



**Diocese of Newcastle:
Generous, Engaged and Open**

Local Ministry Development Handbook



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INTRODUCTION: *About the Handbook*

Welcome! So you took the step and joined a Local Ministry Development Team? The first step on a journey is often hard as we delay moving to the future by clinging to the familiar, but we find, having taken it, we have momentum for the next step. The process of Local Ministry Development (LMD) is like walking on a journey and it is being on that journey which is the most important thing - more important than whether your journey looks the same or meets the approval or pattern of someone else's.

This handbook is not a set of instructions but more a list of ingredients or a series of signposts. It aims to bring into one place information about how teams are set up, guidelines for best practice, and training material. It is primarily for members of Local Ministry Development Teams (LMDTs). It can also be used with Shared Ministry teams, Strategy Groups, House Groups and think tanks and any group or team may find some aspects helpful. The material that this handbook contains will also help others to understand the role of an LMDT. For example, if you are a PCC member or a Churchwarden in a parish with an LMDT, you may find help here if you want to know how you can support the team members and they can support you. Or your parish may be thinking about setting up a team. You could read the handbook to get a better idea of what that might mean in practice.

The first two sections are easy to print off as a booklet if you find this more helpful than reading a screen. You can also ask for a pre-printed copy if wanted. The Resources section (Section Three) is only available online but each resource there can be read, printed off, shared, used and adapted as required.

SECTION ONE: *The Foundations*

Values

However useful this handbook may be in offering some structure and process, it is not meant to be a rigid template.

We are NOT saying, follow a step by step guide and success will be yours - all

your questions answered, all problems solved. The most important thing LMD offers to churches are a group of values. These values are:



- **Collaboration** – as the body of Christ, lay and ordained *all of us are called*. We are called to work together to build God’s Kingdom, to develop our churches as places of worship and welcome and to show and share the Good News every day of the week.
- **Context** – We build God’s Kingdom *where we are*. Our diocese is rural and urban, rich and poor. Churches are big and small, old and new, our communities and networks are many with various resources and needs. A key activity for congregations is to listen to the situation they find themselves and to find out what God is already doing there and join in.
- **Learning** – The Christian life is a journey with lots of opportunities to learn about God, ourselves and the world around us. We are not passive recipients of the faith or of ministry but need to be active participants. In order to learn we need some confidence to try new things and to make mistakes. God encourages us to be unafraid to go deeper, to be playful and to keep on journeying together.

What is our purpose?

The basic purpose of a Local Ministry Development Team is to enable more effective mission and ministry of the local congregation(s). Team members, laity and clergy working together, encourage the church to be a community in which each person's gifts are identified and developed. The congregation should see the team members as



servants who work to enable others to serve God more effectively. The team should aim to be a model of teamwork in the way they go about their task. Structurally a LMDT is a sub-group of the PCC and should always aim for good communication with PCC members and with the wider congregation.

Why do it this way?

Each church needs a 'space' for reflection on vision and strategy. An LMDT should not be 'just another meeting'. Neither is an LMDT the Vicar's 'helpers', a Vicar's replacement or a ministry team, made up only of those doing the ministry. A LMDT is a place to keep an overview of mission and ministry, of strategy and planning. The point is to be able and willing to listen to God together about what is right for your church.

The process is slow and careful because everyone concerned needs the chance to understand what is happening so they can help to shape the plans for the future. People from the congregation are chosen to hold this space for the benefit of the whole church. You are not doing the mission and ministry so the rest of the congregation don't have to, but enable the whole church to dream dreams about what is possible. So take heart: if you are part of the team, you are there as a result of God making his will known through the prayers of his people.

Prayer

Whatever, literally whatever, else you do, pray. Prayer and reflection together on the Scriptures, will ensure that as a group you are rooted in God. LMDTs are not business or fundraising committees and so should not prioritise efficiency over effectiveness. In a Christian sense, this means waiting on God in prayer, together, possibly for a whole evening! “But we didn’t achieve anything!” To which the reply might be, “Didn’t you?”

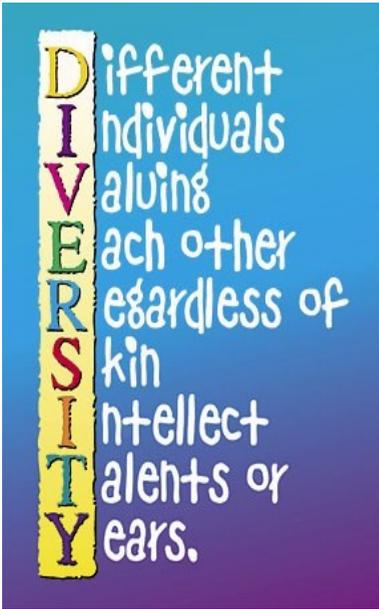
If you need help knowing how to get going or have a lack of confidence about prayer, seek help from within your parish or from the diocese (also see Resource Sheet 1). If you omit prayer completely, or if you go ahead and ask God to bless your plans at the end of the process, then what is to distinguish an LMDT from the committee of the local sports club?



