

## Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Follow-up Report

# Bristol Diocese Licensed Lay Ministry Formation Programme

**Conducted on site, November 2023**

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# Senior Reviewer's Follow-up Report to the 2022 Periodic External Review of Bristol Diocese Licensed Lay Ministry Formation Programme

## Introduction

A Periodic External Review was conducted onsite and online with Bristol Diocese LLM Formation Programme in November 2022. All of the criteria had the outcome of Confidence with Qualifications, and the overall outcome was Confidence with Qualifications.

Since the review the Bishop of Swindon, the Rt Rev Lee Rayfield has retired, and the Ven Neil Warwick has been appointed but has not yet taken post. This has had an impact of delaying some recommendations. Also, it appears that the Sarum Reader Trainers' Conference has not happened and may be a casualty of Covid. This also affects some of the recommendations.

A very good outcome however is the beginning of a relationship with Trinity College Bristol. This comes up at a number of points in the comments below. A partnership is also developing with the diocese of Bath and Wells.

Thanks should go to the team in Bristol and particularly Stephanie Hayton, who was very helpful in the initial PER and in the follow up to the report. The action plan was developed and implemented under her leadership.

A follow up meeting was held in person on 15 November 2023 where the recommendations and the actions taken were reviewed. Clearly Bristol has made substantial steps in following up the recommendations and that much progress has been made, particularly when there is only one paid officer.

Revd Canon Dr Phillip Tovey, Senior Reviewer  
November 2023

## Bristol Diocese LLM Formation Programme response to the 2022 PER recommendations

The formal response of Bristol Diocese's LLM Formation Programme to the recommendations of the 2022 PER report, drawing on the programme leader's Action Plan and progress report, together with the senior reviewer's commentary, follows below. This report sets out the original recommendations in **bold**, the actions identified in the Action Plan in *italics* and the reviewers' comments in regular type.

### Recommendation 1

**We recommend the development of greater clarity of vision for LLM in diocesan strategy, and that this be made more explicit and integrated into the aims of the formation programme.**

#### *Actions*

- *Identify where LLMS are in 'Transforming Church Together' (diocesan vision and strategy)*
- *Identify where LLMS could/should be in TCT*
- *Feed into Workstream/Missional leaders*
- *Integrate the LLM vision more explicitly into Formation and Formation Plus.*

The above elements were worked on, and a paper was sent to the Bishop's Staff Meeting in October 2023 which was favourably received. LLM will also be discussed in the forthcoming diocesan synod.

### Recommendation 2

**We recommend the programme should review and develop its promoting and recruitment strategies.**

#### *Actions*

- *Work with LLM council to develop recruitment plan*
- *Look at new ways into LLM, via Exploring Christianity (EC), locally commissioned lay ministry, parishes/deaneries*
- *Check diocesan website*

A new proposal for lay training is being developed with different pathways. This is being discussed in the LLM council and evenings on lay vocations are being planned.

### Recommendation 3

**We recommend that the programme strengthens its connections with other theological educators and partnerships, and provides opportunities for staff and tutors to be involved in the wider context of LLM training and trainer training.**

#### Actions

- *Encourage Formation and ERC tutors to join Theological Educators Network (TEN)*
- *Fund places at TEN (Theological Educators' Network) conference*
- *Offer 'Formation in Enabling Ministry' (FEM) training*
- *Investigate/participate in Sarum Readers network*
- *Through re-joining Regional Learning Partnership make new links with practitioners in region*

Two tutors have joined FEM. Contact has been made with Trinity College Bristol and there is a prospect of a good relationship with the College. Contacts have been made with TEN, but the Sarum Conference seems not to be operating at present. Contacts have also been made with Bath and Wells diocesan staff.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend the programme should continue to think about how the provision of spaces and locations can best serve a dispersed community, and continue to explore the use of online resources.**

#### Actions

- *Work through TCT commitment to Moodle / VLE*
- *New plans for EC could be part locally delivered/part online.*
- *Key consideration of Priority Communities/digital poverty*

A library facility has been created at the diocesan offices. Moodle is under consideration by the diocesan comms department.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**We recommend that the Adviser for Lay Ministry (ALM) should have a clear budget for resources and activities to allow effective planning for Exploring Christianity and the formation of LLMs.**

#### Actions

- *Share budget line with ALM and delegate responsibility*

A 2024 budget has been developed for the Diocesan Synod with greater clarity on budget and awaits approval of the Synod.

