



DIOCESE *of* OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

Ministerial Development Review

Handbook

September 2024



Welcome to this new handbook for Ministerial Development Review and thank you in advance for the time you will give to careful reflection on your ministry in the coming years.

In Acts, Paul encourages the ministers in Ephesus to “Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” (20.28). Watching over ourselves is not a selfish exercise but a cornerstone of ordained ministry and a key part of our discipleship.

Discipleship is a lifelong journey in which our aim is to become more like Jesus as we follow in his steps. It is an accompanied journey, shared with fellow-pilgrims in our local congregation and all over the world. As we share this journey, the New Testament exhorts us to ‘submit’ to one another, to allow ourselves to be accountable to one another.

Our ministry is part of this discipleship journey. Ordained ministry is a demanding calling. God calls us in grace and love and challenges us continually to deepen our knowledge and develop new skills. God calls us continually to reflect on the hope and joy at the heart of our vocation and the way we are responding to difficult experiences in life and ministry. God calls us deeper into God’s own love revealed in Jesus Christ and the working out of that love in lives offered in prayer and service.

In the Diocese of Oxford, we have accepted the vision to become a more Christ like Church for the sake of God’s world: more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us, this transformation takes place not through trying to emulate Jesus but by allowing him to work within us by his Spirit to shape us into the people God wants us to become.

Ministry development is an integral part of our growth in discipleship, for which we are all accountable to one another and to God. The Ministry Development Review is an opportunity to take stock of our ministry, re-examine our priorities and discern the areas in which we are being challenged to grow. There are four parts to every review:

1. Our responsibility to our colleagues and those we are called to serve is to make time and space for the process of reflection required and to surround this in prayer. A quiet day away from our ministry setting and day-to-day responsibilities is the ideal context in which to carry out the preparation.
2. The session with a Bishop’s Reviewer is an equally vital element in the process. The reviewer’s task is not to appraise your ministry but to support you in the process of reflection. He or she acts as a companion for this step on the journey of discipleship, celebrating where God is at work, affirming your desire to grow in the knowledge, skills and dispositions you need for ministry and reminding you by their presence of your accountability to God and his people.
3. The triannual conversation with your bishop or the archdeacon/ associate archdeacon focusses on your pastoral care, your vocation and mission in your context. We believe that discerning these regularly will enable you to flourish in ministry.
4. Finally, a good Review will make a practical difference to the exercise of ministry through new goals set, resolutions made, better work life balance or new paths of learning and formation.

I commend to you the process of Ministry Development Review laid out in this document and pray that you will find it not only challenging but affirming and upbuilding.

Stan Oxford

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1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been put together as a tool to support you in getting the best out of your Ministerial Development Review (MDR). Whilst it describes what the MDR is and how the scheme runs in the Diocese of Oxford, it also provides guidance, forms and other information you will need for your next MDR.

2. OVERVIEW OF MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (MDR)

Ministry, whether parish-based or in other contexts, such as chaplaincy or in secular employment, is richly diverse. There are always more opportunities than we can possibly respond to with the time and energy at our disposal. Our ministries will be shaped by the way in which we discern our own gifts and release those of others as we respond to the needs of our context.

“Ministerial development review is about practising what we preach as Christians - that people are valuable, deserve proper time and attention and are made in God's image.”

Clergy Terms of Service Implementation Group, 19 Oct 06

A. REASONS FOR HAVING THE MDR

Firstly, because structured opportunity for reflection and review is good for all of us and for our ministerial development. MDR is intended to be a support and encouragement for you in your ministry.

Secondly, because parish ministry has changed significantly in the recent years and it is vital for clergy to have opportunities to learn and adapt to changing circumstances and new demands.

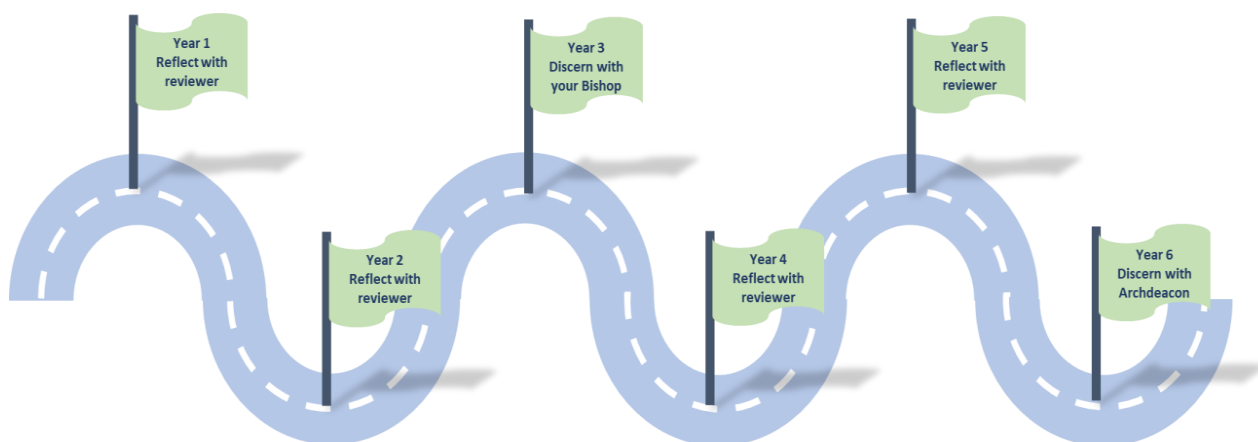
Thirdly, MDR aims to foster a greater sense of collaboration between clergy and those they serve alongside, particularly following the [“Setting God’s People Free”](#) vision, by enabling clergy to be more focused in their ministry and encouraging them to share that focus with others within their context.

