

Exploring Discipleship, Developing Community Awareness, and Approaching Ethical and Social Issues; and Prayer and Spirituality. From their exploration of these broad topics parishes identify their specific areas for parish development and practical training.

Outcomes in the parish

The aim is that by the end of the three years a pattern of shared ministry will be well established in the parish, and so the momentum will continue once the set diocesan programme has ended. Core Groups will still meet and fresh training initiatives will be sought from time to time. Additionally, there may well be a further emergence of people to train for individual ministries: as Readers, Lay Pastoral Ministers, or for Ordained Ministry (Local Deployment) on the diocesan School of Ministry.

Ordination Training

Advisers need to bear in mind that candidates for Ordained Local Ministry are people whose vocations are likely to have been developed over the years in relation to a particular context. They may not yet articulate their understanding of ordained ministry in a way that reflects broader theological traditions. During training they are encouraged to widen their understanding by interacting with one another and experiencing different parish contexts.

Those recommended for training follow a diocesan training scheme with three components. The first strand is the Basic Parish Programme of the Scheme in which the candidate participates alongside the Core Group, ensuring a collaborative context of training. The second strand comprises the York St John Foundation Degree in Theology and Ministry, taught on the Diocesan School of Ministry. For the third strand candidates join in a number of weekends each year with other ordinands training on the Yorkshire Ministry Course (formerly the Northern Ordination Course), for the purposes of ministerial formation.



Wakefield Ministry Scheme



Basic Information For Bishops Selection Advisers

The Wakefield Ministry Scheme is a Local Ministry Scheme offering parishes training in shared ministry together with an option for Ordained Local Ministry. The scheme received House of Bishops' approval in 1999.

Provision for lay and ordained ministry

Diocesan schemes vary in structure and content but the WMS shares with many of them a commitment to developing a collaborative pattern of ministry in the parish. This is facilitated by a local ministry team, usually referred to in Wakefield as a Core Group. This development is fundamental to the Scheme and thus a parish may participate in WMS as essentially a lay training programme. However, the other strand of the scheme is that candidates for Ordained Ministry (Local Deployment) may emerge in participating parishes. Such candidates, once recommended for training through normal procedures, undertake ordination training to prepare them for service as non-stipendiary ministers within their own parishes.

Often the calling of a person by the local church community will be equally as strong as, or indeed stronger than, the candidate's individual inner sense of vocation, and this needs to be taken on board in the discernment process.

Numbers in training

The Wakefield Scheme began with a pilot project launched in 1995. Around 75 parishes have completed the three-year diocesan training programme which evolved in dialogue with the pilot parishes' experience. There are currently a further 15 parishes working through the programme. Since 1999, forty-two Ordained Local Ministers have been ordained through the Scheme. Numbers training for ordination are currently small, as the Scheme is in process of transferring its Ordination training component into the new Yorkshire Regional ministry course and the new arrangements will begin in 2008. Two candidates from the Diocese of Bradford have been trained on the Wakefield Scheme.

Training for ordinands, ministry teams and parishes

An important feature of WMS is that the Basic Parish Programme offers a range of education and training resources, some for the ministry team or Core Group, including any ordinands, but others designed for the whole congregation. Ideally it is not only a small team of people who are being trained to minister together alongside the incumbent, but also the whole church among whom the vision and practice of a shared pattern of ministry is being promoted and extended. Thus there is no separate commissioning of the Local Ministry Team in the scheme, but a commissioning of the church, the congregation, as a shared ministry parish.

Structure of the Basic Parish Programme

Each year Core Group members attend three main Diocesan training sessions, which introduce the basic themes. To follow this up in the parish, a selection of material is made from a menu of options offered on each theme. This material includes course units intended to be run in the parish for as many people as possible, as well as study sessions for the Core Group, sermon series and other possibilities. Units include practical questions about the local application of the material explored, so that each parish identifies the particular areas of ministry it wishes to develop, and requests training to provide for this. Throughout the process the Core Group meets regularly with a Diocesan Helper, a person with appropriate consulting skills assigned to them from outside the parish. Together they monitor progress, ensure that course units are delivered in the parish, plan ahead, identify parish ministry training priorities and call in the necessary resources with the help of the WMS Staff Team.

In line with this overall structure the three-year WMS Basic Programme covers over the three years, Working Together and Exploring Ministry and Vocation; Worshipping Together, Developing Outreach, and Developing Pastoral Care;