#### **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that the LLM Council's statement of purpose is updated to become clear terms of reference which include strategic responsibility for the LLM role, training and a more formal statement of the Council's relationship with the wider Diocesan governance structures.**

#### Actions

- *New Terms of Reference to be drafted, and agreed with LLM Council, Bishops Staff and Bishops Council*
- *Encourage subwardens to take initiative and responsibility*
- *Send LLM council minutes to Bishop's Council? How can LLM council alert Bishop's council?*

Some of this was achieved in the paper sent to Bishop's Staff but other aspects are awaiting the new Bishop of Swindon. When he is in post this will be able to progress.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that the Council consider training and succession planning for the sub-wardens as this is a key role in LLM support (support which is also offered by the Warden of Readers).**

#### Actions

- *LLM Council to agree plan for subwardens*
- *Build into TOR for Council*
- *Clarity of relation with Deanery Leadership Teams (DLTs)*
- *Training for subwardens to be agreed and implemented*
- *Succession planning put in place*

Much of this is awaiting the new Bishop of Swindon who plays a key role in the LLM council.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that the ALM build on the recent SWOT analysis and conduct a risk assessment and develop of business plan for the course looking in particular at future staffing and numbers accessing the formation year.**

#### Actions

- *Plan for Formation Course looking ahead to be developed by ALM and Director of Mission & Ministry Support*
- *Plan to be taken to LLM Council in order to share challenges and get agreement*

Parts of this are in motion and were included in the report to Bishop's Staff, other parts await the new Bishop of Swindon.

### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that the risk analysis and business plan is further redeveloped and expanded to include Exploring Christianity (EC).**

#### *Action*

- *Redesigned EC to be included in planning*

This has also been discussed in the paper to Bishop's Staff. The redesigning of EC is an ongoing task that the staff are aware is a priority.

### **Recommendation 10**

We recommend that the ALM should have access to a better understanding of funds available to run the Formation year and that the LLM Council should understand cost per student for Exploring Christianity, Formation year and Formation Plus.

#### *Action*

- *To be part of business plan*

A 2024 budget has been developed for the Diocesan Synod with greater clarity on budget and awaits approval of the Synod.

### **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that clarity be given on resources available to staff and students.**

#### *Actions*

- *LLM formation handbook to be amended to state this*
- *Look into setting up Resource Library based at HH*

A resource library has been set up. A new handbook has been written but awaits the new Bishop of Swindon for completion.

### **Recommendation 12**

**We recommend that the programme develops its online learning resources and should if possible pursue again the case for the national church's online library to be made available to staff and students.**

#### *Actions*

- *Online resources will be investigated further when we obtain a VLE.*
- *If the VLE is Moodle, then we will look again at the online library.*

- *Videos and other links will be investigated to be part of EC and Formation.*

Moodle is being investigated by comms. Meanwhile time has been put into investigating videos and they are beginning to be used in teaching.

### **Recommendation 13**

**We recommend that a plan for staff development should be considered.**

#### *Actions*

- *Encourage Formation and EC tutors to join Theological Educators Network (TEN)*
- *Fund places at TEN conference*
- *Offer Formation in Enabling Ministry training*
- *Investigate/participate in Sarum Readers network*

Contact has been made with TEN. The Sarum Reader Trainers conference seems not to be happening. Further consideration of staff development is being made. This is a work in progress.

### **Recommendation 14**

**We recommend a review of the programme's quality assurance processes in teaching and learning.**

#### *Action*

- *Invite tutor from Trinity College to review this*

A tutor from Trinity College has been included in the new EC team. There is also collaboration with a staff member from Bath and Wells.