B. THE MDR SCHEME IN THE DIOCESE

Episcopal conversations have been part of the Church’s life since the beginning. MDR has been part of clergy life in the Diocese of Oxford and throughout the Church of England for some years. The requirements for MDR are set out in The Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 part IV. The Bishop of Oxford’s MDR scheme follows the guidance approved by the Archbishops’ Council in January 2010. This is the third revision of the Scheme, which is kept under regular review.

MDR is episcopally led. It is an expression of the Bishop’s oversight of clergy within the Diocese and his commitment to foster both the ministries of individual clergy and the pastoral and missionary calling of the whole church to become more Christ Like, a more contemplative, compassionate and courageous church.

MDR in the Diocese of Oxford is an annual process and its pathway is completed in six years, each year giving you the opportunity to reflect and discern with someone else. At the heart of it are the principles of affirmation, accountability and development achieved through a contemplative, compassionate and courageous process. The confidential conversation with an appointed Bishop's Reviewer during years 1, 2, 4 and 5 is intended to be wide ranging, frank and searching, whilst the opportunity to see your bishop in year 3 and the archdeacon in year 6 focusses on your pastoral care, your vocation and mission in your context.



All the documentation for the MDR scheme can be found on the diocesan website, as follows: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/ordained-ministry/ministerial-development-review/> or by using the search function and entering 'MDR.'

C. PARTICIPANTS IN THE MDR SCHEME

The following clergy participate in the MDR scheme:

- Stipendiary clergy in parochial ministry (on Common Tenure) with the exception of Assistant Curates in Training who participate in a different scheme;
- Self-supporting clergy, including those on House for Duty, (on Common Tenure), in parochial ministry;
- Senior clergy including area deans, associate archdeacons, archdeacons and Bishops
- Licensed Lay Workers on Common Tenure;
- Clergy on historic freehold are invited to participate;
- Those clergy who hold a bishop's licence and are already reviewed or appraised by the institution for which they work (e.g. ODBF, ODBE, hospital, school, and college chaplains) participate in a special way. They are welcome to have a review with the bishop or archdeacon every three years, and the review will focus on their priestly ministry and vocation.

D. PARTICIPATION PROCESS FOR THOSE WHO ARE MOVING

If you exercise ministry in one archdeaconry and are moving to another one within the diocese, you will have to pick up the system where you left it, i.e. If in 2021 you are moving from a role

in Berkshire to a role in the Oxford archdeaconry and you were scheduled to have an MDR session with a Bishop’s Reviewer if you were still in Berkshire, you will have the review with a Bishop’s Reviewer in the Oxford archdeaconry. However, if you are joining the diocese from another diocese, you will have your first MDR review with your area bishop or the archdeacon.

E. SEEKING EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES AS PART OF THE REVIEW

You do not operate in isolation or vacuum – you are party of the whole Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) In order to enrich your reflections before the MDR session and the conversation with the reviewer, we invite those working with you and those we are called to serve in the ministry context to provide their observations of you in action.

This involves **four individuals**, both within and outside the church and they are provided during years 1, 2, 4 and 5. Two of these individuals will remain the same year on year, whilst the other two may vary to reflect the work undertaken during the year. For example, if you are an incumbent and a training incumbent, one of the churchwardens and the curate will always provide their observations of you in action. If you are in a team, the Team Rector should provide feedback. If the reviewee is a curate, then the training incumbent should be asked. Meanwhile, you can nominate the headteacher of a school or a member of a project you worked closely with during the year to share their observations. The table below explains in detail how this could work for different roles, although the list of suggestions for Feedback 3 and 4 is not exhaustive).

Office Holder	Individual 1 (compulsory role)	Individual 2 (compulsory role)	Individual 3 (optional role)	Individual 4 (optional role)
Area Bishop	Archdeacon	Personal Assistant	Another Bishop/ BCs member/ BSM or SMG member/ clergy	Synod member/ NCIs leader/ other leaders in community/ Other
Archdeacon	Area Bishop	Associate Archdeacon	Registrar/ Chancellor/ BSM member/Lay Chair/ Area Dean/ clergy/ Other	Personal Assistant / Bishop’s Chaplain/ Leader in community/ Churchwarden/ Other
Associate Archdeacon	Archdeacon	Area Dean	Registrar/ Chancellor/ BSM member/Lay Chair/ Area Dean/ clergy/ Other	Staff member/ Leader in community/ Churchwarden/ Other
Area Dean	Area Bishop	Lay Chair	Churchwarden/ Incumbent/ PCC member/ Deanery Chapter member	Archdeacon/ Another Area Dean/ Associate Archdeacon/ Other
Vicar/ Rector	One Churchwarden	Associate Minister/Area Dean/Retired clergy within benefice	Staff member in the team/ a peer/ PCC member/ treasurer/ Administrator/ Other	Headteacher/ Leader in community/ member of the congregation/ Other
Team Vicar	One Churchwarden	Team Rector	Staff member in the team/ a peer/ PCC member/ Other	Headteacher/ Leader in community/ member of the congregation/ Other
Team Rector	One Churchwarden	Team Vicar	Staff member in the team/ a peer/ PCC member/ Other	Headteacher/ Leader in community/ Verger/ Other

