

AAAV Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Strategy

All who are called – the vision

A vision for diversity and inclusion in senior clergy appointments

Summary

An approach to increasing the participation of those who are underrepresented in senior clergy appointments in the Church of England, enabling **all who are called** to flourish, underpinned by four theological imperatives for inclusion.

1. Introduction

The [Archbishops' Advisers for Appointments and Vocations](#) (AAAV) team support the discernment processes for Diocesan Bishops, Suffragan Bishops and cathedral Deans in the Church of England.

We support the discernment of the [Crown Nominations Commission](#) (CNC) in identifying and nominating new Diocesan Bishops. Suffragan Bishops are nominated by the appointing Diocesan Bishop, accompanied in their discernment by the AAAV team and an advisory panel. Cathedral Deans are nominated by a selection panel, which includes the Diocesan Bishop, a lay chair and a representative of the AAAV team.

The AAAV team also supports individuals in their vocation and discernment relating to senior appointment processes, working closely with the Ministry Development team and others to develop a diverse pipeline of candidates for senior roles.

2. Our approach

The approach to diversity and inclusion in AAAV is rooted in Christian theology – not working to achieve a minimum number from a particular demographic or set of statistics, but a Kingdom-rooted theology where **all who are called can flourish in the fullness of their God-given gifts and talents**.

We want to be bold in what we might achieve with a Kingdom-rooted vision for senior clergy appointments in the Church of England, with an approach that expands beyond the secular narrative of diversity and inclusion. The values of diversity and inclusion are deeply rooted in the bible and Christian tradition, the Church should therefore be a beacon of hope for the rest of society. We all have a responsibility to embody and demonstrate these values and AAAV commit to playing our part in this transformational journey towards a more diverse and inclusive Church.

We strive for diverse representation in all aspects of the senior appointment processes we support, committing to transparency and accountability wherever possible. When considering the introduction of targets, there is an unresolved tension between the potential for tokenistic participation of underrepresented individuals and the sense of urgency and accountability that targets can provide. Discrimination does not stop when targets are met and therefore, we must be persistent in the work to reduce barriers and address injustice despite any signs of progress. Ongoing consultation and engagement with underrepresented groups and individuals, along with the findings of published data, research and reports, will continue to shape our approach to setting targets.

The vision for senior clergy appointments is as wide as it is deep. We must seek to increase engagement (wide) and participation (deep) of those historically and currently underrepresented in senior clergy appointments, doing all we can to ensure that hidden treasures are found, nurtured in their vocation and enabled to flourish.

3. The bigger picture

The [vision and strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s](#) provides the context for this important work:

1. A church for the whole nation, which is Jesus Christ centred and shaped by [The Five Marks of Mission](#). A church that is simpler, humbler, bolder.

The Fourth Mark of Mission, 'To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation'.

2. To be a church that is younger and more diverse.
3. A Church of England which fully represents the communities we serve in age and diversity.

4. Theological imperatives for inclusion

The Archbishop of York's four theological imperatives for inclusion provide the foundation for this transformative work:

First, the Christological imperative.

The diversity and inclusion mandate flows from our primary identity in Jesus Christ as St. Paul writes to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28). Paul is speaking about the old barriers of separation and divide such as class, ethnicity and culture which no longer exist because we are one whole, new humanity in Jesus Christ. In Christ, our differences are not erased, but embraced, valuing the unique ways we each reflect the imago Dei (image of God). Every neighbour,

regardless of colour, class, or creed, is an image-bearer of God. As a result, matters related to equality, diversity and inclusion are not optional or selective, based on what or who we are comfortable with, but part of our spiritual imperative as the Church.

Second, the ecclesiological imperative.

In 1 Corinthians 12:25 Paul speaks of unity and diversity in the Body of Christ, telling us that there should be no division and that the body should have equal concern for all its parts. When fellow members of the body say that their voices are not heard, their contributions not recognised, and their full participation not welcomed, we are called by Christ to respond to those cries. We are called to be a “household of God” with “Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone,” “built together as a spiritual house” (Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Peter 2:5); and not just a household, but a single body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Within the body of Christ, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26). The bonds of love that unite this body of Christ are essential to the work of diversity and inclusion.

Third, the missiological imperative

The prophet Isaiah speaks of people of “all nations and languages” witnessing the glory of God (Isaiah 66:18) and, as Christians, we are instructed by Jesus to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). God is an inclusive God; the book of Acts describes how the crowd that gathered on the day of Pentecost heard about the wonders of God in their own language (Acts 2:6). Working towards unity and addressing discrimination is a missional duty, essential to our identity in Christ (Luke 4:16-21). The Church’s commitment to diversity and inclusion should begin and end in its commitment to Christ and his Kingdom. Loving our neighbours is an imperative, not an option; and we have a duty to respond with care and compassion to all people.

Fourth, the eschatological imperative.

