



INTRODUCTION & FAQS

**For further information about Authorised Ministry,
please email: vision@newcastle.anglican.org**

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Introduction

Following the consultations undertaken in the deaneries, and the expressed enthusiasm for the development of various forms of authorised lay ministry, we are now proposing three broad categories of ministry, which might be thought of as concentric circles.

- 1) The innermost circle is **licensed ministries**, composed of those categories currently capable of holding the Bishop's Licence, namely clergy, Readers, and licensed lay workers (including Church Army). Current systems of selection, training, and licensing would continue broadly as they are, though we envisage an increasing flexibility in training pathways, especially for those who have the training and experience arising from being an Authorised Minister (AM).
- 2) The outermost circle is **commissioned ministries**, composed of ministries often already in existence in parishes and almost always exercised locally. Commissioned ministries include those helping with Sunday School, sacristy duties, and similar ministries. Training for these ministries is often offered locally, though we note that Sunday School workers, for example, often benefit from events and training offered by the Children and Youth Team. We remain open to the possibility that further training might be offered for such ministries at deanery or diocesan level.
- 3) The circle between commissioned and licensed ministries is **Authorised Ministries**. Authorised Ministries are designed to release and utilise that gifts that God has already given to his people. They further the mission of God and enable and affirm the development of the ministry of the whole people of God. Many people want to offer their time and talents in particular ways, and this scheme offers them a short but focussed Diocesan training course, to equip them for specific roles in their parishes, and potentially more widely. It encourages local diversity in terms of provision for mission and ministry and promotes diocesan collegiality (as each training module would have a family likeness even when delivered in different contexts).

What sort of ministries will people be able to train for?

During the consultation period, enthusiasm was expressed for a wide range of ministries. To ensure that our plans are deliverable and realistic, we will focus in the first instance on the following areas:

leading worship; pastoral care; and community engagement.

At a later date we will also offer training modules in:

lay leadership; evangelism; children and youth ministry; pioneering; more specialist pastoral ministry, and other options.

What is involved in doing the training?

The Authorised Ministry course will consist of two building blocks of training – after completing the relevant safeguarding training :

- 1) a preliminary event which will include a session on diocesan values and ministry in an Anglican framework;
- 2) the substantive module, which consists of a number of sessions – usually twelve evening sessions - covering both core material common to all Authorised Ministries (3 sessions—on practical theology, communications, and shared leadership) and specialist skills, knowledge, and experience (9 sessions) – designed to equip the participants with the necessary skills and confidence to begin ministering.

Those leading the modules will be asked to raise any concerns they have about individual trainees with the Director of Discipleship and Ministry for Mission as the training progresses. Where those concerns have a bearing on a person's suitability for ministry, the incumbent will be informed, and a way forward agreed to address those concerns.

How will people be selected and sponsored for the training?

The Authorised Ministry candidate should:

- show a clear commitment to personal growth in faith and discipleship;

- be recognised by the leadership of the church as being committed to serving God's mission through the work of the parish/benefice/deanery, as well as in their own daily life;
- be committed to working collaboratively as a member of a team;
- be eager to encourage the gifts of others;
- show evidence of the gifts and skills appropriate to the particular ministry being considered, and the potential to develop them;
- have an appetite for life-long learning in a Christian context and be enthusiastic about following a course of training and formation;
- normally be actual communicant members of the Church of England;
- be willing and able to comply with the diocesan and parish policies on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Normally, the primary responsibility for selecting, as for supervising and supporting, Authorised Ministers lies with the parish priest (and PCC). Where there is a clergy team, or wider ministry team, the selection of potential AMs should be discussed confidentially within the team. Where there is no team, the incumbent should discuss the names of people who might be selected with the churchwardens or other people who know the parish / benefice well, before taking those names to the PCC.

In selecting potential AMs, the area where they might exercise a ministry should be considered: a single parish, a whole benefice, or in some cases a wider geographical area (with the permission of both the 'sending' and 'receiving' incumbents and PCCs).

Depending on who has initiated the discernment process, a conversation with each person being proposed is central. (It may start with a person volunteering to be an AM, or it may come from the parish priest or be suggested by another person.)

Only when the incumbent, other appropriate team members, and the person being selected are all in agreement, should the proposal be taken to the PCC. The PCC should be able to have a confidential discussion of the appropriateness of the person or people concerned without them being present.

It will be sufficient that the minutes of the meeting

- a. simply records the decision taken, and
- b. that the PCC affirms and supports the selection of the person, and
- c. states for which ministry they are being selected.

In exceptional circumstances (although the groundwork referred to above should make this unlikely) the minutes of the PCC may need to record that a person has not been selected. In that case, a simple statement that the PCC was unable to agree to support the candidate's selection is all that needs to be recorded.

Once the incumbent and PCC have agreed on the selection of a candidate, the person selected should submit an application to join the training, and be willing to adhere to the principles of safer recruitment.

Where a parish is in vacancy, applications would be considered and supported by the Area Dean in consultation with others in the parish(es).

In such cases specific arrangements for the support and oversight of candidates in training and after authorisation must be put in place.

What ongoing support is expected?

Once someone has completed the common module and a specialised module, they are eligible to be authorised to carry out the ministry for which they have been trained. However, it is vital that they continue to receive support and supervision as they minister: this will usually be offered by the parish priest, who should themselves have undergone training in supervision skills.

From time to time further in-service training opportunities for AMs will be offered which they should be required to attend.

It is recommended that each AM has a simple role description setting out the mutual expectations the AM and the incumbent may have of each other (including arrangements for supervision), and what ministry they will be carrying out. This should ideally be fully reviewed annually.

A strong encouragement is given for the gathering of a team of those engaged in ministry in the parish - clergy, Readers, and AMs, with others as appropriate. Such a team might well meet (for example) once a quarter, for prayer, reflection, and the sharing of ministry issues.

Authorisation in the Parish

The authorisation of AMs is carried out by the parish priest, ideally during a principal act of worship in the parish on a Sunday in the benefice or parish where the ministry will be carried out.

As part of the authorisation the incumbent and AM will agree a pattern of review. It is strongly recommended the ministry is authorised for a three-year period with a full review as to whether both parties wish for a further period of authorisation. The review should take place in the context of a wider review of the parish / benefice's Authorised Ministry needs and opportunities.

In addition, authorisations should lapse one year after the arrival of a new incumbent, so that patterns of mission and ministry may be reviewed.

**Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Bishop's Code of Practice for Authorised Ministry

The Bishop expects that:

- Authorised Ministers will adhere to the diocesan safeguarding policies, will undergo relevant safeguarding training and, where relevant, DBS checks, and will engage in the promotion of a safer Church;
- All ministries will be exercised within a collaborative team, although the size and shape of the ministry team may vary at a local level;
- Authorised Ministers will work with the authorisation and support of the Incumbent / Priest in Charge / Team Vicar and PCC, and be accountable to the parish priest;
- Those selected will attend diocesan training and will be committed to ongoing training following authorisation;
- Parishes will aim to review their Authorised Ministry needs and opportunities every 3 years: this should be undertaken as part of a ministry plan for the parish / benefice. They are encouraged to make use of an outside consultant. This provides an opportunity to ask whether a ministry might be laid down or refreshed.

Diocese of Newcastle 
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