Training Incumbent	One Churchwarden	Assistant Curate in Training	Staff member in the team/ a peer/ PCC member/ IME Director	Headteacher/ Leader in community/ member of the congregation
Priest-in-charge	One Churchwarden	Associate Minister	Staff member in the team/ a peer/ PCC member/ Lay Chair/ Other	Headteacher/ Leader in community/ Family/ Youth/ Children Worker/ Other
Assistant Curate not in Training (Known as Associate Minister) *this may include SSM	Incumbent	Churchwarden	Another Associate Minister/ Church Worker/ Volunteer in the Café/ Other	Bell ringer/ Organist/ Verger/ Lay member of the team/ Other
Licensed Lay Worker on Common Tenure	Incumbent	Churchwarden	Youth/ Children/ Family worker/ Other	Member of the Deanery Chapter/ School teacher/ Chaplain
Interim Minister	Churchwarden	Associate Minister	PCC member/ Lay Chair/ Other	Headteacher/ Leader in community/ member of the congregation/ Other

The Administrator of the MDR scheme (usually one of the Bishops' PAs) initiates the request for feedback after you have provided the nominees. You are encouraged to identify the individuals who would provide feedback promptly as it may take time for them to respond whilst there is usually a short window during which these external perspectives can be sought. The responsibility for chasing external perspectives rests with the Administrator so, it is important that you communicate regularly with the office during this period, including times when you have not been able to identify individuals who can offer that external perspective. Once the feedback is received in the Area Office, the Administrator will forward them to both the Bishop's Reviewer and you, although we do encourage those providing feedback to share their reflections directly with you.

The Bishop's Reviewer may cancel the MDR session if the external perspectives have not reached them on time. This will not be beneficial to you given the energy you may have given to prepare for the planned meeting.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The diocesan Bishop is responsible for ensuring that an MDR scheme is provided in the Diocese. However, the bishop may delegate some of his functions in this area to others. Therefore, in practical terms, the MDR scheme in the Diocese of Oxford involves:

- the diocesan bishop
- area bishops
- archdeacons
- bishops' secretaries
- diocesan officers – members of the Human Resources (HR) and Continuous Ministerial Development (CMD) team

- colleagues and members of the community invited to provide feedback.

We explain below the roles that each of the above plays in the process.

A. DIOCESAN BISHOP (BISHOP OF OXFORD)

- Ensures that there is an MDR scheme in the Diocese of Oxford which complies with the legislation and the Church of England policy and guidance.
- Nominates and delegates MDR responsibilities to a member of Bishop's Staff and other Diocesan Officers.
- Leads the scheme's further development through the diocesan officers.
- Acts as the area bishop for Oxford Archdeaconry in the MDR cycle.
- Conducts MDRs for area bishops and archdeacons within the diocese.

B. AREA BISHOPS AND ARCHDEACONS

- Ensure the Diocesan MDR scheme runs effectively in their respective area.
- Supported by the Director of HR & Safeguarding and Deputy Director of Mission, the area bishops appoint Bishop's Reviewers and ensure that they are briefed, trained and continue to meet the required standard.
- Conduct the triannual conversation with clergy focusing on pastoral care, vocation and mission and confirm the conversation through a pastoral letter.
- Follow up any actions reported from the MDR sessions conducted by Bishop's Reviewers.
- Ensure, through the CMD team, that clergy have opportunities for learning and development.
- Encourage feedback from participating clergy and Bishop's Reviewers on the quality of the MDR scheme in the Diocese.

C. BISHOP'S REVIEWERS

Responsibilities

- To act as Bishop's Reviewers for the Ministerial Development Review (MDR) scheme in this diocese, on behalf of the Bishop of Oxford (on average 4/5 reviews a year)
- To facilitate the review process for each reviewee
- To proactively seek to establish contact and build a relationship with the reviewee(s)
- To liaise with the area bishop and their team, as required
- To prepare for the review(s) they are facilitating beforehand.
- To affirm and encourage ministry, set realistic priorities and learning goals and identify required support and development.
- To listen, probe and challenge the reviewee so that real depth of discussion is achieved.
- To work with the reviewee ensuring the process is completed fully and all paperwork is submitted to the relevant place/people.
- To actively give feedback on their experience of how MDR practice enables clergy to flourish in ministry.
- To signpost reviewees to relevant resources.
- To perform their role within the expectations of safeguarding and confidentiality.