Something should be done in every team meeting to maintain or rekindle your vision. You are not just trying to tinker a bit with the systems of the Church of England. You are there to help bring about a transformation in the life of the people of God. But when things start getting a bit hard, and progress seems slow, you need to take time to recapture a sense of purpose. Look for the “Yes, that’s why we’re here!” moments.

Why is it important to identify skills?

God made us diverse. He made us different for a purpose. In 1 Corinthians 12. 4-7 we read, *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*



It can be easy to forget that each of us has a unique experience of life which has developed gifts and skills in us that others may find useful and valuable. An audit of talents can be a useful way to discover and honour this. So don't choose your chair and scribe simply on the basis that they are articulate or already hold a position of responsibility, or that they've done the job for 30 years! Pray and talk about what skills are needed and come to a common mind. When thinking about a scribe, a good motto is: keep paperwork to the minimum necessary to help the team do its work. Excessive bureaucracy helps no

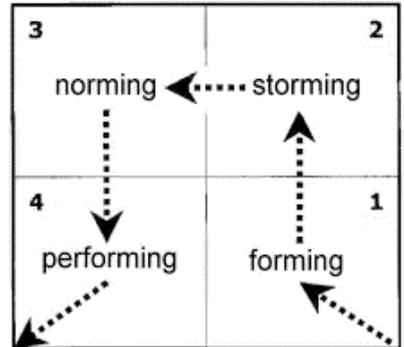
one (see Resource Sheet 3 for more help with this). When thinking about a chair, chose someone who can coordinate, keep hold of the big picture, and reflect back, someone who notices when a quiet member wishes to speak and when a voluble member has said enough.

How should our team operate?

A classic way of identifying how teams develop is through the stages of Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing (Bruce Tuckman 1965). In this model the key thing to notice is that we move from identifying and celebrating our shared views and experiences to discovering our differences, then pooling these differences to get our tasks completed.

Most teams expect to see fruit too soon. They want to jump straight to the norming and performing phase without any putting down of roots and growing of healthy stems.

If you feel there are few visible results after the team has been going for 6 months, there is no cause for alarm. Teams in general over-estimate what they can expect to achieve within a year but under-estimate what they could achieve in three years. It is important, then, to persevere during the second phase, when the team has to start facing challenges. You will probably begin to discover things about some of your team mates that are annoying. People outside the team may make quite unfair criticisms. All this will test whether you are ready to work at building up relationships and see it as a primary responsibility of the team, not just an optional extra.



M. Scott Peck also offers a model of community building in his book, *A Different Drum*. He describes the stages a group of strangers who come together go through as Pseudo Community, Chaos, Emptiness and True Community. The first two stages echo Forming and Storming but Scott Peck argues that to create true community people in a group needs to empty themselves of preconceived ideas and the need to fix, convert or solve and instead begin to share their vulnerabilities. He noticed that often groups rarely get to this stage and would rather stay as pseudo or chaotic communities than do the work to achieve the reality of true community. One of the greatest gifts your team can give to the wider church is to be an example of forgiveness and sacrifice being worked out in practice, a living demonstration of maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. You will therefore need to give steady attention to team development.

What questions might start our journey?



Each team should have key areas, a set of questions or some kind of starting point from the PCC. You might also like to begin by asking yourselves “What’s our church for?” or “What does our church look like from the outside?” You may like to reflect on your Parish Vision statement, Mission Action Plan or the Diocesan Vision of Generous, Engaged and Open. You may also like to share parts of your own Christian journey with each other or develop a timeline of your church. Support from the diocese or from other parishes with LMDTs might help with such questions.

How can a mentor help?

A mentor’s role is to accompany the team on a journey and ‘hold’ their process, acting as a resource and guide – a ‘guide on the side’ rather than a ‘sage on the stage’. Why bother? Because there is then a link to the wider diocese and network of experience and someone to help the team stay faithful to its original purpose. The mentor assists and supports, provides training where able, and identifies training that can be found elsewhere.

What effect does a change of membership have?

Along the way, there will be moments when the membership of the team changes. Sometimes it will be because a term of service has come to an end or there is a change of Incumbent. Sometimes it will be unexpected: a member has to drop out for personal reasons. Recognise that, in an important sense, a team begins again each time somebody new joins it. All the relationships in a team are affected when a new person is introduced. So some of the ground covered above will need to be gone over again and again, not just at the beginning of LMD in your parish.

Finally...

The LMD process is designed to enable the flourishing of the whole people of God. In this handbook we have likened it to a journey and we have hinted that it won't always be easy but it will also be enriching, enlivening and enjoyable. As a Local Ministry Development Task Group we hope and pray that you will know God's presence through the process, both comforting and challenging you as you enjoy learning together as a member of a LMDT.



SECTION TWO: *Checklists*

1. The Group Contract
2. Group Process
3. Possible Actions for the Team
4. Responsibilities During a Vacancy

Checklist 1: The Group Contract

It is important to create a group contract and work together on a team culture.

