



How to ...

become a Licensed Lay Minister

What is a Licensed Lay Minister?

Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are usually local people who are key members of their congregations, exercising leadership in worship, mission, pastoral care and prayer. They will often be active members of the PCC, leaders of home-groups or bible study groups and well-integrated into the local community. They are representatives of the Church in the life of the community and reflect the light and love of Christ wherever they are.

At the heart of Licensed Lay Ministry is the call to preach, teach, lead the people in worship and to offer pastoral care. Any one individual may experience a stronger call to one or more of these roles than to the others but there is an expectation that LLMs will exercise all of these gifts at some point in their ministry.

Could this be me?

God calls and equips all sorts of people for this ministry. However, there are some key criteria which the Church looks for particularly:

- a resilient and self-aware personality, able to cope with the demands of ministering to a wide range of people, many of whom are at difficult or transitional times in their lives
- a supportive network of relationships which are healthy and life-giving
- an ability to work in a collaborative team with other Christians, lay and ordained, and to build collaborative relationships with other groups of leaders outside the Church, eg community groups, schools, health professionals etc.
- an openness to study and the ability to change and grow in discipleship
- a sustaining faith underpinned by a life of prayer, bible study, and other spiritual disciplines
- a heart for mission and the ability and desire to lead others in reaching out to the world
- aged over 18 and under 70 at the time of licensing

What do I do first?

Talk to your Incumbent or contact the Ministry Development Team at the Diocese of Bristol.

What training will I need?

Training requirements for Licensed Lay Ministry vary between Dioceses, however all training routes are approved by the central Church. LLMs in this Diocese are expected to undertake one of the following:

- two years part-time training on the 'Exploring Christianity'ⁱ course plus the Formation year which includes, amongst other things, practical experience of preaching and leading worship, training in pastoral care and a parish placement
- two years part-time training at Trinity College, or another provider, for the Certificate of Theology plus the Formation year as above

If you have some prior theological learning (e.g. Certificate in Theology), then contact the Adviser for Lay Ministry Development to discuss your training. Candidates with special educational needs should also contact the Adviser for LMD as there may be a more appropriate individually tailored route available for training.

Who decides if I'm suitable for Licensed Lay Ministry?

All candidates for licensed ministry, lay or ordained, attend a Diocesan Discernment Day at which a panel of Vocation Advisers, supported by the Adviser for Licensed Ministry, review various pieces of evidence against the Diocesan Criteria for Selection.

Before attending the Discernment Day you will be asked to complete an application form and provide 4 references, one of which must be your incumbent or equivalent. You will also require a PCC resolution approving your application and a parish profile and job description agreed between you, the Incumbent and PCC. This is to ensure that you will be working in a collaborative team in which your role is clearly defined and expectations agreed in advance.

When can I apply?

You should have been regularly worshipping at your church for at least a year before starting training and for two years before attending a Diocesan Discernment Day.

Written by Becky Waring, Adviser for Lay Ministry Development

i Details on the Exploring Christianity course are available on the Diocesan Website and from the Ministry Development Team