- To share models of good MDR practice with others.
- To enhance their own professional experience by attending regular annual archdeaconry events and keeping up to date with diocesan processes.
- To undertake initial and ongoing diocesan training designed for and delivered to Bishop's Reviewers, including Safeguarding Basic Awareness training.

Experience, skills and gifts they bring to MDR

A Bishop's Reviewer is:

- a safe and proactive listener.
- insightful.
- able to provide constructive feedback.
- able to facilitate 1:1 discussion.
- a person with effective organisation skills.
- able to probe and challenge as well as help individuals attend to areas of growth.
- able to demonstrate empathy and encouragement.
- able to keep confidences and be relied on for their discretion.
- up to date with current safeguarding requirements.¹
- have a clean and valid enhanced DBS certificate.

The Bishop's Reviewers are:

Carefully selected and trained, lay or ordained, individuals who are called to support the MDR scheme in the Diocese of Oxford. They have been appointed by each area bishop for their experience, skills and gifts through a process of discernment. Typically, one Bishop's Reviewer will be conducting 4 or 5 reviews with the year. However, the bishop will take into consideration the individual circumstances (availability and other commitments) when allocating the cases.

Selection process

All those seeking/ nominated to be Bishop's Reviewers are invited to submit an expression of interest, supported by two referees². They attend a semi structured conversation with the Director of People and the Director of Formation for Ministry, to explore their call.

When selecting them we are looking for an understanding of:

- mission in the context of the Diocesan Common Vision.
- the role of clergy in the Church of England.
- the experience, gifts and skills required to become a Bishop's Reviewer.
- the MDR as a process of affirmation, accountability and development for clergy.
- the importance of clergy flourishing in ministry.
- challenges for clergy today.

¹ Basic Awareness and Foundation Safeguarding training as at 08/04/2021

² For any current office holder within the Diocese of Oxford who wishes to participate as a Bishop's Reviewer references have already been taken up.

Exit process

As the Bishop's Reviewer role is voluntary, it is understood that any reviewer wishing to stand down, may do so by informing the area bishop of their intention giving reasonable notice.

D. DIOCESAN OFFICERS

Director of People and Director of Formation for Ministry

- Supports the area bishops when identifying the new Bishop's Reviewers for each area (Director of People)
- Develop and deliver an induction and refresher training sessions for Bishop's Reviewers (Director of People and Director of Formation for Ministry, jointly)
- Ensures the MDR scheme in the Diocese of Oxford is of high quality, runs effectively, consistently and smoothly by effective monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting to Bishop's Staff (Director of People)
- Oversees the diocesan CMD programme in a way that enables opportunities for clergy development. (Director of Formation for Ministry + CMD Team)
- Ensure that Bishop's Reviewers are kept up to date with new developments and materials which impact on clergy and their ministry.

Area Offices Personnel

- Support the area bishop to run the MDR related processes for their area, including the administration of the scheme.
- Keep detailed records of clergy and Bishop's Reviewers in their area in line with GDPR, including:
 - Personal details
 - Participation in the current cycle
- Handle correspondence, including invitation to review, external feedback and bishop's / archdeacon's letters.
- Be the key contact for Bishop's Reviewers and reviewees in their respective area.
- Forward the Personal Ministerial Plan to the CMD team.
- Notify HR Adviser (Resourcing and Development) on new Bishop's Reviewers.
- Co-ordinate MDR related annual events in their area.

HR Adviser (Resourcing and Development)

- Develops and maintains a system for recording and analysing the evaluation forms across the Diocese.
- Uses CMS to record and maintain a register of Bishop's Reviewers.
- Supports the induction process for MDR Bishop's Reviewers by coordinating the events including booking venues, preparing paperwork, attendance of participants.
- Responds to queries from reviewees, area offices and MDR Bishop's Reviewers regarding the scheme.
- Supports the annual reporting to Bishop's staff on the MDR scheme across the Diocese.

4. YOU AND YOUR REVIEW

We have outlined the review process for you using the flowcharting tools, in Appendix A we take you through the processes you will be involved as part of the MDR process including a review session with the Bishop's Reviewer (years 1, 2, 4 & 5) and a conversation on your pastoral care, your vocation and mission with the area bishop or the archdeacon (years 3 & 6). You will note that the scheme is run within your archdeaconry. Administration and queries regarding the reviews are handled by your respective area office.

A. YEARS 1, 2, 4 & 5

There are three stages to the review, this section will guide you through the process of preparing for the review, what happens during and after the review. It will explain what they are designed to achieve and the thinking that lies behind it.

Preparing for the review

The MDR is expected to be searching and requires both the Bishop's Reviewer and reviewee to prepare beforehand.

Please read this introduction carefully before completing the Review Preparation Form (Appendix B). It explains what the preparation is designed to achieve and the thinking that lies behind it.

This form is designed with the assumption that you will devote between 3 and 4 hours to it in an atmosphere of prayer and reflection. The Bishops recommend that, wherever possible, you set aside a day's retreat away from your parish or ministry situation to prepare for the MDR session with your Bishop's Reviewer. It is a vital opportunity to review your ministry in response to God's call on your life and to discern the direction he is calling you in the future.

We recognise that a day's retreat may be more difficult for self-supporting ministers who may have other commitments. Putting some time aside for prayer, reflection and preparation is recommended.

