

Commissioning the team: the process for new and established teams

Introduction

A Shared Ministry Team is a recognised model of collaborative ministry in the diocese of Liverpool and as such is a form of parochial ministry commissioned by the Archdeacon on behalf of the Bishop. This document provides guidance on the commissioning of both a new Shared Ministry Team and also for established Teams that are looking to be re-commissioned at the expiry of their five year term.

This document should be read in conjunction with *Forming the Team: an overview of the SMT process*, a download from www.liverpool.anglican.org/the-SMT-process.

The Commissioning of a New Shared Ministry team

The current practice is that a new Shared Ministry team (SMT) is commissioned by the Archdeacons on behalf of the Bishop.

Towards the end of training the facilitators will indicate to the team when it is appropriate for the process leading to commissioning to be set in motion. Before the Commissioning Service can happen the training process must be completed and the Agreed Statement approved by all concerned.

A template for the liturgical words of commissioning will be sent to the Incumbent by Wendy at St James' House along with a sample order of service which can of course be customised locally. The order of service should be returned to Wendy and thence to the Archdeacon at least two weeks before the commissioning service.

In addition a copy of the Agreed Statement should be sent to Wendy along with the order of service.

A Team is commissioned for a five year period and during this time support, advice and some further training, especially in the first year, will be offered by the Team facilitators and/or members of the diocesan Shared Ministry Group.

Each year the Team will prepare an annual review, summarising the achievements of the past year and looking to the year ahead. At the fourth annual review reflections on the future of the team as it enters its final year of commissioning will be set in motion; see the next section for details.

The re-commissioning of an established Shared Ministry Team

As noted above, a Shared Ministry Team is commissioned for a period of five years. If the Team wishes to extend its service to the parish it will be necessary for a formal re-commissioning by the archdeacon with, of course, the full support and permission of the Church Council.

Re-commissioning will normally carry with it the expectation of some limited further training which will be negotiated with the Bishop's Officer for Shared Ministry or with a nominated member of the Shared Ministry Group. This further training, referred to as 'Re-forming' is negotiable but will usually involve a 24 hour overnight session which will help new members to settle in to the Team. It may be appropriate to arrange one or two additional sessions. On the re-forming package see under the paragraph, *Selecting the New Team* below.

At the annual review

The first step towards re-commissioning is taken at the final annual review in the life of the team which falls at the start of the fifth year of commissioning. Thus, a team commissioned in September 2014 would seek re-commissioning on or before 30th September 2019. Accordingly the possibility of re-commissioning would be raised at the annual review in or around September 2018

The expiry of commission will be raised by facilitators from the Shared Ministry Group who are engaged with the relevant Annual Review.

- The Team must consider its future: the willingness of team members to continue to serve on the SMT for a further five years; the potential for new members to join the team; the value of the SMT to the ministry and mission of the church and so on. Such discussion will form an important part of the prayerful consideration of the team at meetings in their final year of commissioning.

- For its part the PCC must consider whether a Shared Ministry Team remains a priority for the parish and whether they are prepared to support the re-commissioning of the team for a further five years.

If there are any queries then a facilitator approved by the Group for Shared Ministry will be available to give advice or attend any appropriate meetings.

The PCC Decision

Around six months and no later than four months prior to the expiry of the Team commission the PCC must decide and minute the outcome of formal resolution of the Council either to dissolve the Team or to support the re-commissioning of the team.

A copy of the relevant PCC minutes should be sent immediately to St James House and to the Bishop's Officer for Shared Ministry and the Team facilitators. Please note that it is the responsibility of the PCC to notify Wendy Pooley at St James House of their decision about the future of their Team.

At this point a member of the Shared Ministry Group will either:

- advise the PCC and the Team of the process leading to a further commissioning for five years *or*
- arrange a closure meeting to celebrate the achievements of the team and reflect on how the principles of shared ministry can be continued in the church

Selecting the new team

If the Team is to continue and be commissioned for a further five years there are a range of options to consider:

1. Most commonly, some members of the Team will indicate their retirement from the team at the expiry of their commissioning period for a range of reasons. In this case, the majority of members will stay on the team but the PCC will institute a selection process for a small number of team members to replace those who resign or who have left the team during the period of commissioning. Ideally perhaps 30% of the team will be new each 5 years but life is rarely packaged so neatly. In this instance the Team will move forward to commissioning following a special process known as Re-forming which allows for the introduction of new members into an existing team. For more guidance see Re-Forming the Team, a download from www.liverpool.anglican.org/commissioning.

2. In some cases the entire Shared Ministry Team will indicate their willingness to serve on the SMT for another five years and the PCC will be happy for this to happen. Experienced people should feel perfectly free to offer themselves again. In this instance it is permissible for the PCC to request St James' House to agree a date for re-commissioning with the Archdeacon. Please note that it will still be necessary for the Team and the PCC to negotiate a fresh Agreed Statement which will be the covenant between the Council and the Team for the next five years. If this is the chosen option then after ten years the next selection must be as in section 3, below.
3. Finally, each PCC always has the right at the end of the five year commissioning period either to no longer host an SMT in the church or equally to institute a new nomination and selection process *for the entire Team*. Existing members of the team who wish to continue are, of course, most welcome to be nominated and seek selection but the entire team is selected afresh and then commissioned.

Training the new Team

The newly selected team must agree with the relevant member of the Shared Ministry Group and facilitators the nature and extent of any training / retraining package and also address the negotiation and finalisation of the new Agreed Statement with the PCC

If the majority of members of the Team are new to shared ministry then the full training package may be required. Where the new Team blends old and new members the composition and experience of the newly selected team will determine the training required. This is negotiated with a representative of the Shared Ministry Group who may advise full training if there have been extensive membership changes since the initial team training. More usually there will be a "reforming package" which is abbreviated or extended as appropriate to the needs of the Team.

A fresh Agreed Statement

In every case it will be necessary and indeed a condition of Re-commissioning for the Team and the PCC to renegotiate a new Agreed Statement. The team facilitators will be available to assist the Team in drawing up a new Statement.

Arrange a service of re-commissioning

When the new Team is selected subject to the options given above and the Agreed Statement is well on the way to completion the Incumbent is responsible for making contact with St James' House to:

- submit the new list of Team members along with the relevant minutes of the PCC resolving to a) establish a new team and b) the names of any elected by the PCC to serve on the new Team alongside those continuing from the previous SMT.
- request a date for a commissioning service with the archdeacon
- agree to send a copy of the new Agreed Statement as soon as it is completed
- plan the commissioning service using the template as guide
- submit the service to the Archdeacon's office at least two weeks prior to the service date

The period of the new commission is, as before, 5 years

Annual reviews

As with all Shared Ministry Teams the new Team will conduct an annual review facilitated by a person nominated by the Group for Shared Ministry, most often the team facilitator(s) according to diocesan policy.

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