

The Process of Discernment in the Diocese of Lichfield

Initial discussions may take place with the incumbent

- The enquirer may enrol for Pathways course with support of the parish church. Pathways gives time and space for personal discernment and is not a part of formal discernment.
- The enquirer may contact the Vocations Department for information.
 - The enquirer may request to see a Vocations Adviser.

Work with VAs

- The candidate will have a series of meetings with a Vocations Adviser (VA).
- Meetings normally take place online or at the VA's workplace or residence.
 - There is **no time frame** for the meetings with the VA.
- The pace or frequency of the meetings is set both by the VA and the candidate.
 - This may include some or all of: conversations, reading, written work etc
- The VA's role is to discern the candidate's calling to different types of ministries which will include licensed ministry, lay ministry as well as vocations beyond traditional Church ministries. This will be further discerned by the relevant member of the Vocations Team.

If calling to Lay ministry is discerned, then the candidate is directed to the coordinator of Lay Ministry.

If calling to Reader ministry is discerned, then the candidate is directed to the Ministry Training Enabler.

Candidate may be encouraged to look beyond traditional Church ministries or affirmed in their existing ministry.

If calling to Ordained Pioneer Ministry, Distinctive Diaconate or Ordained Priesthood is discerned then the candidate is directed to the Bishops' Director of Ordinands (BDO).

Work with BDO / ADDO

- The BDO/ADDO will further discern the candidate's call to ordained ministry.
 - Support of the incumbent or equivalent is mandatory.
 - Assessments with the BDO/ADDO is anywhere between **10 – 18 months**.
- Discernment will include some or all of: 1-2-1 interviews, reading, written work, study groups, workshops, journals, placements etc.
- If the BDO/ADDO discerns at any point that the candidate's vocation lies elsewhere, he/she may encourage the candidate to explore other options.
- If deemed appropriate by the Sponsoring Bishop and the BDO/ADDO, candidates will attend Stage 1 National Discernment.

BDO/ADDO & Bishops

Further work with the candidate & preparation for Stage 1 National Assessment.

Attend Stage 1 (Nov – Feb)

Depending upon the outcome of Stage 1 further work is undertaken. Candidates proceed to Stage 2 National Discernment only if deemed appropriate.

Meet the Area Bishop

Stage 3 will depend upon the outcome of Stage 2 (readiness to begin training / further work / not yet / no)

Attend Stage 2 (Mar – July). Not necessarily in the same year.

Stage 3 – Sponsoring Bishop's Decision regarding training or further development.

If a candidate is not recommended for training, then support and ongoing discernment will be offered.