Resources you will need to help you prepare:

In addition to the preparation form and this handbook, you will need the following:

- your role description (stipendiary ministers) or working agreement (self-supporting ministers)
- your deanery or parish mission action plan
- the diocesan CMD webpages
<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/continuing-ministerial-development/>
- the diocesan publication, 'Flourishing in Ministry'
www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/flourishing-in-your-role/flourishing-together/flourishing-together
- external perspectives you have received from your colleagues on your ministry for the year under review.

You may want to use the following in thinking about the key features of your context:

- parish profile - If you are new in role, this may be a good resource.
- your parish dashboard found at [Understanding your Parish Dashboard - Diocese of Oxford \(anglican.org\)](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/understanding-your-parish-dashboard)
- On deprivation, the report 'For Richer for Poorer' provides fuller information. It can be found at: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/richer-poorer-tackle-poverty/>

The MDR Review Preparation Form

This document offers a framework within which to review your ministry. It is not intended as a straitjacket but as an aid to reflection. Please use the questions to help you focus on the aspects of ministry highlighted here but do not be tied down by these.

Reflecting on your ministry since your last review

Reflecting on the role of the priest as an enabler of the local church to fulfil God's call to participate with God in his mission, Bishop Steven has written:

"In my view, it is both possible and appropriate to find in the pattern of Jesus' ministry and in his teaching about ministry the elements and 'shape' of the Christian ministry of oversight:

- *leadership grounded in character and which therefore begins with watching over yourself;*
- *enabling others through the call, nurture, training and commissioning of disciples;*
- *building, guarding and guiding a missionary community;*
- *concern with the location of this new community within the purposes of God and horizons of the world of his day.*

These four elements of oversight are also, it seems to me, a helpful way of describing the approach to church leadership which develops in the remainder of the New Testament."

(Foundation for Church Leadership, Focus on Leadership, 2005, page 19)

This review takes the four aspects of ministry discerned by Bishop Steven as its framework. You are invited to discern the ways each is already a part of your ministry at present. This may be a cause of celebration as you affirm where you have seen God at work and what has been achieved. Use your assessment of the ways each element is already present to help you to discern what the next steps might be.

Watching over yourself

For this element, you may find it useful to refer to the 'Flourishing in Ministry' resource as a tool for discerning the priority you need to set to guard your own and your family's well-being. Some of the key questions you may wish to ask yourself are:

- is your rhythm of daily prayer and regular retreats resourcing you to draw on God's strength and guidance in ministry?
- are the boundaries between ministry and personal life clear?

- in what ways are you able to maintain balance in your life, given the multiple demands of ministry?

Encouraging faith and equipping people for ministry

Areas to think about under this heading might include:

- the opportunities provided by baptism and marriage preparation and funeral ministry to demonstrate compassion and to draw people to Christ;
- the ministry of catechesis, through which to nurture faith and prepare people for baptism and confirmation;
- equipping people for everyday faith through personal discipleship plans;
- encouraging vocation to ministry both within and beyond the church.

Building Christ-like community and leading the church in mission

Areas to think about under this heading might include:

- forming community through personal example and pastoral care;
- the ministry of teaching and preaching;
- the skills of leadership, particularly team leadership;
- working with others to discern the ways in which God is calling the church to engage with the community.

Exercising leadership and influence beyond the church

Areas you might think about include:

- your role in local schools;
- opportunities to offer chaplaincy in the local community;
- your role and the influence you have as representative of the local church;
- working in partnership with community agencies, other denominations and faith communities.

Reflections on the Beatitudes

In the Diocese of Oxford, we are taking the Beatitudes as our guide to what it means to be a more Christ-like Church, a contemplative, compassionate and courageous church. This review asks you to reflect on these in your own life and ministry. The ways in which these qualities might be reflected include:

Contemplative:

- nurturing your own spiritual life and making time for silence;
- seeking to be good news in an over-active and busy world;
- wrestling with questions rather than settling for superficial answers;
- finding joy in the midst of challenges and suffering.

Compassionate:

- nurturing the qualities of kindness and gentleness;
- offering hospitable space to listen to others;
- giving generously of our time, money and gifts;
- taking steps to care for the earth.

Courageous:

- being bold and consistent in witnessing to Christian faith;
- seeking justice and working for peace;
- facing conflict and seeking peace;
- bearing the costs of discipleship and ministry.

Self-supporting ministers (For those who have an external role)

For those self-supporting ministers whose ministry is more parish-focussed, all the above areas of ministry may be relevant, depending on the amount of time you are able to commit to ministry and your working agreement. For those in employment or with a workplace focus in ministry, there are some additional areas to think about, and these may, in fact, be the principal focus of your ministry:

- exercising Christian influence and leadership in the workplace;
- encouraging lay Christians in their discipleship at work;
- drawing on insights from reflection on the presence of God in the workplace for ministry in the church.

Reviewing the past year (Section 7)

Having reviewed your ministry in the light of the four aspects of ministry described by Bishop Steven above and the diocesan commitment to becoming more contemplative, compassionate and courageous, in section 7 we invite you to reflect on the specific priorities you set in your previous review. Hopefully, the three questions in this section guide you through your reflections.

