



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

**AUTHORISED
LAY MINISTRY
IN THE DIOCESE
OF NEWCASTLE**

A HANDBOOK

*THEN I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD SAYING,
“WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?”
AND I SAID, “HERE AM I; SEND ME!”*

ISAIAH 6:8

FOREWORD

Welcome to the new handbook for Authorised Lay Ministry in the Diocese of Newcastle. This is a really exciting development in the life of our diocese.

In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom which means that from our daily work to our care for family and friends, all of us are involved in the work of God in the world.

To serve the Church, God has given a variety of ministries. As part of these ministries some will be called to have particular responsibility as an Authorised Lay Minister, serving alongside licensed clergy and readers. Could this be you? This handbook will give you more information about Authorised Lay Ministry and, hopefully, help you to discern whether this is how God is calling you to serve. I encourage you to pray about this, to think about it with family and friends, and to discuss it with your parish priest and other lay leaders in your parish.



Whether this is what God is calling you to, or not, I am grateful for the partnership we all share in serving God's mission and purpose in our communities.

Every blessing,
+Mark Berwick

INTRODUCTION

Thank you so much for picking up this handbook. I'm Nic Denyer, Lay Ministry Development Officer, and Reader in the diocese.

In this handbook, I hope you find all the information you need about what Authorised Lay Ministry is, the training and development Newcastle Diocese offers, and the processes involved in discerning, applying and living out your gifts and callings.

Everything you need to know should be found here, but if you'd like more information, or just chat through anything at all, please get in touch. You can call or email anytime (I work Mon-Fri 9-5), and I'd love to hear from you.

Nic Denyer

n.deny@newcastle.anglican.org

07436216750



VOCATION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Vocation means what you are called by God to be and do. For some, this is a specific calling to ministry. For others, it could mean serving God through faithful discipleship in everyday life. Everyone has a vocation. What is yours??

Vocation is who you are, not just what skills you have. Your vocation is what gives you meaning; what makes you 'you', if you like.

As Christians, our vocations and gifts aren't only recognised in church on Sundays, but in what we do in the world too. The skills and gifts we use every day aren't magically erased when we go into a church service. Rather, our skills and gifts matter, and if you discern a call to Lay Ministry, you are being called by God because of all that you are, and all that you bring in every sphere of life – from work to worship, secular to spiritual.

Lay ministry falls broadly into three categories: Recognised, Licensed and Authorised. The following pages give examples of what these categories include, how training is delivered, and where responsibility for oversight lies. It is the last category – Authorised – that this handbook focuses on, but if you'd like to know more about licensed or recognised ministry, there is advice for who to contact in the following pages.

“We easily slip into thinking that a vocation from God is something that only applies to a minority of Christians. That means vocation gets used to make some feel special if not spiritually superior, while others assume that there is no need for them to think and pray about God's call when considering significant life commitments.”

Both are damaging perspectives to adopt.

Kingdom Calling, the Archbishops' Council 2020

Recognised Lay Ministries happen in the local parish, benefice, chaplaincy or fresh expression. Examples of recognised ministry include leading a home group, pastoral care, assisting with children and youth ministry, offering prayer and listening, acting as a chaplaincy assistant or exploring growing church locally.



Selection, recognition and training is usually local, led by the minister in the parish or deanery. Some local ministry roles will have diocesan training too, for example safeguarding courses.

If you feel called to serve in your local Church in this way, speak to your vicar about how you can pursue your vocation further.

Licensed lay ministers (Readers in the Diocese of Newcastle) may be involved in evangelism, mission enabling, teaching, preaching, leading of worship, taking funerals, leading a Fresh Expression and community outreach. Licenses are issued by the diocesan bishop as required by Canon law (Church law) and are nationally recognised'.

Selection is carried out by dioceses, following national guidelines. Training is carried out by the diocese or on behalf of the diocese and there is provision for ongoing ministerial development.

As a Reader, you would usually be supervised by your vicar, with final accountability to your bishop.

If you feel called to serve in the leadership of your local Church in this way, speak to your vicar and then either

Ce Pacitti

c.pacitti@newcastle.anglican.org

Nic Denyer

n.denyer@newcastle.anglican.org

about how you can pursue your vocation further.

