

2024/25 LLF Working Groups – Tasks and Terms of Reference

Four working groups are envisaged.

- **PLF – Guidance for registration and use** inc. arrangements for Standalone Services
- Pastoral Reassurance – **Code of Practice**
- **Bishops Statement** Drafting Group
- **Ministry and Vocations Guidance** – Interim guidance to parallel doctrinal development and clergy SSM timetable

Each group will need to be aware of the work that is happening in parallel but should avoid replicating this work. The working group chairs will meet regularly throughout the process to consider the dependencies and direct the work of their groups accordingly.

Stakeholder engagement will continue alongside Working Groups. This may provide new information that the working groups would need to consider. This will be monitored by the Programme Board and reported to working groups through their Chairs.

Given the need for integration between workstreams in addition to joint working at the Leicester weekend (14-16th Nov). Two additional ‘combined working group’ meetings will be schedule. **The first on 29th Oct** (to discuss feedback from the 22nd/23rd Oct House of Bishops) **and the second on 11th Dec** (to discuss feedback from the 10th Dec House of Bishops).

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Responsibilities

LLF working groups are advisory bodies drawing on a range of perspectives to provide draft documentation for consideration by the House of Bishops, to support them in determining the next steps in the implementation of LLF.

The Programme Board will compile and report the recommendations from the LLF Working Groups to the House and College of Bishops. They will not make any decisions themselves but will have responsibility for working with the members of the LLF Working Groups to present the bishops with clear, concise and integrated proposals to enable the House of Bishops to make key decisions.

Parameters

The parameters for the tasks of each working group have been set to reflect the tasks required from motions previously passed by the House of Bishops and the General Synod.

Papers going to the House of Bishops that include Working Group outputs will be shared in strict confidence. Feedback on issues raised and suggested revisions will follow any formal discussion of drafts in meetings of the House of Bishops.

Outputs

Each group has the specific task of providing documentation for an integrated approach to the implementation of the PLF, and associated guidance and measures for pastoral reassurance.

Each group will produce a commentary paper to include the rationale for certain sections, views on receptivity, and comments on divergent views that have not been resolvable through the drafting process. Commentary documents will be included as annexes to the proposals.



Timeline

- By Oct 14th, 2024: initial drafts/scoping document for Bishops' Statement and the Code of Practice for Episcopal Ministry
- By Nov 29th, 2024: revised drafts of Bishops' Statement and the Code of Practice for Episcopal Ministry; PLF Process and draft public facing materials and guidance.
- By Jan 10th, 2025: draft versions of Bishops' Statement and the Code of Practice for Episcopal Ministry; draft PLF Process and public facing materials and guidance for inclusion in update to the General Synod.
- By Jun 13th, 2025: revised versions of Bishops' Statement and the Code of Practice for Episcopal Ministry following diocesan feedback; final PLF Process and public facing materials and guidance for inclusion in update to the General Synod.

Support

Each group will be staffed by a lead officer and be supported with theological, liturgical, legal and other advice as required.

PLF Registration and Guidance for the use of PLF in Standalone services

This group will consider a process for registration for standalone services of PLF. This process should be incorporated in principle within the guidance, along with clarifications around the use of the PLF in non-scheduled (standalone) services. This guidance should continue to seek to balance the sensitivities of how these services offer appropriate pastoral provision response. The guidance is predicated on the PLF being available for use by clergy and lay ministers as commended material that can be used within services with authorized liturgy.

The group should also undertake an impact assessment of how this process could be implemented and the types of resources and support that dioceses would require to facilitate this. The group should consider the scope and mechanism for evaluation and learning from the use of the PLF over the next three years. The group should work on the assumption that pastoral reassurance will be provided for those who wish to use the PLF and those who do not.

The tasks of this group are to:

- Develop a process for registration and evaluation of the PLF in Standalone Services
- Identify key elements of an accompanying process for requesting and monitoring experience of Pastoral Reassurance.
- Revise and redraft Pastoral Guidance (1&2) for the use of the PLF under these arrangements.
- Advise on the impact and resources needed to support this implementation and how learning might be gathered and disseminated to enhance practice.

Pastoral Reassurance

This group will consider the detail for proportionate pastoral reassurance through a model of delegated episcopal ministry based on a Code of Practice. They will need to navigate the parameters of how 'some specific delegated episcopal ministry' might facilitate the core aspects of reassurance required in the areas of:

- *Enabling spaces where the approach to doctrine is shared with others.*
- *Episcopal oversight which is [legally] secure and is able in particular to cover and make authoritative decisions about:*
 - *Ministry/ appointments – for example writing commendations, appointing clergy to parishes, issuing licenses.*



- *Pipelines/vocations* - provision which enables different integrities to have secure access and encouragement to pathways to lay ministry, ordination, senior office etc.
- *Church planting* - the ability for church planting to take place wholly led by in of the three spaces as well as potentially in partnership between them. This should also help to address concerns over
- *legal security* – e.g. protection of clergy in Same-Sex Civil Marriage (SSM) from legal action for not conforming to doctrine or equally protection from teaching Anglican traditional doctrine being construed as prejudice in law.

This work will need to recognise that differences remain between stakeholders in the approach of delegated episcopal ministry as a basis for pastoral reassurance.

