

Licensed Lay Ministry Discernment and Selection Process

Discernment varies enormously between people. Some may be sure of a calling to licensed lay ministry – others may take time to explore all the possibilities before coming to a conclusion. Conversations with the incumbent are usually ongoing over a period of time, either before or concurrently with discussions with Vocations Advisers and LLM sub-wardens.

Advisers and enquirers may find it helpful to visit the diocesan website for more information on the vision for licensed lay ministry and the qualities we would be seeking:

[Licensed Lay Ministry - Diocese of Norwich](#)

<https://youtu.be/JqYC20Dtgwo>

The following is a summary of the steps needed in the vocational discernment process from initial enquiry through to the start of training.

Initial Exploration

1. Enquirer talks to their incumbent, or to a Vocations Adviser, or makes contact with the Bishop's Adviser for Licensed Lay Ministers (BALLM).
2. During this time, they also contact the PA to the Licensed Lay Ministry Training Coordinator to arrange to attend the next Training Exploration Evening (usually every February/March)
3. If the enquirer makes contact with the BALLM's office, then either the BALLM or their area Sub-Warden will be in touch for one-to-one conversation.
4. Once the enquirer is ready to test a vocation by making a formal application as a candidate for lay ministry selection, they will need to obtain their incumbent's support as follows.

Incumbent

5. If the Incumbent endorses the candidate's call to licensed lay ministry, they confirm this by email to the BALLM **no later than 28th February in each year for a September start.**
6. Incumbent (or other clergy colleague or Rural Dean if the parish is in vacancy) completes the Incumbent's Nomination Form and Reference as soon as is feasible thereafter and send them to the BALLM's office. (If the deadlines are looming, it is possible for the Nomination Form to be submitted with details of the PCC motions to follow, provided these have taken place before the candidate's selection conference.)
7. The Incumbent arranges for all of the PCCs in the benefice to vote by secret ballot on the following motion:
'This PCC supports N spiritually, prayerfully and financially as its candidate for Licensed Lay Ministry Training Selection on the understanding:
 - a) *that N will be released from all obligations in the parish during the two years of training*
 - b) *that N will be entitled to claim and be paid the expenses of office once licensed and*
 - c) *agrees that on completion of training N will be accepted and regularly used as a full member of the Parish Ministry Team.*
8. On receipt of the Incumbent's Nomination, the BALLM's office sends a copy to the Licensed Lay Ministry Training Coordinator and to the Selection Secretary.

Candidate

9. On receipt of the Incumbent's confirmation in (5) above, the BALLM's office sends the candidate an Application Form for completion and return as soon as possible (Closing date in each year is

15th March for a September start). The form includes a request for baptism and confirmation certificates, so candidates would be wise to start the process of getting hold of these as early as possible, as getting formal copies of missing certificates can take time. The candidate will also have to supply details of three referees. Dates to keep free for training and selection will also be supplied by the BALLM's office.

10. The candidate will need to attend the 'Introduction to Licensed Lay Ministry Training' evening in February/March.

Sub-Warden

11. The BALLM's office will notify the relevant Sub-Warden and pass to them a copy of the incumbent's nomination, unless there has already been discussion between the candidate and Sub-Warden.
12. The candidate and area Sub-Warden will meet, and the Sub-Warden will send a short report to the BALLM's office no later than **30th March** in the year of application. It may be that this step has happened as part of the initial exploration, but if there is a long gap between initial exploration and application, a further conversation may be recommended.

Referees

13. On receipt of the candidate's application, the BALLM's office will write to their referees requesting a formal reference. These must be returned by **30th March** in each year for a September start. The BALLM's office will also check with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser where there is any safeguarding history to be taken into account.

Selection Conference

14. Once all the papers have been received by the BALLM's office, they are sent to the Selection Secretary, who then calls candidates to a day-long selection conference, usually held between April and June.
15. Candidates are usually contacted by telephone by the BALLM within 48 hours of the end of their selection conference to be told the recommendation.
16. If successful, the candidate will then need to liaise with the LLM Training Coordinator regarding the start of training and will be required to complete the necessary documents to obtain a DBS clearance.

Those recommended for training must attend a Summer School at the end of August. This forms part of their induction to the course as well as providing initial teaching for their first 2 modules. The dates of the Summer School are usually the week leading up to the Bank Holiday at the end of August. It would help potential candidates to be aware of this as early as possible.

At the end of the training period, reports are written by members of the Training Team, and the BALLM makes the final decision on whether or not a trainee is admitted as a Licensed Lay Minister. Admission takes place usually on the third Saturday in September of each year, and it is one of the regulations that new ministers must be aged 69 or less on that date.

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