In the first year it is recommended to:

- Meet at least once a month or for 10 meetings over the year
- Meet for up to 2 hours
- Make time for prayer and Bible study, Lectio Divina etc.
- Establish ground rules of speaking and listening, mutual respect and confidentiality
- Have an away day or morning with a meal together (grants are available).
- Maintain regular contact with PCC
- Reflect together on what's going well after one year

Keep asking whether and what kind support do we need?

Keep in touch with LMD Officer and the LMD Network events and mailings

Group membership needs to be reviewed every 3 years

Checklist 2: Group Process

Here are some issues to think about, when you are establishing your team culture:

- Do we need a chair and who will it be?
- Which members of the team have experience of leadership that we can draw upon?
- How can we avoid the meetings turning into “just another committee”?
- How do we ensure that we include prayer, study and reflection together at each meeting?
- Do we need a standard agenda or better without?
- How do we make sure we don’t neglect outcomes?
- How can we ensure that the voices of quieter people are heard?
- How important is consensus? How do we receive unpopular or unconventional suggestions?
- How will we record decisions and check that they have been acted upon?
- How will we evaluate the meeting? Refer back to the Team’s mandate from the PCC?
- It is good at the end of each meeting to offer an opportunity for each member to add to or comment on the meeting.

Checklist 3: Possible Actions

The best source of ideas is other LMDTs. You may like to attend events such as the Networking Evening and meal held every summer or the smaller regional meetings where you can talk to members of other teams. The bi-monthly LMD mailings are also a source of ideas and resources. You will find a list of previous mailings and ideas from other parishes on the Newcastle Diocesan website www.newcastle.anglican.org/lmd.

Here are just a few examples of things that various LMDTs have done but this is not intended to be prescriptive:

- Developing the welcome offered by the church
- Coordinating and resourcing pastoral care
- Enabling the setting up of Bible study and discussion groups
- Researching how the church relates to the wider community through a church and community audit
- Resourcing the ministry of baptisms, weddings and funerals
- Encouraging spiritual development (eg through prayer workshops)
- Encouraging use of a parish prayer cycle

Checklist 4: During a Vacancy

Changes of vicar will have a particular impact. The Local Ministry Development Team has an important role to play during the vacancy, which can still be a time of growth with a sense of everybody pulling together.

Aim to help the whole congregation to prepare for that opportunity and deepen their faith during the period of transition. Remember that you are there to recognise other people's gifts and ensure that proper training is provided for those who take up new responsibilities.

The team's meetings and established responsibilities continue when the Parish or Benefice falls vacant

The team remains accountable to the PCC and should report to it regularly

The team's remit remains as described by the PCC

Unlike wardens, the team members acquire no specific statutory responsibilities

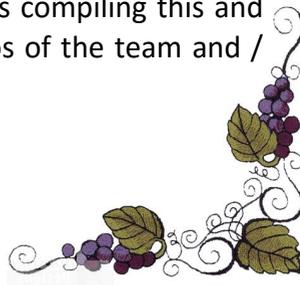
At the start of the vacancy, you should:

- Plan how the team will adjust to being without a vicar
- Appoint a contact person for the Area Dean and LMDO
- If you do not already it can be useful to have a LMDT member on the PCC during a vacancy
- Keep in touch with Churchwardens

Your Archdeacon and Area Dean both have roles to play during the vacancy, but the Area Dean is your usual port of call when you want advice. The LMD Officer is also available for support and advice.

It is very important to ensure that information about the LMDT is included in the Parish Profile. Do find out who is compiling this and provide a paragraph and preferably some photos of the team and / or their achievements!

**Don't be afraid to try new things
Encourage one another!**



SECTION THREE: *Online Resources*

We have a wide range of resources to support you. Go to – www.newcastle.anglican.org/lmd

They will be updated, added to and posted on the website as they become available

Resource sheet 1: Praying Together

This material includes practical ideas about how to pray in a variety of styles

Resource sheet 2: Learning Together

Some starters on how we learn and how to create a helpful environment for learning in a group

Resource sheet 3: Notes on Note-taking

Pointers on creating a simple and effective record of a meeting

Resource sheet 4: A Reflection Journal

Some questions to get you started on keeping a personal record of your learning

Resource sheet 5: Getting the Balance Right – organisations and community

Pointers on how to build a sense of community in your team

- Resource sheet 6: Getting the Balance Right – maintenance and mission**
Thoughts on how to help keep a team and church outward-facing
- Resource sheet 7: Changing Culture**
An introduction to some theories of change and how we might help and hinder it
- Resource sheet 8: Reviewing a Team**
Some questions to help with an annual review of a LMDT
- Resource sheet 9: Flow Chart for setting up an LMDT**
The basic process for setting up a LMDT in your parish
- Resource sheet 10: Nomination form template**
A template for you to download and adapt when nominating new members for a LMDT
- Resource sheet 11: Worship resources for commissioning, renewing and the laying down of a LMDT**
Suggested prayers for use in a service where a LMDT is to be commissioned, renewed or ended
- Resource sheet 12: Further Resources**
Links to other resources on the internet and through the Religious Resources Centre at Church House, Percy Main

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