Authorised Lay Ministers represent the church in the wider community. Their Authorisation is from the bishop, and it is time limited and reviewed regularly. In the Diocese of Newcastle Authorised Lay Ministry training is offered on *Leading Worship *Pastoral Care *Community Engagement and *Mission and Evangelism. Anna Chaplains and Authorised Lay Pioneers are also part of this category.

Selection is primarily local, but there will also be diocesan discernment in line with Safer Recruitment and People Management. Those wishing to take part in ALM training courses will be expected to have a conversation with Nic and / or other advisors outside the parish before being accepted onto the course. There is also a diocesan mediation procedure being developed to help make sure any problems are recognised and managed well for all concerned.

If you feel called to serve in your local Church in this way, speak to your vicar about how you can pursue your vocation further.

AUTHORISED LAY MINISTRY TRAINING SEPTEMBER 2022

In September 2022, we will launch four new and revitalised Authorised Lay Ministry courses. All four will have at their heart affirming and valuing the gifts and skills that all people will bring with them. We recognise that many lay people have been doing ministry in their local contexts and communities for ages, and that we can all learn from each other.

There will be an information event before the course starts for people to see if the training is right for them; that it is what they are called to do. There will be no expectation that those attending this event will be expected to sign – up. There will also be a de-brief session at the end of the course, to talk about what next, further training, support and supervision.

Each course will have nine sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. They will be about sharing experiences, reflecting theologically on practice, and forming learning networks with others across the Diocese, that will last far longer than the course!

The course will be taught over nine sessions, once a month. This is because we recognise all people are busy and have other commitments. The Diocese wishes to make it as easy as possible for those called to ALM to take part. There will be one more informal session per month, perhaps to chat to each other about the learning, or what's happening in the local context. It also means that those taking part will have longer to get to know others they are learning alongside, enabling relationships to develop that will last far beyond the end of the initial training.

Each course, as well as having regular facilitators, will have a course 'chaplain' or 'mentor'. Someone to get the kettle on, to talk to about the learning and provide help or support as necessary.

There won't be written assignments or lengthy reading lists so please don't worry! Learning will be assessed through conversation, group work and discussion. ALM training is about building on the skills and experience each person brings with them, exploring together the national and diocesan background to the subject, and ensuring safeguards and supports are in place for each person's future ministry.

Each course will have three 'core' sessions; Diocesan Safeguarding Leadership Training, National and Diocesan background, and a joint session with incumbents / parish supervisor and the learner.

So, after all that, what might you explore? Will it be LEADING WORSHIP, PASTORAL CARE, MISSION AND EVANGELISM or COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Each course will have aims and objectives, and will value and affirm the skills and experiences people bring with them, whilst offering opportunities for practical and useful learning. Please see Appendix One for a brief summary of each course.



90 minutes



**9 sessions,
1 per month**



large network

GENERAL OUTCOMES FOR ALM STUDENTS

- To encourage personal growth and self-awareness in their discipleship, vocation and ministry.
- To have experience of a learning community, and the opportunity to share learning with others in similar and diverse contexts and communities.
- To understand how Authorised Lay Ministry 'fits' with Licensed, Ordained and Recognised Ministries.
- To facilitate safe practices, recruitment and continued development.

I THINK I'M CALLED TO BE AN ALM, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The following pages describe the process for discerning and applying to take part in ALM training. It might seem that there is loads of steps (or 'hoops' to jump through), but this is necessary for a number of reasons:

- Authorised Lay Ministers represent the church in both the parish and the wider community. Authorisation is issued by the Bishop of Newcastle.
- It is vital that all Licensed and Authorised ministers in the Church of England understand that they have a responsibility that comes with their license or authorisation when it comes to safeguarding those who are vulnerable.
- Safer Recruitment and People Management exists to ensure those in roles of responsibility have been recruited safely, and then are managed well. This means volunteers are subject to the same application and criminal vetting processes as those who are paid.
- The Diocese of Newcastle therefore needs to make sure that paperwork for all ALMs is completed and maintained to the highest standard. Ordained and Licensed ministers are subject to the same checks and processes too.
- Please see Appendix 3 for the ALM process In the Diocese of Newcastle.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGH INITIAL TRAINING & BEYOND

