

Commissioned Pastoral Teams

Approved and Accredited Scheme
for Commissioned Pastoral Teams
in the Church of England – Birmingham



Introductory Booklet May 2025



What is the purpose of this scheme?

The purpose of this approved and accredited diocesan scheme is to strengthen the life and witness of the Church in parishes and local communities so that the gifts of lay people are developed in the service of Christ. The training is designed to equip a pastoral team to share with clergy in pastoral care and community outreach on behalf of their church.

Will the Vicar and PCC be involved?

Yes. The team will work on behalf of their local church, so the whole church will need to understand and support what they are doing. The Incumbent and Church Wardens are responsible for discerning gifts and inviting the people who will train as part of a parish team. It is also important that the team has the agreement of the PCC and the support of the congregation as they do their training.

What previous training is needed?

Where the parish is seeking diocesan accreditation for a Commissioned Pastoral Team (CPT) there is a formal requirement that people **MUST** have a depth of confidence as disciples of Christ before they begin their pastoral and team training. We no longer require that potential team members have completed a foundation course (such as 3D or Way of Discipleship). But we do expect, when discerning



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who is being trained for a parish CPT, that the Incumbent and PCC are confident that those participating have the necessary integrity, gifting and capacity to represent the church in what is a public representative ministry. When the initial training is completed, the pastoral team can be accredited by the Bishop and formally commissioned for their work in the parish. In this way the scheme offers a recognised pathway into pastoral and community ministry.

How do we apply?

Any parish wishing to join the diocesan scheme must be in touch with the Warden of Commissioned Pastoral Teams or the Lay Ministry Foundation Lead at an early stage in the process of preparation.

The scheme is organised through a Steering Group chaired by the Warden of Commissioned Pastoral Care Teams. Co-ordination of training is the responsibility of the Lay Ministry Formation Lead and is overseen by the Head of Ministry Formation. Careful preparation is needed before a parish embarks on the scheme, and this may take as much as six months. During the preparation the vicar and PCC will meet with the Warden or Lay Ministry Formation Lead. There will need to be a clear commitment to teamwork between clergy and the lay pastoral team and a developing sense of clear priorities in response to local needs and the claims of the Gospel. The Lay Ministry Formation Lead monitors the training process and helps with assessment at the end of the foundation training.



When a parish has agreed to take part in the diocesan scheme each member of the proposed team will need to have completed:

- **An enrolment form**
- **A current and relevant DBS check**
- **Safeguarding training**

BEFORE they can start the course.

How is the team selected?

The Incumbent and the Church Wardens will look for people whose potential for developing in pastoral care and community outreach can already be discerned. Some may bring confidence and skills already gained in church and community, and others may be at a point where they are ready to venture into quite new areas of responsibility.

They may be adults of any age or gender. They will need to be people of integrity, trust and mature attitude, and also willing to learn and grow further in faith and service.

The process of selection in the parish may begin at any time, once the Incumbent and PCC have made the decision to take part in the diocesan scheme. Selection is for training, and the training includes a continuing process of discernment and assessment of each person's suitability for this particular ministry.



What is the Course?



1. Safeguarding	2. Learning to Listen	3. Team Building	4. Pastoral Theology & Praying with Others
<i>two online sessions</i>	<i>six sessions</i>	<i>three sessions</i>	<i>three sessions</i>
Foundations & Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse	Laying the foundations of listening to others and being self-aware	Providing firm foundations for working together with a common purpose	The distinctiveness about Christian Pastoral Care

When all four parts of the course have been completed to a satisfactory level the team can then be commissioned.

Following commissioning, there are opportunities to continue ministerial development:



CPT Annual Away Day – this is a day event where teams gather to learn together, share best practice and receive valuable input addressing current areas of concern. There is an expectation that all team members will attend.

Bereavement – half-day in-person training in caring for the bereaved and having greater understanding in the process of grief (led by Care for the Family)

Spirituality of Ageing – a new in-person day training event exploring issues of ageing and the growth of older people in their spiritual practices (led by the Anna Chaplaincy).

Further opportunities are currently being developed.

When does the course start?

We are flexible. We work with the momentum of the parish. And so, it is really a question of having a conversation with the Lay Ministry Formation Lead. We work at your pace.

Where does the course take place?

People train as a team, not as individuals. The training is increasingly offered in your parish location. Materials for the training are provided by the diocese, but it is anticipated that the training, wherever possible, is led by competent practitioners in your parish or deanery. This is arranged through conversations with the Lay Ministry Formation Lead. In some cases, parish teams will join up to do some of the training together.



How is the Course assessed?

There are no written exams, but if the parish is seeking diocesan accreditation, the progress of the team and its members is assessed at the end of each module. The Lay Ministry Formation Lead receives a written report on each member of the group – written in three parts: by the participant, the module Facilitator and the Incumbent (though sometimes that might be the same person). All three must be confident that there has been sufficient progress before anyone goes on to the next module, and at the end of all the foundation modules they must agree that the participant is now ready to begin ministry as a member of the parish team.

How long does Commissioning last?

Accreditation by the diocese is for the team as a whole, not for the participants individually, and the team is commissioned to the parish with a review at 5-year intervals.

What does it cost?

The costs are very modest and will normally be met by the parish. For most of the modules there will only be a charge to cover the copying of course materials. There will be some central training days offered for parish teams, after their commissioning and for these days there may be a



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registration fee. Some funds are available if the parish cannot meet these costs.

Where can I get more information?


PARISH CLERGY are invited to send for the Incumbent Handbook giving full details of the approved diocesan scheme for Commissioned Pastoral Teams.

IF YOU ARE A LAY MEMBER OF YOUR CHURCH and wish to be considered for this training, you should show this brochure to your Vicar or Church Warden so that they can consider if the diocesan scheme is suitable for your church at the present time.

To discuss the process of preparing for a team to enter training, please contact the Warden of Commissioned Pastoral Teams or the Lay Ministry Formation Lead.

For enquiries please contact our Learning & Development

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