

## GENERAL SYNOD

### Update on the Resourcing Ministerial Formation Review

#### Introduction

1. In February 2023, Synod endorsed the proposals of the Resourcing Ministerial Formation Review, as set out in paper [GS2286](#). Synod affirmed the importance of further work, in particular in relation to ordinand maintenance and funding the training for lay ministries, and requested an update on this within 12 months. Synod also reaffirmed the importance of the Ministry Council monitoring and supporting the capacity of TEIs as RMF was implemented.
2. This paper therefore updates Synod on the implementation and further development work done over the last year.

#### Funding the Training of Ordinands

3. The new arrangements for funding TEIs for ordinand tuition and other payments to TEIs and candidates made from Vote 1 were successfully introduced in September as planned. Since the number of ordinands entering training was substantially lower than in previous years, the greater consistency and stability of income given to the TEIs under the new arrangements has already made a significant difference by partially mitigating the loss in fee income in the short term. However, a further intervention was necessary to compensate for recent high rates of inflation. This has been done as a temporary measure for 2023/24 but work is under way with the TEIs to identify a longer-term solution by the end of this academic year.
4. TEIs have registered concerns over the effects of transferring to them the responsibility for paying the travel expenses of ordinands in non-residential training. The Ministry Council is therefore undertaking an initial review of the travel expenses policy and payments after the first term.

#### Service Level Agreements

5. A Service Level Agreement has been made with each TEI in line with the draft included in GS2286, setting out the respective expectations of the TEI and Archbishops' Council. These largely make explicit and value what was already implicit, rather than establishing new obligations. However, in so doing they establish a clearer accountability framework for the significant payments the Church makes to the TEIs. TEIs will report annually on their performance, and work will be done to align this reporting with existing annual quality assurance reporting in order to ensure there is no unnecessary demand made on TEI or NCI staff to operate the processes.

### **Innovation Funding for TEIs**

6. Synod agreed to establish an innovation fund to enable TEIs to take new initiatives which improve their provision of ministerial formation and/or respond to the Church's strategic commitments. This is to be funded from reclaimed surpluses dioceses built up under the previous funding system which they will no longer be able to use. Invitations to apply were distributed in December and the first grants will be awarded by Easter 2024, as described further in paragraphs 8-10 below.

### **Funding for Training for Lay Ministries**

7. As agreed by Synod, the system which provides additional funding for training disabled ordinands has been expanded to encompass those training for licensed lay ministries. This was communicated to dioceses and TEIs in August 2023 and has been warmly welcomed.
8. Synod has consistently warmly endorsed the principle of further funding to support the training of lay ministers. In light of this, Archbishops' Council agreed in September to make up to an additional £1 million annually available to dioceses and TEIs for training lay ministers through an expansion of the innovation fund with the additional money ring-fenced for lay ministries). Dioceses, TEIs and other institutions such as Church Army and CMS are eligible to apply to this fund. The rationale for this was:
  - To enable the money to be accessed as soon as possible;
  - To allow dioceses and TEIs flexibility to respond to the particular needs they discern, with innovation and improving diversity as central priorities and collaboration also a central value;
  - To avoid setting up two different processes to apply for funding under RMF for innovation and for lay ministry, which could create administrative burden and confusion.
9. Work is being done to develop a national strategy for lay ministries that is aligned with the bold outcomes of the Church of England's Vision and Strategy. Once that new strategy has been agreed, it might be appropriate to develop proposals to use the available funding in a different way if this would better support the strategy. The fact that the general innovation fund is limited in its total expenditure by the amounts in diocesan unspent RME funds means that this is necessarily time-limited, but the operation of the new fund will be reviewed no later than after two years to assess whether any change would be desirable.
10. Annexe 1 sets out the eligibility criteria for the fund and principles shaping the processes to allocate funding. This includes a distinction between small grants

(up to £50k) and larger grants to enable proportionate work on applications and approval depending on the amount of funding requested.

### **Ordinand Maintenance**

11. It has not as yet been possible to make significant progress towards a revised maintenance system for ordinands. This because available staff have needed to prioritise implementing the changes already agreed as part of the RMF Process combined with the departure of several members of the working group. Realistically this means that there cannot be any major changes to the system for the academic year 2024-25 as ordinands need to have sufficient notice of the any changes to the financial support they receive. However, it may be possible to introduce any small improvements identified.
12. Ministry Council has agreed to refresh the working group it had established to develop the proposals in order to give it new impetus and enable it to bring the work to a conclusion. The working group will now be chaired by Julie Dziel, member of Synod and of Archbishops' Council Finance Committee. We therefore expect to bring a fuller report to Synod no later than February 2025.

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## Annexe 1

### RMF Innovation Fund

#### *Eligibility criteria*

- a. Bids may be made  
**either** i) by a TEI holding an SLA with the Archbishops' Council under which it trains ordinands or a consortium including at least one such TEI as the lead institution.  
**or** ii) where the initial training of lay ministers will be delivered by an institution working within the national quality assurance framework for initial ministerial training, bids for funding to support that training may also be made by that institution or by a diocese commissioning the training or by a consortium led by such an institution or diocese.
- b. Bids must enable innovation, that is a substantially new activity or a substantially different way to carry out existing activity. Such innovations must  
**either** enable the delivery of Initial Ministerial Education with greater effectiveness or efficiency  
**or** clearly support stated commitments of the Archbishops' Council, General Synod or the House of Bishops, notably the *Vision and Strategy*.
- c. Bids must evidence a good case for the long-term sustainability of the innovation, or its long-term impact if it is expected to be a time-limited intervention.
- d. Bids must demonstrate that appropriate and proportionate consultation and exploration of potential partnerships has taken place.
- e. Bids must show why this funding is reasonably necessary to enable the innovation in light of other potential sources of funding.
- f. Bids must show how their success will be evaluated, including transparent and externally accountable metrics. It is recognised that it is in the nature of innovation that things do not always work as planned. For multi-year grants, there should be regular (and at least annual) points at which a judgement can be made whether sufficient progress has been made to continue funding.
- g. Bids must include a commitment to share learning from the funded activity widely within the church.
- h. Bids must demonstrate attention to issues of diversity and inclusion.

*Allocation process*

- a. No TEI, diocese or other institution may be lead institution for more than one award made in any funding cycle. Note that this refers to when the award is made, not when the money is paid out: projects may overlap in delivery.
- b. Bids for up to £50k will be agreed where they meet the eligibility criteria up to a maximum allocation of £1 million in any year of which no more than £500k may be primarily or exclusively for the training of ordained ministers. If it seems likely that eligible bids for a total amount greater than the maximum allocation will be received, at the discretion of the Director for Ministry the principles of evaluation set out in paragraph c. below may also be used to determine which bids to which funding has not already been granted shall be successful and the views of Ministry Council may be sought.
- c. Bids for more than £50k will be evaluated for their
  - degree of fit with the eligibility criteria
  - extent of need demonstrated, the scale of benefit intended and its proportionality to cost
  - likelihood of success and/or significant learning resulting from the initiative
  - contribution to a balance of funding across e.g. different areas of activity, different traditions within the church, different geographical regions of the country.

The total amount of funding allocated each year under this paragraph shall be no more than £1 million, of which no more than £500k may be primarily or exclusively for the training of ordained ministers.
- d. In assessing the degree of fit with the eligibility criteria, bids will be assessed on
  - whether the proposal has a strategic impact aligned with the Vision and Strategy and/or in increasing effectiveness of Initial Ministerial Training;
  - the likelihood that the proposals will lead to the desired outcomes;
  - whether the institution or consortium has the capacity to deliver the proposals.