

LInC Funding: Policy for Strategic use within Minster Communities Summary Version

Full Policy Document Approved by DBF Trustees in June 2023

Lowest Income Communities (LInC) Funding is a grant given from the national Church of England to the diocese for the purpose of providing ministry within our most deprived communities.

Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure that the LInC funding is being used for its intended purpose – to support the provision of ministry in the most deprived communities in the diocese.
- To significantly increase the awareness amongst these communities, and the wider diocese, of the existence and purpose of LInC funding.
- To enable these communities to have a significant say in decisions about what their ministry need is and how the LInC funding is used to meet these needs.

Underpinning Principles

Transparency: People in parishes across the diocese need to know about LInC funding and its use

Simplicity: This money rightly belongs to those communities on whose behalf it is granted to the diocese, therefore any process for deciding its use must not be a barrier to those parishes' access to or use of the funding.

Consultation: Local people are best placed to determine their needs and make the decision as to how the LInC allocation is used locally.

Allocation/eligibility: Explicit commitment that this money gets to where it is supposed to be used, by ensuring clear method of allocation and communication of allocation to those parishes.

Method of Allocation

LInC allocations are made to parishes containing communities within the 20% most deprived in the country. This includes those with overall levels of deprivation, but also with a recognition that some parishes contain “pockets” of significant deprivation:

- a) Those parishes that are in the 20% most deprived in the country according to IMD¹ ranking
- b) Those parishes that contain smaller areas of population (LSOAs²) that are within the 20% most deprived in the country.

We have chosen to focus on data relating to the population of the whole parish, rather than consider congregational data, parish financial data, or other demographic data relating to religious affiliation because this is true to the mission and calling of the Church of England to minister to the whole of the parish – the “cure of souls”. The size of deprived population within parishes varies greatly and this is taken into account in the allocation calculation.

¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation

² Lower Super Output Areas – small areas with population of approximately 1500 people)

Implementation of this Policy

LInC Funding is already integrated into the diocesan budget and supports ministry in deprived parishes. Therefore, there will be a transition period of approximately 2-3 years while this policy is implemented.

- a) LInC funding is integrated into conversations about cost of ministry and ministry provision planning within the Minster Community formation process. Therefore, there will be a period of transition as Minster Communities are formed. Any recruitment will take place within the context of DBF agreed recruitment policies.
- b) Minster Communities are asked to agree what ministry is needed and how they propose that this should be provided. In Minster Communities including parishes with a LInC funding allocation, this will include deciding how this will be used. The clear expectation is that LInC funding provides ministry specifically within deprived communities and this must be demonstrably true in practice (it cannot simply subsidise ministry generally within a Minster Community). This forms part of the Minster Community proposal.
- c) There are three types of capacity need that LInC funding may support: leadership for mission; specific skills for the “nuts and bolts” running of churches; developing work with children, families and youth. It is notable that 32% of the under 18yrs population of the diocese live within our most deprived parishes³. Roles supported by LInC funding can be, but do not have to be, stipendiary clergy posts.
- d) If there is more than one parish with a LInC allocation within the Minster Community, they could pool their allocations to support a role that works across all their deprived communities. LInC funding could be used to support one of the core stipendiary posts within an MC, if this cost could not otherwise be met, but this role would need to focus particularly on deprived communities.

Outcome

As is our hope for all parishes across the diocese, our hope is to provide ministry within these parish communities that enables the growth of God’s Kingdom, as seen through the numbers of disciples of Christ, the depth of discipleship and loving service of the world.

The national church asks us to identify an outcome that we aim to achieve through the use of our LInC funding. We are expected to report on this each year. It must be demonstrably aligned to the national Vision and Strategy. We hope to see a positive growth trend in these parishes collectively over the coming years. However, while we rejoice that some of the parishes receiving LInC allocations are growing, we recognise the general trajectory of decline across the Church of England. We anticipate it being several years before net growth might be seen. This still represents significant growth as a steady growth in new members will be needed to balance the inevitable loss of people through the declining health of old age and death, and the fact that many of these communities are very transitory populations. Our aspirational aim is for a combined 3% growth by the fourth year. We will measure this primarily through the total Worshipping Community size, with a second indicator being the total number of Occasional Offices. Both of these are already collected through annual Statistics for Mission returns.

³ The 22 parishes in the diocese that are in the 20% most deprived in the country.