The beauty of God’s creation throughout scripture is intentionally diverse. Humanity, with all its different expressions, is created to glorify God and display his likeness. Revelation 7:9 paints a picture of the multitude of every tribe and nation, worshipping together: a gathering of God’s family. When we reflect the likeness of God and follow Jesus’ example of radical welcome and inclusion, the Revelation picture becomes a reality on earth and creates the conditions for fullness of life and the flourishing of the Body of Christ. We value the gift of humanity in all its diverse, God-given glory, where all who are called can flourish.

‘Connect’, ‘Develop’ and ‘Support’ – the strategy

A three-strand strategy to achieving greater diversity and inclusion in senior clergy appointments

1. Introduction

‘Connect’, ‘Develop’ and ‘Support’ are the three strands of the [Archbishops’ Advisers for Appointments and Vocations](#) (AAAV) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

This strategy builds on some of the work already underway to increase participation of those historically and currently underrepresented in senior clergy appointments. The three strands provide a framework for identifying and implementing actions to increase participation of those historically and currently underrepresented in all aspects of the work of AAAV, but specifically to increase the diversity of Diocesan Bishops, Suffragan Bishops and cathedral Deans.

The theological underpinning for this strategy is outlined in ‘All who are called: A vision for diversity and inclusion in senior clergy appointments’. The approach is rooted in Christian theology – not working to achieve a minimum number from a particular demographic or set of statistics, but a Kingdom-rooted theology where all who are called can flourish in the fullness of their God-given gifts and talents.

This vision and strategy are ‘living documents’ and will evolve based on consultation, engagement and ongoing learning, paying particular attention to those with lived experience of exclusion and underrepresentation.

2. The three strands

Our primary focus for the rest of this 2022-2027 quinquennium is on increasing the participation of disabled, United Kingdom Minoritised Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage (UKME/GMH), women and working-class clergy in senior appointments and on appointment panels. We will also pay attention to intersectionality and actively strive to address all areas of underrepresentation in senior clergy roles, not promoting one demographic to the detriment of another.

The three strands provide a framework for the following strategic priorities:

Connect – with individuals and groups

Achieving a diverse pool of candidates for senior clergy appointments depends on the support and commitment of those involved in all stages of the vocational journey to identify, encourage and empower individuals from historically and currently underrepresented groups to flourish.

We will continue to ‘demystify’ senior appointment processes by proactively engaging even more with networks (particularly for those from underrepresented groups) and key stakeholders, providing regular and informative content via these networks and online. Attending network meetings and events to explain senior clergy appointment processes and supporting discernment of a possible call to this vocation.

Develop - the pipeline and the process

Ongoing process reviews will continue to address both ‘people and process’ aspects of the appointment processes supported by AAVV. We commit to continually reviewing the appointment processes we support and associated documentation, initiating debate and process changes where necessary.

The AAVV team will continue to work closely with Diocesan Bishops, the Ministry Development team and others to promote those who are historically and currently underrepresented at senior levels in the Church, including regular reviews of the pipeline, bespoke vocational support, mentoring, development and networking.

Support – for candidates and panel members

We will evaluate existing targeted support and development for underrepresented candidates and make recommendations for further investment and resources to increase their participation as well as equipping or signposting them to enable them to fulfil their calling.

We will also continually review, update or make recommendations for additional resources to equip members of appointment panels, collaborating with colleagues to work towards a consistent approach to training in relation to bias, intercultural awareness and racial justice.

3. Reporting and accountability

The Archbishops’ Appointments Secretary is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York. The Archbishops’ Advisers for Appointments and Vocations team also has an advisory group, Advisory Group for Appointments and Vocations (AGAV), which meets twice a year. The group is chaired by Bishop Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London. The group has diverse representation, and its role is to:

- I. Provide advice and support to the team, ensuring that its work is enabled to properly advise the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

- II. To contribute views to the discussion of issues which impact on senior appointments and vocations, and those who might be considered for senior appointments or for appointment to other strategic leadership roles.
- III. To contribute to, and advise on, the reviewing, designing and shaping of policy and processes in relation to the work of the team.

Diversity and inclusion is a standing item for these meetings and all [Crown Nominations Commission](#) (CNC) Central Member meetings - also twice a year. It is and will remain a priority.

4. Measuring the effectiveness of the vision and strategy

Whilst we don't want to limit inclusion, it is important to know the current situation and to track progress. The most effective way to achieve this is by monitoring the data.

Diversity data is requested from candidates for all senior appointment processes. It is used to monitor diversity at every stage and is useful in identifying areas of underrepresentation and action required to address barriers for underrepresented clergy. However, due to the small number of individuals involved, we are unable to publish data beyond that relating to appointments made which is in the public domain. It is worth noting that due to the small numbers, one appointment can lead to a large change in percentages both negatively and positively.

We are working collaboratively with others across the Church to develop better data collection and sharing practices as we strive to be as transparent as possible whilst ensuring the wellbeing of individuals.

5. Invitation

We welcome partnership working and opportunities to engage with others in progressing this important work. We are keen to learn from existing good practice and share our own experiences of progressing this work with those for whom it may be helpful. For a conversation, please contact the Archbishops' Advisers for Appointments and Vocation team at aaav.office@churchofengland.org.

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