

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 Trusted Advisers, LLM sub-wardens, and as part of the Shared Vocations Space.

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:

<https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/mission-and-ministry/ministry/lay-ministry/licensed-lay-ministry/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqYC20Dtgow>

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 makes contact with the Bishop's Adviser for Licensed Lay Ministry (BAFLM).
2. As part of their discernment the enquirer should attend the Shared Vocations Space which brings together the resources to support those wanting to explore a calling towards lay or ordained public ministry in our diocese. More details can be found here

https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/mission-and-ministry/vocations/shared_vocation_space/#:~:text=The%20Shared%20Vocation%20Space%20brings%20together%20the%20resources,this%20further%3F%20Incorporating%20the%20new%20School%20of%20Mission%21

3. During the Vocations Space the enquirer will explore ministry in its widest context. Towards the end of the Shared Vocations Space the enquirer will know if they wish to explore lay ministry further.
4. If so the enquirer should contact the BAFLM to test their vocation by making a formal application as a candidate for lay ministry selection. They will need to obtain their incumbent's and each of their PCCs support as part of the process. The application form should be requested by the end of February at the latest and returned to the Admin Assistant to the BAFLM by 15 March – this is a firm deadline – applications received after this date may not be considered.
5. During this time they also contact the Admin Assistant to the Licensed Lay Ministry Training Coordinator to arrange to attend the next Training Exploration Evening (usually every February/March).

Incumbent

6. Once an application has been submitted the Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM will contact the Incumbent to submit a nomination form and reference. A copy of the application form will also be sent to the Licensed Lay Minister's Selection Secretary who will, working with the Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM, ensure all paperwork is in place before a candidate's formal selection.

7. The 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 and sends them to the Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM. (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.)

8. The Incumbent arranges for ALL 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.

9. On receipt of the Incumbent's Nomination and Reference the Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM sends a copy to the Selection Secretary.

Candidate

10. On receipt of the application the Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM will ask the Sub-Warden of the area a candidate is located in to contact the candidate for an initial discussion. After the discussion the Sub-Warden will submit a written report to the Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM and the Selection Secretary.

11. The application 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 selection and training will also be supplied by the BAFFLM's office.

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

Assistant to the BAFFLM and the Selection Secretary

13. The Admin Assistant to the BAFFLM and the Selection Secretary work closely together to ensure the application and selection processes run as smoothly as possible. They take day to day control of the process and once an application is submitted become the usual main point of contact – they collate and hold all papers prior to the selection day, arrange and send out invitation to candidates to attend a Selection Conference, and run the actual Selection Days.

Referees

14. On receipt of the candidate's application, the PA to the BAFFLM will write to their referees requesting a formal reference. These must be returned in a timely manner. The BAFFLM's Office will also check with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser where there is any safeguarding history to be taken into account.

Selection Conference

15. During the above process all papers will be collated by the Selection Secretary in conjunction with the PA to the BAFFLM. All papers, including Incumbents Nomination and Reference, the three references, baptism and confirmation certificates, and Sub-Warden's report must be completed at least 14 days before a candidate's Selection Conference. If there are any extenuating circumstances when this is not possible the Selection Secretary will liaise with the BAFFLM accordingly.

16. The Selection Day is held on a Saturday in April or May. The candidate will be advised of which dates to keep free and will receive their final invitation and confirmation of date at least 14 days before the first Selection Day.

17. The Selection Day does not look for fully formed Licensed Lay Ministers, but for potential with each candidate being assessed individually and not in competition with each other.

18. Candidates are usually contacted by telephone by the BAFFLM within 48 hours of the end of their selection conference to be told the recommendation.

19. 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 during August. This forms part of their induction to the course as well as providing initial teaching for their first 2 modules. The date will be provided by the Licensed Lay Ministry Training Coordinator.

At the end of the training period, reports are written by members of the Training Team, and the BAFFLM 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 in Norwich Cathedral.

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