

Diocese of Newcastle Church Planting Strategy

Our diocesan vision of Growing Church Bringing Hope places growth – numerical, spiritual, and missional – at the heart of our life together. A Church Planting Strategy is one important element in this vision, enabling us to see our vision put into practice and resourcing the Church to be a transforming Christian presence across the communities we serve.

Principles

- 1) We believe that the Church can and should grow in the Diocese of Newcastle, and that this involves the willingness to change, adapt, and develop. Growth of the whole involves some parts growing, some declining, some being started and others closing; this is normal and healthy.
- 2) Church Planting, by which we mean the establishment of new expressions of Christian Community, is a necessary part of the life of a healthy, growing diocese, seeking to be ‘Growing Church Bringing Hope.’
- 3) Such Church Planting does not exclusively belong to or sit within any one ‘tradition’, but we are committed to learn from parts of the church which have expertise in this area.
- 4) Church Planting is part of the heritage of this Diocese with a significant amount of planting having been done in the past with the rapid growth of Newcastle and other areas (especially in the years around the formation of the Diocese and again in the 1950s and 60s). More recently, there have been initiatives such as ‘Ark in the Park,’ the mid-Northumbria Young Adults Community, and the re-launch of St Luke’s, Newcastle.
- 5) Church Planting can be understood in various ways and follows various models (see **appendix 1**, referenced in the numbers after each sub-section below). In Newcastle Diocese we group this into four areas, all of which are necessary.
 - a) Planting or establishing of a new congregation or other form of community by (and within) an existing Church to meet an identified aspect of the church’s strategy – we call this **refresh** (e.g. 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 – Messy Church is a good example of this in the Diocese)
 - b) Planting alongside an existing Church in partnership, in line with the strategy both of the existing church and the Diocese – we call this **renew** (e.g. 3, 10, 14 – St Michael’s Byker is an example of this in the Diocese)
 - c) Planting into an existing Church with a different model to the existing one, at the invitation of the Bishop and in line with Diocesan strategy – we call this **revive** (e.g. 2, 5 – St Luke’s, Newcastle is an example of this in the Diocese)
 - d) Planting from scratch in line with the Diocese’s strategy to address an unmet need – we call this **reach** (e.g. 1, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14 – Ark in the Park and the African worshipping community are examples of this in the Diocese)
- 6) Planting will take place across the whole diocese and not be confined to any one area or demographic.
- 7) Our planting will seek to develop, and often make use of, models that are replicable across a range of contexts.
- 8) The Resource Church and associated vision is a key element in our planting strategy, but not the only one.

The role of a Resource Church

Resource churches are an identified national strategy to support the work of the Diocese in Mission and Discipleship, with a particular emphasis on Church Planting. To quote a recent paper to the Bishops' Church Planting Group (Presented 5/9/17):

It is also worth noting the role of Resource Churches: churches that are designated by their bishop as church planting churches in city centres, city regions or town centres. They work strategically with the bishop with an expectation that they will plant churches in other parts of the city and further afield to other cities and towns. Because they tend to be larger churches, they are able to develop resources and ministry teams to send to support other churches. They are designated by bishops and work strategically with them. Resource churches may be created by planting a new church or by designating an existing large church as a resource church.

In Newcastle Diocese, Resource Churches would have a number of key roles. A Resource Church:

- is, first and foremost, a missionally active, growing church, often serving missing demographics
- is a centre of excellence in matters missional, and concerning church planting and contemporary worship
- exists as a resource for the missional growth in the parishes of the diocese, for example in
 - Training events
 - Acting as a focal point for national missional resources
 - Offering some training and fellowship to a growing cohort of Resource Curates, some of whom will be serving titles elsewhere, and other identified Resource Ministers
 - Staff time offered in mentoring or facilitation
- will establish (over an initial 3 year period), host, and resource an intern scheme, with Interns stationed in hubs around the Diocese and receiving training through the central hub. This builds on the good practice of the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme.
- will have an active church planting strategy in line with that of the Diocese, phased over an initial 10 year period

The role of Resource Curates

Curates, with an explicit (although not always formally recognised by a BAP) bias towards Pioneering Ministry will be placed in a Resource Church, and potentially in other benefices, with the expectation that they will plant a fresh expression of church during their curacy and as they move into their first post of responsibility.