- Ministry may be a vocation, and a calling, but that doesn't mean it will always be easy, or without challenges!
- The individual learner, the Parish and the Diocese all have equal parts to play in ensuring ministry is healthy, productive and fulfilling
- The learner is responsible for completing the application processes, attending taught sessions, and taking part in group discussions and learning. They are also expected to complete a working agreement with their parish supervisor, and attend regular supervision sessions. They must understand the need for Safeguarding training and care of vulnerable people.
- The Parish is responsible for discerning the gifts of the laity, and encouraging their confidence. They are expected to enable the learner to use their learning in the parish context, and the Incumbent is responsible for both completing a Working Agreement with the learner, and offering regular supervision sessions. The Incumbent / Parish are also responsible for raising any concerns around safe practice with others outside the parish.
- The Diocese is responsible for ensuring learners have the materials they need to complete their training, and provide facilitators and course chaplains / mentors who will support people through their learning journey and beyond. This might take the form of facilitating peer interest / support, action learning sets, or occasional sessions for continued development. The Diocese is also responsible for assisting with mediation / well-being of all involved in ministry as necessary.



A GREAT BIG THANK YOU!



The Church of England relies heavily on all its members (whatever their ministry), and here in Newcastle we recognise how hard things have been for everyone over the last couple of years. Living through a global pandemic, the retirement of our Diocesan Bishop, reduced clergy numbers and longer vacancies, stretched finances, and now the rising cost of living means we're all under pressure from all sides!

We need to refocus, and remind ourselves that we have all the skills and gifts we need to continue to worship, to connect with those in our communities and those we work with, and to remain focused on sharing the love and hope given to us by God through Jesus with all those we meet.

Whether reading this handbook has inspired you to find out more about Authorised Lay Ministry, helped you realise that maybe Licensed or Ordained ministry is for you, or that God is working through you exactly as you are, thanks for reading. If you would like to get in touch to ask questions or find out more, please do.



From the Archdeacons, Catherine and Rachel

LEADING WORSHIP

This course will help people who are interested in exploring worship in a practical and enjoyable way. The tradition and history of Anglican worship, resourcing prayers, music and readings, and learning what worship works where you are and why will all be covered in this training.

PASTORAL CARE

This course will explore how we can care pastorally for those in our communities, whether inside or outside of church. How is pastoral care different to counselling, what do we do if we are concerned, and how do we manage confidentiality and safeguarding in caring? How do we listen well, and what resources might be helpful?

MISSION AND EVANGELISM

This is a new ALM course for 2022, and it will ask us what is mission and evangelism? How do we tell our own stories of faith or identify missional projects that are appropriate to our different contexts? What are the ethics around mission and evangelism – and what is the difference between the two?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This course will encourage us to consider how well we know the communities we live and worship in. How do those who don't come to services 'see' our parish churches? What is the role of the church in engaging with the community, and how do we grow links and relationships with other agencies and charities where we are?

APPENDIX TWO

VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

This is a simple model role outline template for a volunteer which can be used, amended or substituted by a local model as required.



Name of Church

Volunteer Worker (Children and /or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect)

The Church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the church safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately report it.

Principles

Workers with children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect must have a commitment to:

- Treat individuals with respect;
- Recognise and respect their abilities and potential for development;
- Promote their rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless it is unsafe;
- Ensure their welfare and safety;
- The promotion of social justice, social responsibility and respect for others; and
- Confidentiality, never passing on personal information, except to the person to whom you are responsible, unless there are safeguarding issues of concern (e.g. allegations of abuse). Safeguarding issues of concern must **always** be reported to the Police or Social Care services and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Responsible to (named contact for support and resolution of any difficulties):

The Priest (or his / her named representative) and through them to the PCC.

Key responsibilities and accountabilities:

- To work with vulnerable people (children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect) in a way that meets and develops their personal, spiritual and social needs, exercising active pastoral concern.
- To represent the needs and views of vulnerable people to the PCC or, where appropriate, enable them to do this for themselves.
- To maintain a link with parents and carers.
- To work in accordance with the church's policy on safeguarding.
- To undertake any other work that has been agreed and is seen to be appropriate.

As a volunteer you can expect that we will do our best to ensure that:

- We provide a supportive, inclusive and positive environment that ensures you enjoy your volunteering and that you are treated with respect and courtesy and provided with training.

Person specification

1. Able to demonstrate an ability to work with people who are /may be vulnerable; and
2. A willingness to develop their skills and training

As a volunteer working regularly with people who are/may be vulnerable, this post may be eligible for a criminal record check which will be renewed at least every five years.

