations to come.

2. Background

It is widely accepted that the Church of England is disproportionately middle class, in terms of both congregations and clergy. Recent initiatives to address this include the establishment of the Estates Evangelism Task Group (EETG) as part of Renewal and Reform, and efforts to make discernment and formational processes more accessible to a wider range of people. The Emerging Church vision unveiled in 2021 states as one of its priorities 'a church which is younger and more diverse' (including social and economic diversity), and as one of its bold outcomes, 'a Church of England which fully represents the communities we serve in age and diversity'. As part of the aim to see 10,000 new worshipping communities established by 2030, the EETG is seeking to help and resource dioceses to plant 2,000 new worshipping communities on estates. Developing indigenous ordained leadership is key to this aim.

Along with the missional objectives of the Church of England, work is ongoing to address issues of clerical diversity from a social justice perspective. This has so far focussed largely on gender and race (the latter particularly recently following the establishment of the Anti-Racism Taskforce and the Racial Justice Commission). More limited and less high-profile work is being conducted to address issues facing disabled clergy. Socio-economic diversity has so far received little attention from this perspective; indeed, the



Church Times noted in June 2021 that Lynne Cullens, now Bishop of Barking, ‘has observed a certain wariness when it comes to discussing class in the Church.’¹

The issue of clergy wellbeing is currently being addressed by the Ministry Development Team through a ten-year research project, ‘Living Ministry’ (<https://www.churchofengland.org/living-ministry>), exploring how ordained ministers flourish in ministry. The research follows four cohorts of clergy through their ministry at two-year intervals, each wave comprising a large-scale quantitative survey and a smaller-scale qualitative study. The Living Ministry research has not yet explored issues of social class in depth; however, class has been raised by a small number of the 85 participants in the qualitative element of the study as having implications for wellbeing. To understand how wellbeing and illbeing are experienced by working-class ordained ministers, the Ministry Development Team is therefore seeking to commission a stand-alone, qualitative research project.

3. Aims & objectives

Aim

To understand and contribute to improving the experiences and wellbeing of working-class clergy.

Objectives

- Identify the particular wellbeing experiences of working-class clergy.
- Identify ways of improving the wellbeing of working-class clergy.

Anticipated questions to be explored

- How does ordination affect class identity and what are the wellbeing implications of this?
- How far is the Living Ministry wellbeing framework² adequate for the experiences of working-class clergy?
- What are the particular factors that influence the wellbeing of working-class clergy?
- How do experiences vary within this group, e.g. by role or location and how does social class intersect with other factors affecting wellbeing?
- On what strategies and resources do working-class clergy draw to sustain, enhance and overcome barriers and threats to their wellbeing?

¹ ‘Is the C of E still a class-riddled act?’ Church Times, 25th June 2021.

² See *Negotiating Wellbeing: Experiences of Ordinands and Clergy in the Church of England*, p. 10-11 <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Living%20Ministry%20Qualitative%20Panel%20Study%20Wave%201%20Report.pdf>, and the Living Ministry Wellbeing Map, <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Wellbeing%20map%20updated%2024-09.pdf>.



- How and how far is their wellbeing supported or hindered by the church at different levels?
- How can the wellbeing of working-class clergy be supported and improved?

Anticipated policy implications

- Support the work of the Ministry Council:
 - Inform diocesan senior clergy and staff about structural barriers to the wellbeing of working-class clergy and how best to support these ministers;
 - Inform national, diocesan and theological education processes for working-class clergy, ordinands, and people in the discernment process;
- Inform the work of the Facilitation Group for the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing and the ‘Big Conversation’ on clergy wellbeing at all levels of the church;
- Contribute to the national Church of England Vision and Strategy, specifically the bold outcome of ‘a Church of England which fully represents the communities we serve in age and diversity,’ and inform the work of the Estates Evangelism Task Group.

4. Method

The detailed methods to be employed will be determined by the researcher, in consultation with the Advisory Group. We envisage the main method to be qualitative individual or group interviews with clergy who are working-class or have a working-class background. The Church of England does not hold data on clergy social class so other approaches will be required for sampling and recruitment. The Advisory Group may be able to assist with suggestions of and access to formal and informal networks.

5. Deliverables

The following outputs will be required:

- 1) A full report of the research findings, to be published on the Church of England website and disseminated by the Ministry Development Team within the national church, dioceses and theological education institutions as appropriate.
- 2) An accessible summary or practical resource, based on the research findings, for senior clergy, diocesan staff and individual clergy, to be available on the Church of England website alongside other Living Ministry resources.

6. Contractor

We welcome applications from individuals and teams. As well as possessing expertise in qualitative research methods, the researcher or research team should:

- Include researcher(s) who are working class;



- Be sympathetic to the Christian faith;
- Be familiar with key structures and processes of the Church of England;
- Be aware of any potential impact of the research on their own wellbeing and have in place appropriate professional support.

7. Contract management

Dates

We expect the research to begin in October and be completed by 31st March 2023. Flexibility with dates may be considered.

Management

The research is commissioned by the Archbishops' Council's Ministry Development Team. It will be managed on a day-to-day basis by Dr Liz Graveling and supported by the project Advisory Group. All research commissioned by the Ministry Development Team must go through the NCI's research ethics process.

Budget

The research budget is £12,000, to include all expenses and VAT.

8. How to apply

Dates

- Deadline for tender submissions: 5pm Friday 16th September 2022
- Notification of decision by: 30th September 2022

Submission

Please send submissions via email to liz.graveling@churchofengland.org, including the following information:

- A detailed method for undertaking the study, including the conceptual approach to 'working-class clergy';
- An indication of what a practical resource might look like;
- Details of the researcher or team and how they meet the criteria given above, including relevant experience, allocation of time and roles where appropriate, and main contact;
- Details of how personal information and confidential data will be handled;
- A timescale for the project;
- A breakdown of costs, including daily rates.

