

Continuing Ministerial Development Policy

Leicester Diocese. Updated October 2025

Introduction:

The fundamental purpose of Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) is to equip and develop the Church's ministers in order that they may stimulate and enable the whole Church to participate more fully in the mission of God in the world. The on-going purpose of Continuing Ministerial Development is to strengthen and deepen a lifelong learning culture within the diocese. We place high importance on all who minister within the diocese continually reflecting and learning throughout their ministry, and we recognise that Continuing Ministerial Development is one of the places in which theological reflection may be encouraged, and lead to new shared insights and practice. As both lay and ordained ministers we are called to disciple and develop others, so too, we should be willing to develop ourselves, through learning, reflecting and following Christ.

Continuing Ministerial Development focuses not just on learning and training but takes seriously the flourishing of the whole person in their ministerial context. Whilst the underlying regulations within this document relate to clergy, Continuing Ministerial Development is for all licensed or commissioned ministries within the Diocese. Wherever possible Continuing Ministerial Development is organised collaboratively, integrating the education and training of both lay and ordained.

1. Expectations

1a. Expectations of the Diocese, Parish Transition & Ministry Development Dept. (PTMD).

We will support learning and development within ministry.

We will provide cost-effective, high quality learning interventions and opportunities.

We will advise and consult in connecting with other provision that can be best delivered elsewhere.

We will provide in-house courses and events free at point of delivery.

We will provide ministerial development appropriate to both the ministry and ministry stage of the individual.

For clergy, we will fulfil the expectations of Ministerial Development, as found in the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009.

1b. Expectations of the licensed ministers within the Diocese.

We encourage each licensed minister to form and develop a 'Ministry Development Plan', usually arising out of their Ministry Development Review.

The individual may, where appropriate, contribute to the cost of training and development external to the diocese.

The individual will encourage, and request, appropriate support and resourcing from the parish / ministry location.

Clergy will fulfil the expectations of Ministerial Development, as found in the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009.¹

All clergy are expected to attend designated Bishop's study days.

All clergy are expected to undertake a 3 day retreat per year.

1c. In addition, clergy and office holders are required by law to keep abreast of changing legal and public responsibilities and wider legislation. The PTMD Dept will facilitate such training, in co-operation with the responsible Diocesan department.

2. Ministry Development Plans.

A Ministry Development Plan is a simple, but effective means of identifying what is needed to implement a previously identified ministerial development goal.

Each licensed minister is expected to develop a 'Ministry Development Plan'. For Clergy this is an integral part of the Ministerial Development Review. As such Ministry Development Plans will become the norm. For other ministries, they are strongly recommended as part of the annual review of the working agreement, established between the individual and the Parish / Minister Community. A Ministry Development Plan proforma is available on the diocesan website.

There are several ways in which an individual's ministerial development needs can be identified.

- A) By the individual themselves
- B) By a Ministerial Review, or Working Agreement review.
- C) From the individual's own network of support, in the parish, the Minister Community, the PCC, chapter, cell group, mentor, work consultant, etc.
- D) By the wider structure and support network within the Diocese
- E) By consultation with the Director PTMD

Given that it is difficult to see blind spots in one's own ministry, individuals are encouraged to consider ways of collecting feedback on different dimensions of their ministerial practice to help in identifying training needs.

3. Resourcing.

3a Financial support.

¹ Under the Clergy Terms of Service legislation the diocesan bishop has an obligation to use reasonable endeavours to ensure that office holders in the diocese are afforded opportunities to participate in CME and each office holder has an obligation to participate in appropriate CME.

For Clergy and Pioneer Ministers, a nominal sum of £160 per year is available for ministerial development. Whilst there is no 'set amount' for Lay Ministries, there is an encouragement to apply for resources (financial and otherwise) that are available through the diocese.

It is **not** possible to roll-over this nominal sum to a subsequent year. The CMD budget is limited, and only able to offer financial assistance toward the cost of courses and projects, rather than pay for everything. It is expected that applicants will make every effort to apply for grants to which they may be entitled, not least because this allows more funds to be available to help those who may not be thus provided for. Applicants will be asked to indicate what assistance they have secured from other providers when applying for funds. Applicants should also be willing to make some personal contribution towards their training, and similarly parishes and other ministry locations should seriously consider providing help where the training is directly beneficial to their place of ministry. In general, this contribution may be covered through the reimbursement of travel expenses, or by matching the diocesan grant.

Financial support will not be given retrospectively. All applications for funding should be submitted before the development activity is undertaken.

3b. Exceptions.

The following do not qualify for financial support, unless specifically agreed, although they may constitute an element of the Ministry Development Plan.

Cell groups

Spiritual Direction

Books

Subscriptions

Festival Conferences. (Greenbelt / New Wine / Spring Harvest etc).

3c. Retreats.

Taking into account the guidance contained within the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009, we expect that Clergy within the Diocese undertake a 3 day retreat, once a year. Applications for financial support for a retreat are treated no differently from other requests, and similar expectations of support from Parish / Individual / Diocese are relevant.

A conversation before booking a retreat is recommended, and financial support will not be given retrospectively.

3d. Formal Study.

In the case of on-going training or study, applications for funding must be made for each year of study, with no automatic assumption that because a previous grant was made another will be made available.

4. Sabbaticals / Study Leave

A sabbatical is a structured period of extended leave from regular ministerial duties designed for rest, renewal, retreat and resourcing. Whilst every diocese in the Church of England will award sabbaticals, it is not an entitlement or a right, and different dioceses have different eligibility criteria and processes. **Rather it is a gift offered by the Bishop,** after consultation with Archdeacons, to clergy who have requested a sabbatical or period of study leave.

There is a limit on the number of Sabbaticals we are able to offer in any one year. All applications will be considered by the meeting of Bishops and Archdeacons (B&As) upon recommendation from the Director of Parish Transition and Ministry Development.

4a. Eligibility & criteria

- Clergy who have been ordained at least ten years are eligible to apply for a sabbatical.
- Prior service in a similar ministry in another diocese, church or ministry, will normally be recognised, at the discretion of the Bishop.
- Repeat sabbaticals can be applied for 7 years after a long sabbatical, and 3 years after the final month of a short sabbatical.
- Further to the eligibility criteria, Bishops & Archdeacons will consider the following:
 - Impact of the overall number of sabbaticals upon the wider ministry of the whole Diocese.
 - Overall length of ministry and service.
 - Any previous leave granted for either study or sabbaticals, or any other discretionary purposes.
 - Other mitigating circumstances.

Application information is available on the diocesan website.

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6. Method of Application.

All applications must be made using the standard forms available electronically from the Diocesan web site.

The policy developed in this document is derived from several sources. Firstly previous practice in the diocese, the Church of England report 'Mind the Gap': Integrating Continual Ministerial Education for the Church's Ministers (Archbishops Council 2001); Affirmation and Accountability (Society of Mary and Martha 2002), The diocesan report 'Shaped by God' (2005). The policy refers to regulation 19 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009, which sets out advice in relation to arrangements for CMD and development in diocese.