As already stated on the form, if your previous review did not follow this format or if you are new to the Diocese of Oxford, it is possible that the priorities you set for yourself were much less clearly defined. In this case, use the space to reflect on significant aspects of your ministry in the past year and the most significant areas of learning and development.

Looking ahead

Section 8 invites you to look further ahead at the way your ministry may develop over the next few years and beyond. More specifically:

- where do you see yourself in 5 or 10-years' time?
- what area/s of ministry most energise you?
- is there an area of ministry you wish to develop further?

- is it time to think about a sabbatical?

Sabbatical information is available here: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/ministry/sabbaticals-study-leave/>

Please see the diocesan CMD webpages for information on other development opportunities: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/continuing-ministerial-development/>

Personal Ministerial Plan

Having reflected on each of the four areas of ministry and the three qualities of Christ-like discipleship, reviewed the previous year's priorities and having also reflected on the external feedback you have received, you now need to discern up to four key priorities for the coming year.

One of these will address your own personal flourishing in ministry, one will be a longer-term vocational priority and two will address the context of your ministry. You will then think carefully about the context in which these priorities arise, the change that you want to see, the steps you might take and the difference you hope to see in 12 to 18 months' time.

To assist you, the form contains a sample table with some examples of what this priority-setting might look like and a blank table for you to use. You do not need to use the blank table if you do not find it helpful, but you should have thought about the four areas listed and made some notes in preparation for the interview with your Bishop's Reviewer.

The Invitation Letter

As described in the flowchart (Appendix A), the process is initiated by the 'invitation letter'. The area bishop will write, inviting you to begin preparations for the year's review. The letter includes the name and contact details of your Bishop's Reviewer.

If you or the Bishop's Reviewer find that there is a conflict of interest or indeed there is another serious reason that does not allow you to work together, please notify the Administrator in the Area Office and another Bishop's Reviewer will be found.

Contact by the Bishop's Reviewer

Following the area bishop's letter, once you have considered the Bishop's Reviewer recommended, please contact the area office to confirm whether you are happy to proceed or not. The Bishop's Reviewer will make contact with you to introduce themselves and fix the time and place for the review. It is expected that the review will usually take place at the Bishop's Reviewer's home or place of work. Having the session in public places, such as a café, is not permissible.

Your travel expenses should be reimbursed in the usual way by your parish or institution you work for.

Forms to send to the Bishop's Reviewer

To enable smooth running of the session with the Bishop's Reviewer you are encouraged to plan well in advance as described in the 'Preparing for your review' section above. At least **two**

weeks before the review, you should send the completed Review Preparation Form to the Reviewer.

At the same time, you are invited to send some background information that might be helpful for the Reviewer: information about your place of ministry; your parish profile, your role description (stipendiary clergy) or ministerial working agreement (self- supporting ministers) are good examples.

You are also asked to send a copy of the Review Summary Sheet and the Ministerial Personal Plan from your last review (Appendixes D and E), if applicable, as well as any working plan you have been using as part of your routine. **If you somehow have misplaced last year's paperwork and no longer have them, please get in touch with the area office as one copy will always be in your blue file.**

Your review session

You should by now have agreed a review session, if you have not, it is time to liaise with the Bishop's Reviewer and finalise a time, date and venue.

Through open questions the Bishop's Reviewer helps you reflect on how far you have achieved your goals and what learning and development opportunities you have engaged in. The Bishop's Reviewer also seeks to help you identify areas of strength and weakness by celebrating success and identifying areas where growth is needed. It is time, with the reviewer's help to turn the notes/ reflections you have made in preparation for the session and together firm up the possible priorities and learning goals, well thought-out intentions to which you are ready to commit.

The Review Summary Sheet (Appendix D) and the Personal Ministerial Plan (Appendix E) must be completed. The former notes briefly the areas of discussion, records the outcomes and actions that have been agreed, between you and the Bishop's Reviewer, whilst the latter notes the learning goals which will guide you and the CMD team when thinking about your programme of learning.

You will need to agree with the Bishop's Reviewer how you are to complete the above:

- you might agree to complete the form during the meeting itself,
or
- you might agree that you will write up the form following the meeting and send it to the reviewer for their comments,
or
- alternatively, the reviewer might agree to do the initial write-up.

Processes after the review

Whatever you agree, you should aim to complete the write-up **no longer than two weeks after the review**. There is a space on the form for both you and the Bishop's Reviewer to make additional comments. These can be about any aspect of the review.

There is a possibility that you and the Bishop's Reviewer may disagree about the outcome. This may be about summarising the activities that have taken place, or any issues experienced

during the review period. He or she may want to challenge you about the priorities and learning goals you have set; or they may think you are being too ambitious. In all these scenarios, you have the opportunity to voice your own point of view in your comments before the form is sent to the bishop.

Whilst you are required to keep the Review Summary Sheet and the Personal Ministerial Plan for your records and follow up actions, the Bishop's Reviewer sends copies to the area bishop who will keep the papers on the blue file. The Review Preparation Form is also returned to you. The Bishop's Reviewer does not keep any copies (see confidentiality, below).