### **Recommendation 15**

**We recommend that consideration is given to how best to support students who are more comfortable with other styles of learning by offering, for example, videos.**

#### *Action*

- *Redesigned EC to take account of this.*

This is actively underway in a rolling programme.

### **Recommendation 16**

**We recommend re-writing the course material for Exploring Christianity to update the course in content and in use of a wider range of resources.**

*Actions*

- *Proposal for new structure being developed*
- *Funding and arrangements for implementing this to be included.*

This is actively underway in a rolling programme.

**Recommendation 17**

**We recommend using a standardised set of criteria for making assignments at the appropriate level, consistent feedback to students in line with the criteria, and that the levels and criteria should be clearly explained to students and referenced in module outlines reviewing how learning is evidenced and assessed to demonstrate progression and depth of both knowledge and experience in line with national expectations for Licensed Lay Ministry.**

*Action*

- *As EC is redesigned, standardised criteria to be looked at*

Again, this is actively being pursued in the redesign process. Level criteria have been taken from Durham University's Common Awards and are being introduced into the programme.

**Recommendation 18**

**We recommend introducing sessions on study skills, so students are better able to evidence deep learning.**

*Actions*

- *Reflective practice is already a key element in Formation.*
- *Study skills will be extended for EC*

Trinity College Bristol have offered to host a study skills day as a part of the new EC.

**Recommendation 19**

**We recommend the programme should consider including portfolio-based assignment projects requiring evidence of independent research and critical reflection on practice, theology and theory.**

*Actions*

- *As EC is redesigned, we will consider Portfolio assessment*
- *Also possible for Formation Plus and / or extra module*
- *Possible co-ordination with curate assessment (360 review etc)*



This is being considered as part of the Formation Course. Discussions have been held with the DDO about the timing of parts of the process to enable this to happen.

### **Recommendation 20**

**We recommend that the programme should more actively integrate the learning from Exploring Christianity into the Formation year.**

#### *Action*

- *Formation tutors to audit and implement*

This is happening as sessions are reviewed.

### **Recommendation 21**

**We recommend that more overt reference should be made in the teaching programme between specific module/workshop content, scripture and contemporary issues.**

#### *Actions*

- *Ongoing*
- *Already particular emphasis in term 3 of Formation*
- *Tutors to audit and implement*

This is being incorporated as sessions are reviewed.

### **Recommendation 22**

**We recommend addressing the perceived undervaluing of Lay Ministry with tangible resources and support and regular acknowledgement that lay Ministry is valued at parish and diocesan level.**

#### *Actions*

- *For discussion with Bishop's Staff and Diocesan Synod*
- *Planned visits to deanery synods*
- *Archdeaconry celebrations of Everyday Faith*
- *ToR for LLM council to be passed at diocesan synod*

This has in part happened with the paper to Bishop's Staff, and future discussions planned in Diocesan Synod.

### **Recommendation 23**

**We recommend that the course seek to increase the diversity of theological viewpoints offered within the programme.**

*Action*

- *Redesign of EC will prioritise this*

This is being incorporated as sessions are reviewed.

**Recommendation 24**

**We recommend developing the formational programmes to allow for greater depth of learning, and in support of distinctive ministries where appropriate.**

*Actions*

- *Since the course is small, individual support is possible particularly with relevance to the placement supporting distinctive ministries.*
- *Redesign of EC will allow new optional modules.*

This is being incorporated as sessions are reviewed.

**Recommendation 25**

**We recommend that Licensed Lay Ministry is identified as a distinctive missional resource within the diocesan strategy and deployed as such.**

*Action*

- *Opportunities for deployment have been discussed.*
- *Focus in term 3*

An LLM is joining the team to talk in the course about deployment. The issues are being discussed.

**Recommendation 26**

**We recommend a stronger tracking for formational development in line with emerging and realised ministries for Licensed Lay Ministers in order that provision can be made to meet ongoing formational development.**

*Action*

- *Working Agreements to reflect and enable ongoing conversations between LLMs and incumbents*

This is planned for a future LLM Council meeting once the Bishop of Swindon is in post.