This letter is binding in honour only; it is not intended to create a legally binding contract between us and it may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

This can be supplemented by reference to specific roles e.g. Crèche Assistant (supervising babies and toddlers in a separate room during Sunday services), Sunday School Teacher (teaching children away from the main service), Pastoral Assistant (who visits people with special needs who cannot get to church.) Children or Youth Worker (running activities on church premises). Outreach Worker (working with vulnerable people away from the church setting).

APPENDIX TWO

CONFIDENTIAL DECLARATION FORM

[Church of England Confidential Declaration Guidance and Privacy Notice](#)

Click [here](#) to download.

APPENDIX TWO

VOLUNTEER INDUCTION CHECKLIST

Activity	When	Who	Date completed
Initial meeting with person to whom individual is responsible			
Welcome and meet the team			
Location tour as appropriate			
Review of safeguarding policies, procedures and code of conduct			
Review of health & safety policy and procedures, including fire training			
Review of other relevant policies, procedures and guidelines for the body and/or role			
Safeguarding training identified and booked in			
Anything else specific to Church body and/or role			
Induction Completed			
Volunteer Signed:			
Responsible Person Signed:			

APPENDIX TWO

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT MEETING AGENDA CHECKLIST

Section 14: Ongoing Support, Accountability, Oversight & Supervision

Toolkit Template: Volunteer Support Meeting Agenda template.

This is a simple agenda template that can be used for support meetings with volunteers.

Volunteer Support Meeting Agenda	
Name of Volunteer:	Name of Responsible Person:
1. Action points from last time	
2. What has the volunteer been doing since the last meeting?	
3. What's gone well? What hasn't gone so well? This is also a chance for the responsible person to talk about the volunteer's work, give positive feedback as well as an opportunity to raise any minor problems or issues if necessary.	
4. What help or support does the volunteer need?	
5. Safeguarding matters?	
6. Development/motivation Such meetings can be used to gauge whether the volunteer is still getting what they were looking for from the volunteer role; they may benefit from a minor change in their tasks or a fresh challenge	
7. Action points for next time	

Section 10: Dealing with Criminal Records

This is a simple risk assessment form which can be used by Cathedral Safeguarding Advisers. Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and Human Resources teams to manage a blemished DBS certificate. It can be used to carry out a full risk assessment to support them in making an informed and balanced decision about whether to employ or to continue to employ an individual or engage or continue to engage with a volunteer.

Before any decision is reached the individual must be offered the opportunity to discuss the contents of the DBS certificate.

Name of individual:	Date of Birth:
Address (incl postcode):	Role applied for:
Body:	Responsible Person:
Details of Criminal Record disclosed:	
Questions to Consider:	
<p>1. Do the DBS Barred Listings bar the appointment? Yes/No</p> <p><i>If yes, then the appointment is automatically unlawful and the person must not be appointed to the role. Do not continue with this decision sheet.</i></p>	
<p>2. Are you satisfied with the individual's explanation of the circumstances of the offence?</p> <p><i>All positive disclosures should be discussed with the individual. Note down their explanation of the circumstances.</i></p>	
<p>3. Did the offence occur recently?</p> <p><i>For example, minor offences that occurred a long time ago may be less relevant than ones that are very recent. Offences that took place years ago may have less relevance now, with the exception of serious violent or sexual offences.</i></p>	
<p>4. At what age were the offences committed? Was the offence committed as an adult, or as a child or adolescent?</p>	
<p>5. Does the disclosure show a pattern of behaviour, or was the offence a one-off?</p> <p><i>Repeated offences may indicate that the individual has not been able to change their offending behaviour and may be more likely to re-offend.</i></p>	
<p>6. Have the circumstances that contributed to the individual committing the offence or behave in such a manner changed for the better?</p> <p><i>Look at all the circumstances, including the employment pattern and the individual's own explanation.</i></p>	

7. Did the applicant disclose any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings which would not be filtered in line with current guidance, as part of the application process/at interview/or during their employment?

Note that a failure to disclose a relevant offence, without a satisfactory reason, will, in an employment situation, be a breach of contract and render any employment offer void or where the individual is already an employee lead to disciplinary action which may result in their dismissal.

8. Were all references satisfactory and verified by telephone?

9. Does the post involve responsibility for finance, items of value or other high risk areas?

This is particularly relevant where the disclosed offences are related to robbery, burglary or fraud.