Area bishop - The bishop will read the forms received and will place them on your blue file. A copy of the Personal Ministerial Plan will be forwarded to the Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) team to guide your programme of learning. The bishop will write to thank you for taking part in the MDR process and to ask for your comments on the review process.

You – You may want to reflect further on the agreed outcomes and action points and take initiative to make them happen. You may need to use other support such as your incumbent, your peers, your spiritual director and/ your ministry accompanier to draw up working plans so that you achieve the goals you set. Most importantly, there is a need to take responsibility for your own learning and development. Please see section below.

B. TRIANNUAL CONVERSATIONS

Year 3 - Triannual conversation with area bishop focussing on your pastoral care, your vocation and mission in your context. This will be followed up by a personal pastoral letter from the area bishop.

Year 6 – This time your triannual conversation will be with the archdeacon or the associate archdeacon. Again, the conversation will focus on your pastoral care, your vocation and mission in your context. The session will be followed up by a personal pastoral letter from the archdeacon or associate archdeacon, whoever you had the session with.

As you will note, there is no MDR paperwork to complete for years 3 and 6 as we would like to achieve a deeper quality conversation without the need for forms. However, you may want to use the Preparation Prompt Sheet (Appendix C) or refer to the Ordinal in preparation for your conversation. Meanwhile, the bishop or the archdeacon/ associate archdeacon will be informed by the previous sessions you have had with the Bishop's Reviewer.

Please note that you will meet on one-to-one basis with the area bishop or the archdeacon regularly, as you exercise your ministry. The above refers only to the session as part of the MDR scheme.

5. CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT (CMD)

Ministry Division of the Archbishop's Council informs that:

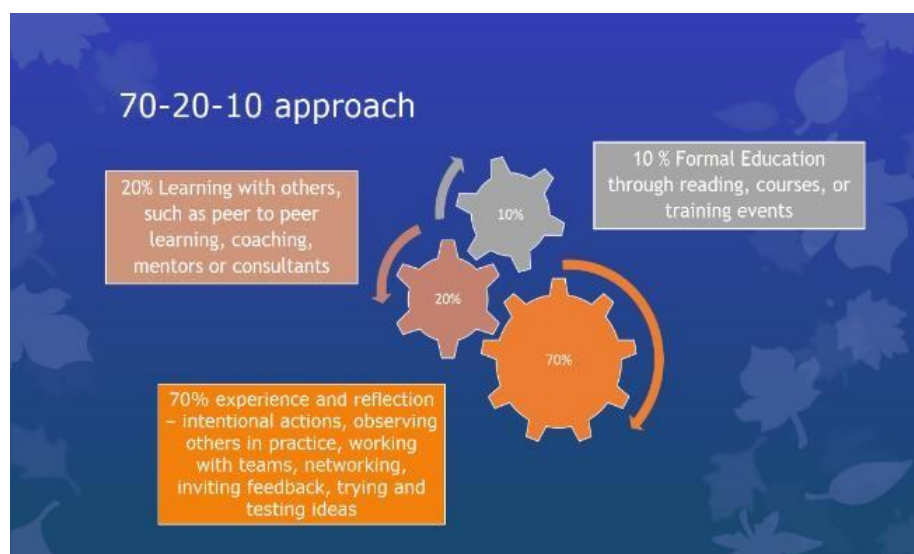
“The purpose of continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) is to strengthen and deepen a lifelong learning culture within each diocese. Good practice in both provision and

participation are ultimately evidenced in spiritual and numerical growth with the Church's ministers more fully engaged in God's mission themselves, in the variety of roles they have been licensed to as public representative ministers and better able to stimulate and enable the whole Church to respond to its call."

In addition, the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 (Reg 19) require that the bishops ensure, as far as possible, every office holder is afforded opportunities to participate in such education or training as is appropriate to their ministerial development. The Regulations also require you as the office holders to participate in arrangements that are made for your continuing ministerial development.

Learning Goals

At your review meeting, together with the Bishop's Reviewer, you will think about the areas of learning and development (your learning goals) that arise from your ministry priorities. It is the learner's responsibility to further the learning identified through MDR. In this context, you may find the following diagram helpful.



Additionally, 'Planning Your Ministerial Development' in the CMD Handbook will help you achieve that. You can find the CMD Handbook online at: [Continuing Ministerial Development - Diocese of Oxford \(anglican.org\)](http://www.anglican.org/Continuing%20Ministerial%20Development-Diocese%20of%20Oxford)

To assist you and the CMD team in considering how to respond to these continuing ministerial development needs, it is helpful to think about them as follows:

- *formal learning*, such as reading a book or attending a training event. There are also resources for formal learning on the internet, many in the form of video clips.
- *learning with others*, such as working with a ministry accompanier, mentor or coach, taking advice or working with others, or attending training with a team and discussing afterwards how to follow it up.
- *reflection on your own practice* - the largest part of your ongoing learning will consist of such as reflecting afterwards on how a sermon or a meeting went and how you could

improve; trying out new ideas; inviting feedback from others; observing others or reflecting on your experience of working as part of a team.

