



**A CONFIDENTIAL SCHEME FOR
READERS
IN THE
DIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL
2023**

Bishops Letter

Dear Colleague,

It has been both inspiring and humbling to see the ministry of Readers exercised throughout this critical time of the Covid pandemic. Your adaptability to new circumstances and learning and your resilience and faithfulness has been a great testimony of the Holy Spirit at work in his church.

I am aware that for many colleagues, this has been a time of shielding and many have felt the frustrations of not being able to minister as you may have wanted. These days of Covid are hopefully, giving us all time to reflect theologically on the God who remains with us throughout the pandemic. I thank God for your faith, the desire of your heart and for your faithful prayers – all of which serve to strengthen the church and make a bigger difference in the world.

In these turbulent times, I do hope you are taking the time you need to enrich your faith and discipleship and reflect upon your vocation and what it means to be a Christian leader in such a time as this.

Friends, you will be aware that a new MDR process for Readers was introduced some years ago. We have now updated the MDR format to align it more closely to the diocesan vision and strategy and to ensure it is purposeful. We hope that you will find it beneficial in helping you develop your ministry and role and identify any concerns or training needs.

As the MDR is a condition of your re-licensing please take it seriously and give it the time and attention it requires. For any assistance or concerns, please speak to the Bishop's Officer for Reader Ministry (Bruce Pennie).

Please stay safe and well and may God continue to bless you. With thanks for our shared ministry in the Gospel.

Yours most sincerely in Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Bev." The plus sign is small and positioned to the left of the name "Bev.", which is written in a cursive, flowing style.

What is a Reader?

Readers in the Diocese of Liverpool exercise a valued and distinctive ministry as we ask God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference in the world. Readers are tasked by the Bishop to: -

- Grow and equip disciples that they may live out their faith in daily life.
- Frame their personal life and public ministry under our diocesan Rule of Life.
- Identify and nurture new leaders, both lay and ordained.

Reader ministry is distinctive in 4 keys ways: -

- Readers are first and foremost Ministers of the Word – their focus is on teaching and applying the Word of God in preaching, in worship, in small groups and in the nurturing and forming of new disciples.
- Readers are lay ministers; in their preaching and teaching they speak out of the rich diversity of the Church of England and their experience as lay women and men, living out their own discipleship in the world and encouraging all God’s people to live out their faith in the church and in everyday life.
- As Ministers of the Word, Readers are trained in scripture and theology - they are teachers of the faith who offer a distinctive, theologically informed lay voice within the church’s teaching.
- Readers hold a licence from the Bishop and as such are accountable to their incumbent and to the Bishop for their public ministry. Readers are usually licensed to a specific parish but are also expected to be more widely deployable across the deanery and diocese (including chaplaincy, where they are accountable to the institution in which they serve). Readers understand and exercise their ministry and leadership alongside others in a rich variety of lay and ordained ministries.

Readers are sustained in this ministry by the diocesan College of Readers, which is itself part of the wider community of ministers and disciples across our diocese. Readers are expected to be committed to our diocesan Rule of Life, to the life of the local church to which they are licensed, to growing in their own learning and ministry and to nurturing and encouraging others in their calling in the church and the world.

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Ministerial Development Review is founded on the assumption that all in licensed ministry, ordained or lay, are responsible to God for the ministry entrusted to them and that they are accountable to the Church and to one another for the way in which it is exercised and developed.

The review is about affirmation, celebration and encouragement as well as challenge. It also reminds us of our shared responsibility with our colleagues in ministry and our responsibility to ourselves and our families.

The objectives of this review are: -

1. To support Readers in their vocation and service of the Diocese of Liverpool to: -
 - Introduce people to Jesus
 - Deepen discipleship
 - Develop Christian Leaders
 - Work for justice
2. To ensure Readers are supported in their role so that they are able to minister as part of an effective leadership team. To listen to any concerns about the exercise of their ministry and to name any challenge or difficulty.
3. To celebrate success and acknowledge gifts and abilities.
4. To explore how the Rule of Life is blessing the Reader in their own discipleship.
5. To identify ongoing training and ministerial development needs.

GUIDELINES ON HOW TO USE THIS REVIEW

Your MDR is conducted in conjunction with your working agreement and should be undertaken every year.

Please complete this review before your working agreement as it may help identify issues to be discussed with your incumbent.