Similarly, the conceptual framework of three spaces is not one that is able to be foregrounded in the outline of provision. However, this does still appear to be a helpful ‘reality check’ on the constituencies who need to be considered in any reassurance. As GS 2358 states “the language of three spaces sought to acknowledge that responses to LLF appear to be emerging in roughly three ways: broad agreement; strong disagreement; and many congregations or individuals for whom there is a mixture of the two, or who do not want to make a decision on this at this time. Therefore, an expectation would be that in discussing the practical areas for reassurance the ‘on the ground reality’ of will be taken into account.

This group will also need to navigate how such provision might map onto two possible outcomes, depending on the ERG work around the development of doctrine and how this might inform a timetable for further discussions and decisions on removing restrictions to enable clergy to enter into SSM. The starting point for the work is then current provision of the PLF (to include option of use in standalone services). However, it will be necessary for the group to identify how any further decisions on clergy in SSM might affect the proportionality of provision.

The tasks of this group are to:

- Draft a Code of Practice proportionate for use of the PLF as a pastoral accommodation, including potential adjustments to accommodate a Code of Practice proportionate for use with PLF over the three year period of discernment.
- Identify where this CoP would need additional attention if the House of Bishops were to set a 3–5-year timetable for the consideration of clergy entering into SSM and the necessary processes required to enable this.

Consultative Group for Bishops’ Statement

This group will draft the text of a Bishops’ Statement, which will provide the overarching narrative for the proposal for the period of discernment around the use of the PLF, how differences over development of doctrine can be navigated, what informs and sustains our unity, and what the bishops are committing to providing in terms pastoral reassurance to support this. The text should highlight what we hold in common and the Anglican ecclesiological principles the settlement is founded upon. This document will need to be drafted in conjunction with the Code of Practice around pastoral reassurance so that the overarching principles cohere with the detail of provision.

The group will consist of bishops who are members of the LLF Programme Board alongside other episcopal colleagues. Early drafts of a statement will be distributed to all members of Working Groups for comments and suggestions.

Given ongoing challenges over areas of significant disagreement the Bishops’ Statement Group will also meet directly with the principle leaders in key Stakeholder groups to discuss the



overarching remit of the current proposal (which the Bishops' Statement will outline) and the positions held by these groups and their wider constituencies. These conversations will help to inform the drafting of the Statement and identify further issues that might need to be raised in accompanying commentary.

The tasks of this group are to:

- Draft a Bishops' Statement articulating the overarching rationale and framework of a settlement around current and future practice for implementing the objectives of LLF.
- Outline wider issues for consideration by the House of Bishops in the accompanying commentary.
- Ensure this statement aligns with the detail within the Code of Practice for Pastoral Reassurance.

Vocations and Ministry Guidance

This group will draft interim Vocations and Ministry Guidance (some of which was previously consider as Part 3 of the PLF Pastoral Guidance).

Given that decisions on any timetable for removing restrictions on clergy entering same-sex civil marriages has not yet been determined. This group will need to be responsive to future decisions that the House of Bishops might take in this area.

The FAOC ERG work that is providing additional theological input on doctrinal considerations is due to report to the House of Bishops in two stages. A draft/outline report coming for the Dec 10th meeting and a full report for January 20th meeting.

As such this group's work is likely to be primarily one of scoping potential issues and areas until some point in 2025 when greater clarity on the parameters and needs for this guidance would be set.

In order to progress this work, it is reasonable for the group to begin its scoping work on the assumption that any work to formally remove restrictions on clergy entering into same-sex marriages would likely require a longer period of work and as such the guidance that will be needed is interim guidance that would be to be required to be operative for several years.

The group will also need to take account of developments in the Pastoral Reassurance work as this may also provide the mechanism for some forms of differentiated processes for vocations, ordinations, licensing etc. within nationally agreed guidance.

It should be noted that members of the group may not be in full agreement with some of the determinations that may need to be made. If helpful these can be noted and expanded on in the commentary document

The tasks of this group are to:

- Develop interim Vocations and Ministry Guidance in accordance with any timetable set for wider changes around removing restrictions on clergy entering into same sex marriage.
- Advise on what further guidance would be necessary based on full removal of restrictions and what teaching documents and resources might be useful in this regard.
- Align interim guidance with any proposed mechanisms for differentiated processes for vocations, ordinations, licensing etc. in the PR Code of Practice.



Key dates

	Programme Board	Pastoral Reassurance	PLF	Bishops Statement	V&M	Other
October						
Week of 7 th		8 th 11am	7 th 2 pm			
Week of 14 th	18 th 9.30am			TBA		
Week of 21 st			21 st 2pm			HOB 22-23
Week of 28 th	Joint WG 29 th 2 pm			TBA	29 th 4pm	
November						
Week of 4 th	5 th 1.30pm		6 th 2pm			
Week of 11 th	Leicester Residential 14 th – 16 th					
Week of 18 th	18 th 10am					
Week of 25 th			28 th 11am		25 th 9.30am	
December						
Week of 2 nd	2 nd 2pm					HOB 10th
Week of 9 th	Joint WG 11 th 10am				V&M on 12 th	
Week of 16 th	16 th 2pm	19 th 9am				
Week of 23 rd						
Week of 30 th						
January						
Week of 6 th	6 th 2pm	7 th 11am	8 th 10am	TBA	8 th 9am	
Week of 13 th						
Week of 20 th		21 st 9am	22 nd 10am		22 nd 9.30am	HOB 20 th
Week of 27 th						College 28-29
February						
Week of 3 rd	3 rd 10am					
Week of 10 th	General Synod					
Week of 17 th	18 th 10 am					
Week of 24 th						