The CMD Team aim to help in a variety of ways:

- providing a programme of residentials, day and half-day workshops on a variety of topics;
- giving advice on areas of training not provided by the diocese;
- administering the grant of £250 per year, which can be spent in a variety of ways;
- putting you in touch with a ministry accompanier, who can work with you on either a regular or one-off basis.

The Personal Ministerial Plan (CMD) that you complete at the end of the review is passed to the CMD Team. The more specific you are able to make this, the easier it is for the team to provide any help or advice you may need. MDR returns also help to indicate the areas of training the team should be looking to provide.

Details of all the resources available, including guidelines on sabbatical and additional sources of grant funding can be found in the CMD Handbook and on the CMD section of the diocesan website, which you will find under 'Mission and Ministry' in the top menu.

Whilst the Diocesan Bishop and his officers ensure that there are learning and development opportunities available to clergy in his care, it is important to note that the **initial responsibility for taking forward the CMD requirements rests with the Reviewee**. You are encouraged to research programmes, course and conferences which may help meet the needs identified. It maybe that a spiritual director and/or a work consultant would be helpful in discerning the way forward.

If you are not sure where to begin or how to access courses and other learning available, then please speak to your Parish Development Adviser who has responsibility for supporting your CMD.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

A cornerstone of the MDR scheme is confidentiality. In particular, Reviewers must respect confidentiality. Reviewers are not at liberty to disclose the content of review discussions or preparatory forms outside the MDR scheme. However, they will be duty bound to pass on any safeguarding disclosures made or concerns raised during the MDR session with you.

Once you have signed the summary at the end of the review, the Bishop's Reviewer will not keep any notes about the content of the review. **This makes it essential for you to keep copies so that you have them ready to be shared the following year with the reviewer prior to the next review.**

7. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE MDR SCHEME

Evaluation

Every year, both you and the Bishop's Reviewer are asked to complete a Review Evaluation Form (Appendix F). This form can be accessed on the MDR Handbook pages of the website under the Appendices section online via this link:

[Ministry Development Review - Diocese of Oxford \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/ministry-development-review-diocese-of-oxford)

or can alternatively, be found by using the search function by entering MDR). Should you require a hard copy of this, please request for one to be sent to you by the Area Office as you start the preparation for the MDR session.

This is an opportunity for you to share your experience of the MDR scheme. So, once the session has taken place and all paperwork is completed, you are strongly encouraged to feedback to us, as this information is very helpful for the ongoing improvement of the MDR scheme. Your evaluation will also contribute to your reviewer's learning.

Complaints

Everyone involved in MDR is encouraged to try to resolve disputed matters informally in the first instance, but where this is impossible; a formal complaints procedure is available.

If the reviewer you wish to complain about is not your own area bishop or archdeacon, your complaint should be addressed to your Area Bishop. Complaints about a review with your area bishop or archdeacon should be addressed to the Bishop of Oxford. Complaints about a review with the Bishop of Oxford should be addressed to one of the Archbishops.

What happens if a reviewer and reviewee cannot find common ground?

There is space in the Review Summary Sheet for you to share your reflections. However, if you or the reviewer find that it is impossible to proceed with a satisfactory review, the matter is to be referred to the bishop. The bishop will consult with both you and the reviewer before deciding how to proceed.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

There is further information on MDR and Continuing Ministerial Development in the Clergy HR and CMD pages on the diocesan website, respectively at:

CMD pages - [Continuing Ministerial Development - Diocese of Oxford \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/ministry-development-review-diocese-of-oxford)

Clergy HR pages - [Clergy Handbook - Diocese of Oxford \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/clergy-handbook-diocese-of-oxford)

Further information on the MDR, especially as it relates to the Ecclesiastical Officers (Terms of Service) Measure 2009, please visit the Church of England website at: [ac-mdr-guidance-2022-for-website-pdf.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](https://www.churchofengland.org/ac-mdr-guidance-2022-for-website-pdf.pdf)

For further information about the way the Ministerial Development Review process runs in your area and queries relating to your MDR, please contact your area bishop or archdeacon.

9. APPENDICES (FORMS)

Templates of forms used during the operation of the MDR scheme are appended to this handbook. Although printed copies of the forms are made available, clergy and reviewers are encouraged to complete forms electronically and to send them by email where convenient.

- [Appendix A - MDR Process Flowcharts](#)
 - [Flowchart – Bishop - Area Office \(Years 1, 2, 4 & 5\)](#)
 - [Flowchart – Bishops Reviewers \(Years 1, 2, 4 & 5\)](#)
 - [Flowchart – External Perspectives \(for MDR Administrator use\)](#)
 - [Flowchart – \(Year 1, 2, 4 & 5\) - Reviewee](#)
- [Appendix B - Review Preparation Form \(Years 1, 2, 4 & 5\)](#)
- [Appendix C - Preparation Prompt sheet \(Years 3 and 6\)](#)
- [Appendix D - Review Summary Sheet](#)
- [Appendix E – Personal Ministerial Plan \(CMD\)](#)
- [Appendix F - Review Evaluation Form](#)
- [Appendix G – Bishop’s Reviewer Role Description](#)
- [Bishop's Reviewers Resources](#)