

The Process of Discernment in the Diocese of Lichfield

Initial discussions may take place with the incumbent or equivalent.

- The Enquirer may enrol on to the Chad Foundations Programme.
- The Enquirer may contact the Vocations Department for further information.
 - The Enquirer may request to see a Vocations Adviser.

Work with VAs

- The Enquirer 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 Enquirer.
 - This may include conversations, reading, written work etc.

The VA's role is to discern the Enquirer'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.

Handing over

If calling to Lay Ministry or Reader Ministry is discerned, the Enquirer is directed to the Lay Ministerial Learning and Development Officer.

If calling to Lay Chaplaincy is discerned, the Enquirer is directed to the Chaplaincy & Mission Team Leader.

If calling to Lay Pioneer Ministry is discerned, the Enquirer is directed to the Pioneer Missioner.

If calling to the Church Army, 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 is mandatory.
 - Assessments with the BDO/ADDO may take at least **18 – 24 months**.
- The process of discernment includes conversations, reading, written work, study groups, workshops, journals, placements, DBS, Safeguarding training, references and much more.
- If the BDO/ADDO discerns at any point that the candidate's calling lies elsewhere, they may encourage the candidate to explore other options.
- If deemed appropriate by the Sponsoring Bishop and the BDO/ADDO, candidates will attend National Discernment Panels of the Shared Discernment Process.

BDO/ADDO & Bishops

Candidate undertakes further work & preparation for Stage 1.

Candidate may attend Stage 1.

Candidate continues in discernment with the BDO/ADDO.

Candidate meets the Area Bishop for Sponsorship meeting.

Outcome of Stage 2 is varied: candidate may start training, further work needed before training / Not Yet / No.

Candidate may attend Stage 2 (not necessarily in the same year) or they may not be sponsored to attend Stage 2.

If a candidate is not recommended for training or if they are not sponsored to attend Stage 2, then support and ongoing discernment will be offered.

Please note that this is a process of discernment and a natural progression to the next stage of the process should not be assumed. Pastoral Care and wellbeing of candidates, as well as commitment to safeguarding are at the heart of the discernment process.