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 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
Diocese of Norwich

Ministry Experience Scheme

Discover - Live, Work, Pray

Information Pack





Introduction

Thank you for your interest in The Diocese of Norwich Ministry Experience Scheme (MES). The MES will enable you to give a year to God, and provides time, space and support for you to reflect on the call of God in your life, experience life rooted in a parish church, and to live, work and pray in community. Alongside shadowing those working in parishes, the MES will offer the opportunity to do placements in specific contexts that may be of interest; for example, seaside parish ministry, or placements at the Cathedral, in prison, or with voluntary agencies. We will also provide skills based training in leadership and theology to support you as you listen to the voice of God.

The participating parishes are all based in Norwich East Deanery, within easy access of the city centre. Alongside the parish priest who will supervise your parish placement exploring a range of ministry opportunities, you will receive theological education in Christian Doctrine, the Bible and Preaching, Ministry and Discipleship, Pastoral Care, Mission and Evangelism, Worship and Spirituality. The Coordinator of the MES will provide support in developing a rule of life and community living, and theological reflection on your experiences. You will meet once a month with a mentor, a young ordained minister who has recent experience of exploring a call from God. Spiritual direction will also be provided.

The year will begin with a weekend retreat on Holy Island, which will allow you to get to know the other participants and begin building relationships and considering a rule of life for living in community. After the retreat, you will be living in a shared house in Norwich within easy reach of the city centre and placement parishes, which are all in Norwich East Deanery. The Diocese will pay all household expenses and provide a living allowance of £60 per week.

Ministry Experience Scheme

Who is the MES for?

The MES is for young people who are considering whether God is calling them to Christian ministry in one of its many guises; this may be as an ordained minister, as a youth worker or children and family worker, parish nurse, or within a charitable agency. The MES will allow you to gain experience and help you to explore some of the possibilities open to you.

The MES is for young people after finishing school who are still considering their options or who want a gap year before university. If you have finished university, the MES gives a year of experience in a busy parish setting and chance to reflect on your future. You may have been working for a few years, and are now wondering whether God has something different in store for you.

What can you expect?

You will join in the full life of the parish you are placed in and gain a variety of experience in areas of ministry. These will include leading prayer & worship, preaching, taking part in and leading small groups, visits to homes, Bible studies, working with children and young people working with the elderly, working with community groups such as toddler groups and uniformed groups, depending on the areas that the parish is engaged with. There will also be the opportunity to undertake additional placements in settings that may be of particular interest, for example, seaside team ministry, rural ministry, prison, education or hospital chaplaincy, work with voluntary agencies.

What support will you get?

You will be supervised by the incumbent of the parish you are placed in. They will provide support and coaching in the work you do. You will receive spiritual direction which will provide personal support and encouragement, and enable you to grow in faith and discernment. The MES coordinator will provide ongoing support and help you to reflect theologically on your experiences and study.

What will we expect of you?

We will expect you to give five days a week, including Sunday, to the life of the parish where you are placed, and to spend one day in study each week. You will be expected to live in community with other volunteers, but may take up to four weeks away from the shared house for private time, plus all bank holidays. We will pay for your accommodation (including household bills and broadband), the retreat and associated costs, and expenses associated with placements. We will also pay a £60 weekly living allowance for all weeks that you are resident in the house, from which you will be expected to pay for your own food, personal items, mobile phone and local travel.

What next?

If you would like to find out more, please contact Revd Dr Fiona Haworth, Coordinator of the Diocese of Norwich Ministry Experience Scheme. Fiona will be happy to talk to you about the scheme and what it involves. She can be contacted on:

01603 615297,
fiona.haworth@dioceseofnorwich.org
40 Heigham Road, Norwich, NR2 3AU.

If you would like to apply to join the MES, please complete the Application form (below) You will need two referees – people who know you and can tell us a little about you; one of whom must be your vicar, chaplain or church leader. We will invite successful applicants for interview and an opportunity to visit potential placements. Once you have been offered a place, we will complete DBS checks, take up references and arrange for you to begin.

Person Specification & Role description

Education/Qualifications

The successful candidate will have been educated to GCSE level or above., and have a willingness to engage in practical learning and study as part of the role

Experience

Essential:

- Membership of a church or Christian community
- Willingness to learn from new traditions

Desirable:

- A desire to be involved in leading Christian worship in different ways
- Willingness to try new things and to be challenged and stretched.

Skills/Aptitudes/Competencies

Essential:

- Openness to new perspectives and differing approaches to scripture and worship, and the ability to live with good disagreement
- Considerate of others
- Willingness to develop new skills
- Ability to work in a team and share in the common task
- Committed to personal, spiritual and professional development
- Able to demonstrate an ability to work with people who are /may be vulnerable; and

Desirable:

- Ability to relate well to a wide range of people
- Ability to be flexible, given the fast-changing nature of ministry
- Willingness to support events and meetings during evenings and weekends as required, whilst maintaining a disciplined approach to free time
- Work under the direction of the Parish supervisor in ways appropriate to the participant's role
- A willingness to develop their skills and training in working with people who are / may be vulnerable

Indicative role description

- Involvement in leading worship, leading prayers, serving, teaching and preaching with support and as is appropriate in the placement parish
- Attending and participating in regular worship within the parish and community house
- Supporting and assisting in the running of parish events
- Participating in theological study and reflection
- Taking part in at least two block placements exploring different areas of ministry during the year.
- Assist the placement supervisors in other ways that are appropriate to the Volunteer's role within the parish / ministry setting, and working collaboratively as part of the team.

Principles

The Church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the church safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately report it.

The role of volunteer with the Ministry Experience Scheme may involve contact with children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect. This requires a commitment to:

- Treat individuals with respect;
- Recognise and respect their abilities and potential for development;
- Promote their rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless it is unsafe;
- Ensure their welfare and safety;
- The promotion of social justice, social responsibility and respect for others; and
- Confidentiality, never passing on personal information, except to the person to whom you are responsible, unless there are safeguarding issues of concern (e.g. allegations of abuse).
Safeguarding issues of concern must always be reported to the Police or Social Care services and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

If a volunteer is required to work regularly with vulnerable groups, this post will be eligible for a criminal record check which will be renewed at least every five years.