1. Identify your Reviewer. Your Reader Chaplain or Bishop's Officer for Reader Ministry (BOFRM) will supply you with a list of Reader MDR Reviewers. If you would require any advice on this please contact your Deanery Reader Chaplain.
2. Agree a time and venue for your meeting. This may be via Zoom or ideally, face to face.
3. Take time to reflect prayerfully on your ministry using the 'Review Guidance Form'.
4. The Form is to be used as an aid for meeting the objectives of your Review meeting, not as an end in itself. Please complete the form as openly as you can and either take it to your meeting or give it to your Reviewer in advance if this would help your conversation.
5. At your meeting with your Reviewer try to be open and honest; this is your opportunity to talk about how you are exercising Reader ministry with all its highs and lows.
6. Try to identify any areas of celebration or concern where you might require ongoing support or training.
7. Sign and date the Confirmation Sheet. If there are any comments you would like to make to the Bishop please include them on this sheet.
8. Please arrange for your Reviewer to sign the Confirmation and return via email to sarah.smith@liverpool.anglican.org or post to Bishop's Lodge, Woolton Park, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 6DT. We will arrange for your Deanery Reader Chaplain to sign this form.
9. Please keep your Review Guidance Form for your own records.

LIVERPOOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF READERS

READERS MINISTERIAL REVIEW SCHEME

REVIEW GUIDANCE FORM

This form has been designed to help you and your Reviewer to evaluate and develop prayerfully the particularities of Reader ministry that you are called to.

It is suggested that you spend time reflecting on the various areas of your service and then use this form as a basis for discussion with your Reviewer.

This is an aid to help your review discussion. This is not sent to the Diocese but is kept for your own personal records, we only require the completed Confirmation Sheet returned (this can be found on the final page of this document).

SECTION A. PERSONAL DETAILS

Name of Reader _____

Name of Reviewer _____

Incumbent _____

Parish _____

Deanery _____

Date of Review _____

SECTION B.

1. Present Ministerial Context

a) Please define and give a brief insight into your context (*e.g. Sector ministry, LML, Team Ministry, Parish; who else is in your ministry team; etc*)

b) Please describe your role(s)

- c) Would you say you have got the number of hours you are giving to this ministry about right? Is there anything that needs changing/adjusting?

- d) What do you find life-giving about your role?

- e) Where do you find affirmation and encouragement?

- f) Do you have any frustrations/disappointments with regard to your role?

2. Diocesan Vision & Strategy

In Liverpool we are asking God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference, with more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world.

- a) What does 'asking God for a bigger difference' mean to you? How is this shaping your role and ministry?

- b) Since your last MDR, how are you
 - a. Introducing people to Jesus?
 - b. Deepening Discipleship?
 - c. Developing Christian Leaders; and
 - d. Working for justice?

- c) What difficulties are you encountering and how might they be overcome?

3. Spirituality and Discipleship?

- a) Are you signed up to the Rule of Life?

b) How is your discipleship nurtured by:

- a) Praying
- b) Reading
- c) Learning
- d) Telling
- e) Serving
- f) Giving

c) Do you have a Spiritual Director?

d) Do you have a Mentor?

e) Do you make time for retreats/quiet days?

f) Do you have a spiritual support network (Prayer triplet/cell group etc)?

4. Working Arrangements?

a) Do you have regular supervision with your incumbent (Please state frequency)?

b) How would you describe your working relationship with your incumbent? Others?

c) Do you feel you have a clear understanding of the vision and strategy for your ministerial context?

d) Are you part of the Leadership Team?

5. Personal Professional Development

a) Are you committed to the Deanery Reader Chapter? How could it be improved?

b) How are you delivering on your commitment to on-going Reader learning and development? What is working well? What changes would help?

c) Is there any training you would benefit from?

d) Are there concerns for your own welfare and that of your family or colleagues?

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

C. CONFIRMATION SHEET

Please use this form to confirm that the review has taken place.

Name of Reader _____

Parish _____

Name of Reviewer _____

Date of Review _____

We would like to make the following comments for the attention of The Bishop of Warrington. If a meeting with the Bishop’s Officer for Reader Ministry, the Vocations Team or the Bishop would be helpful, please contact them directly (PAWarrington@liverpool.anglican.org).

Signed (Reader) _____

Signed (Reviewer) _____

Please email this confirmation together with your completed Working Agreement to: sarah.smith@liverpool.anglican.org or post to Bishop’s Lodge, Woolton Park, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 6DT and we will arrange signature by your Deanery Reader Chaplain.

Signed (Chair of Deanery Reader Chapter) _____