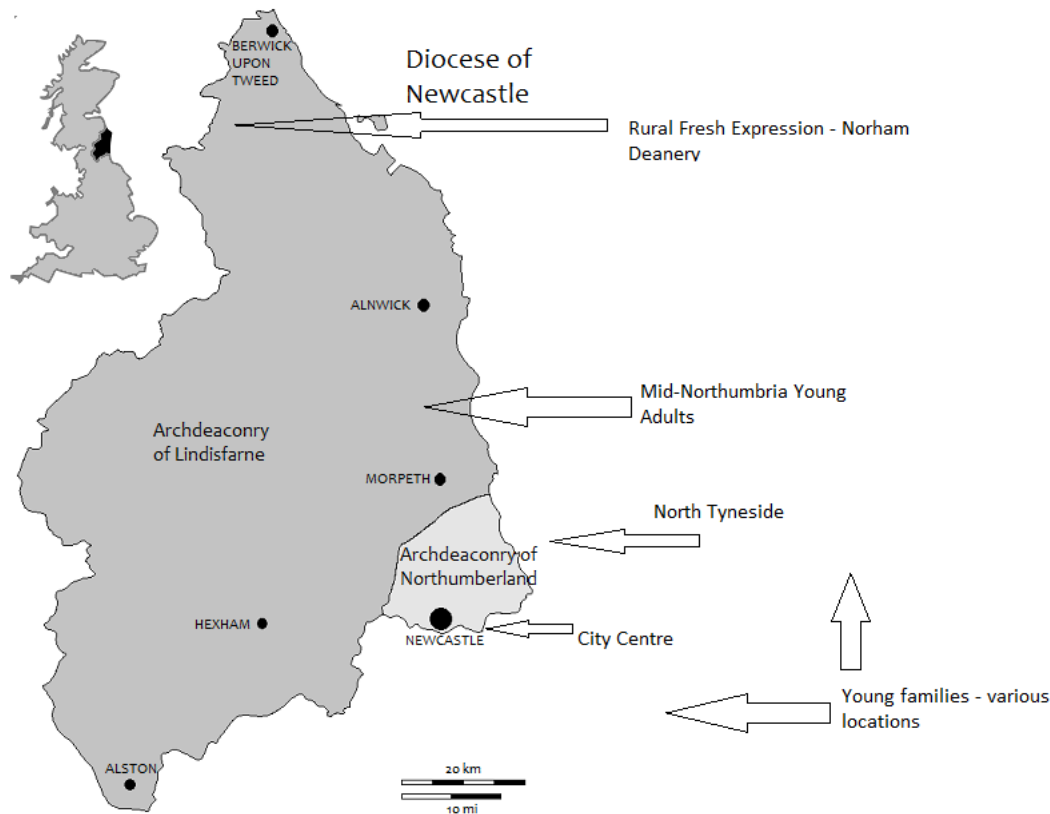
Note that we will need to explore whether this idea should also include Resource Ministers who are not ordained but do hold the Bishop's commission for particular areas of work.

Resource Curates and Ministers will be part of a cohort incorporating:

- Training (alongside IME2 in a manner which does not overburden)
- Mentoring
- Fellowship

Identifying the planting opportunities

The Diocese is committed to identifying the planting opportunities in each of the four planting modes we have identified. The map below indicates some of the areas in which church planting is desirable or at an early stage of development. Opportunities for planting will be identified in a range of ways: by individual churches, including the Resource Churches; by Deaneries (as part of the Deanery Development process); within the Bishop's Staff Team and the Diocesan Ministry Council.



Identifying and addressing the training needs

There are a number of key training needs, including:

- Church Planting
 - Preparation and Planning
 - Discernment of vision and clarification of priorities
 - Team building; recruitment, training, leadership
 - Community formation
 - Evangelism beyond the fringe
 - Discipleship
- Intern development
 - Recruiting
 - Initial training
 - Effective deployment
 - Training for host churches and clergy
 - Ongoing training
- Resource Curacy resources in addition to IME2
 - Church Planting material available nationally
 - Deep listening to an area, identifying needs, aspirations, 'contact points'
 - Recruiting and training teams
 - Practical matters
 - Reaching beyond the middle classes
- Senior Staff
 - Identifying plants
 - Supervision of pioneers
 - Culture management and development

APPENDIX 1 – Church Planting Models (Excerpt from *Bishops Church Planting Paper 5/9/17*)

Church plants, fresh expressions of church and missional communities represent different terms and methodologies used to describe the creation of new congregations. Here are some of the ways (or models) that are commonly being used in England:

1. **New Developments:** a new church community established within a new residential development that has a distinct sense of community or that is not easily served by an existing church.
2. **Closed Churches:** a leader and congregation are invited to "plant" into a church building that is either closed, faces closure or needs so much help to survive that a different approach is needed and agreed.
3. **Parish Graft:** a leader and a congregation "graft" into an existing congregation with a view to infusing the church with new DNA and fresh energy. This is a partnership between old and new, but with the understanding of change being welcomed. Also called a "revitalisation".
4. **New Congregation:** developing a new service for a new people group within the existing parish church. This will include international congregations, perhaps using their own languages.
5. **Network Church:** a leader and a congregation start a new church in a new space that draws in people through their network of relationships. This is not a geographic (parish) church but exists autonomously within or across another parish or number of parishes.
6. **School Plant:** a new worshipping community based within and ministering to a school community in its broadest sense and not just using a school building as a venue for worship.
7. **Estate Church:** a church based on an un(der)reached estate that has a distinct sense of community and a distinct ministry to that estate.
8. **Workplace Church:** a worshipping community based in a workplace ("second space") connecting with those who work there.
9. **Cafe Church:** Creating new congregations in "third spaces" especially in cafes and coffee shops. In some places running the coffee shop may also pay for the mission work. Third spaces are understood as being a space distinct from "first spaces" (homes) and "second spaces" (workplaces) e.g. cafes, restaurants, etc.
10. **Missional Communities:** these are understood as communities constituted by a specific missional purpose in relation to a network or a place. They are not parish churches or places of conventional worship.
11. **Messy Church:** this is a way of being church for families, not just children. It is adaptable to its context but its values are about being Christ-centred, for all ages, based on creativity, hospitality and celebration.
12. **Age related churches.** These focus on creating church for a particular age group such as children, youth, young adults or senior citizens.
13. **Special interest groups.** These tend to be new congregations which initially aim to connect incarnationally with a particular group such as those who might play a particular sport or have a certain hobby.
14. **New monastic communities.** These communities include a stronger focus on intentional community through a gathered and dispersed life, patterns of prayer, contemplation, hospitality and practical engagement in mission beyond itself (often to the poor).