10. Does the role allow the opportunity to re-offend?

Consider the nature of the post in relation to the disclosed offence(s).

11. What level of management/supervision/support will the person receive?

Will supervision reduce the risk of re-offending?? How much responsibility does the post carry?

12. What mechanisms are in place to track the individual's progress?

A review requirement allows for the possibility of the person moving to a role they are not currently safe for or moving into a 'safer' role or dismissed if there is a deterioration.

13. Further comments/overall summary

Decision (please circle as applicable)	Employ	Employ – with adjustments to role (give details e.g. supervision, monitoring arrangements etc)	Do not employ	Suspend	Allocate to other work
Signed:			Print name:		
Date:			Job Title:		
Signed:			Print name:		
Date:			Job Title:		

PLEASE ENSURE YOUR FINAL DECISION IS RECORDED ON THIS DOCUMENT AND SIGNED BY THE RELEVANT PARTIES.

THIS RISK ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE RETAINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL DATA PROTECTION POLICIES.

APPENDIX TWO

REFERENCE FORM

This is a simple model reference form template for a volunteer which can be used, amended or substituted by a local model as required.



Name of Church

Name and address of referee:	Name and address of Priest or their nominee requesting a reference:
Date	

Dear

REQUEST FOR REFERENCE FOR A VOLUNTARY WORKER WITH CHILDREN / ADULTS EXPERIENCING, OR AT RISK OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

RE: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms,
Address:

Post applicant applying for:

The above has given your name as someone who may be contacted in relation to his / her* application to work with children / adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect. Guidelines suggest that all voluntary organisations including Churches must take steps to safeguard the children/adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect entrusted to their care. I would be grateful if you could comment on the following factors as they may apply to the applicant:-

- Previous experience of working with children or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- His / her* ability to provide kind and consistent care.
- Evidence of his / her* willingness to respect the background and culture of children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect in his / her* care.
- His / her* commitment to treat all children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect as individuals and with equal concern.
- Any evidence or concern that he / she* would not be suitable to work with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect.

You are welcome to use the reverse of this letter for your reply. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Priest or Nominee

How long have you known the applicant?years

His / her* previous experience of working with children / adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect:

His / her* ability to provide kind, consistent and safe care:

Evidence of his / her* willingness to respect the background and culture of children/adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect in his / her* care:

His/ her* commitment to treat all children / adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect as individuals and with equal concern:

Any evidence or concern that he / she* would not be suitable to work with children / adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect?

Telephone contact point for clarification:

**Please delete as appropriate*

APPENDIX THREE:

AUTHORISED LAY MINISTRY PROCESS

To attend course:

- Participant is supported by local church, indicated on application form by incumbent (or Area Dean) and PCC (via resolution – from April 2021 onwards)
- Participant submits application form, references and DBS status to Church House via info@newcastle.anglican.org



On receipt of application form by Church House:

1. Applicant contacted by Lay Ministry Development Officer / Vocations Advisor to have a conversation about their desire to undertake the course.
2. References requested by Church House, to be received prior to the beginning of any course.
3. Application acknowledged with confirmation of course dates
4. List compiled of participants and contact details - sent out to course leader before start of course (plus updates if necessary). In addition to support of Incumbent (or Area Dean) and PCC outlined above, potential Authorised Lay Minister will need to follow safer recruitment process. See Appendix Two.



For Authorisation:

- At completion of course, Course Leader to confirm which participants have completed the training.
- All participants to send in a copy of their working agreement with their Incumbent / Supervisor to Church House.
- Church House to log receipt of above information and checks.
- Once all in place, Church House sends list of those to be authorised to Bishop's House for Authorisation letters to be printed and sent out.
- As per Safer Recruitment and People Management (and in line with existing processes for Clergy and Readers), a paper file will be held at Bishop's House, as well as digitally, to ensure information is both held securely and easily accessible if needed for Safeguarding audits etc.
- Bishop's Office sends out letters of authorisation, with a copy to Incumbent, Area Dean and Church House.
- Authorised Ministers entered onto CMS.
- Authorisation lasts for 3 years. After 2 and a half years, Lay Ministry Development Officer writes to Incumbent and ALM, setting out proposal for renewal of authorisation.