

Forming the team: an overview of the SMT process

Introduction

A Shared Ministry Team (SMT) is recognised form of collaborative ministry, commissioned by the Archdeacon on behalf of the Bishop. As such there is a clear process in the establishment of a new Shared Ministry Team. This document provides an overview of that process.

Initial enquiry

An initial enquiry is just that, an opportunity to explore how a Shared Ministry Team might work in the parish. There are no commitments, no obligations. Often the initial enquiry will come from the Incumbent but may also be made by a post holder of the PCC such as warden or PCC Secretary. The enquiry should be addressed in the first instance to Wendy Pooley (see below for details) at St James' House who will:

- i. record the enquiry on the SMT database
- ii. advise that a member of the Shared Ministry Group will be in contact at the earliest opportunity
- iii. contact the Bishop's Officer for Shared Ministry requesting a response to the enquiry
- iv. provide details of the Shared Ministry pages on the diocesan web site
- v. deal with any further enquiries from the parish

Informal contact

The Bishop's Officer for Shared Ministry, Dr Adrian Ball, or a member of the Diocesan Shared Ministry Group will be pleased to discuss how an SMT might serve the parish, the shape of the training and other aspects of team life. This initial discussion may take place over the phone

or, where possible, face to face with the incumbent at least and ideally with one or more members of the PCC as is felt appropriate.

Formal contact

Following informal discussions any agreed actions to take things forward will be captured in writing. This will include any dates for visits to the PCC for presentation and discussion and the dates or a request for Sunday sermon. For administrative purposes Wendy Pooley should be copied in on all correspondence relating to dates, speakers and so on. The Bishop's Officer is a voluntary post and so it is important that administration is as smooth as possible.

PCC formal resolution

After both informal and more formal discussion if the PCC agrees to establish an SMT a formal resolution must be made, voted upon and recorded in the minutes of the PCC. The PCC will also minute its agreement to abide by the Diocesan Guidelines for shared ministry teams, guidelines which will be explained by the representative of the Group for Shared Ministry at the meeting with the PCC.

A copy of the PCC minutes with this resolution should be sent to Wendy at St James' House. No further engagement with the parish can take place until this resolution is made and the duly signed minutes of the PCC are held by the diocese.

The selection process

Once the minutes of the PCC resolution are received the Incumbent will be informed by Wendy of the name of the Diocesan Nominee, a member of the diocesan Shared Ministry Group, who will oversee the nomination and selection process. Details of the selection process can be found on the diocesan website at www.liverpool.anglican.org/the-SMT-process. In brief:

- i. Each member of the congregation can nominate up to 6 team members
- ii. The PCC vote on the final membership of the Shared Ministry Team. This takes place at a meeting of the PCC and is overseen by the Diocesan nominee.
- iii. The names of all selected members are sent to Wendy at St James' House and the team is commissioned for a five year period.

The training period

The Bishop's Officer will arrange for two trainers, occasionally one, to facilitate the training process. There will be an initial, informal and social meeting between trainer and the new SMT which will outline the training programme and answer any queries and concerns SMT members may have. The team and trainer(s) will then agree the dates for training, usually ten or eleven sessions which can be completed within 12 months but which will depend on a shared commitment to date setting. During this training the team will maintain regular contact with the congregation and the PCC. More details of SMT training can be found on the diocesan website at www.liverpool.anglican.org/shared-ministry-training.

The Agreed Statement

Towards the end of their training the SMT will generate a first draft of the Agreed Statement, the foundational document which covenants the relationship between the team members and between the team, the PCC and the wider congregation. This document summarises the life of the team and the ministry tasks which the team feels it can address. It is discussed with the PCC at a meeting chaired by an SMT trainer and amended in the light of discussions. The final draft is agreed with the PCC and sent to St James' House on receipt of which Wendy Pooley will liaise with the Archdeacon's office and the Incumbent to arrange a date for commissioning of the Shared Ministry Team. Further details of the Agreed Statement can be found at www.liverpool.anglican.org/commissioning.

The commissioning service

The commissioning of a new team or the re-commissioning of team after five years of service will usually be conducted by the Archdeacons. Once a date is agreed with all parties the parish will receive a liturgical template for the commissioning service. The order of service for the commissioning and a copy of the Agreed Statement should be returned to the Archdeacon at least a fortnight prior to commissioning. The commissioning is for a period of 5 years.

At the service of commissioning the Agreed Statement is signed by the Archdeacon, the Team Members, the Incumbent, a member of the PCC and the Diocesan Representative of the Group for Shared Ministry at the service. See www.liverpool.anglican.org/commissioning for details