



Discernment and training for licensed ministries in St Asaph Diocese

Licensed Ministry in the Church in Wales is a recognition of God's call and gifting in you which enables you to serve God in a specific ordered and representative way within the life of the Church. It is not like applying for a job, in that licensing for ministry comes after what can be a lengthy process in which you and the Church co-operate to discern how God has been working in you and preparing you to serve him. The discernment and training process are designed to identify and develop your God-given gifts for a ministry which is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ and as a representative of his Church. In Anglican ecclesiology, the Bishop oversees all authorised public ministry on behalf of the Church in the service of Christ, and it is the bishop who eventually licenses such ministry.

Stage 1: Initial discernment

Before entering into the diocesan process please spend some time discussing your calling with the member of clergy you have most contact within your Mission Area. (MA) During this time of local discernment and when the local minister feels it is time to move further into the process you will be asked to complete an Inquirer's form. A copy of this can be found at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/find-your-calling/> On receipt of your form you will have a conversation with the Director of Ministry who will allocate a Vocations Adviser (VA) compatible with the ministry you are discerning and not too far from your home but out of your Mission Area (MA). During this early stage, be open to considering different ministries with people or even finding out more about them. You may already be a Commissioned minister (Worship Leader, Catechist or Pastoral Assistant) and through your existing ministry feel called to train for a licensed ministry.

There was a time when the choice of ministry was Lay or Ordained but the range of ministries have developed:

- Ordained ministry can be stipendiary (paid and supported through housing etc) which is generally full time. This is the only role which we give an age limit for commencement of training as 55 years of age.
- Ordained ministry can also be non-stipendiary (NSM) where you will minister where there is a need for ordained ministry or NSM Local (L) where you will finally return to your sending MA.

- Other licensed ministries include: Reader/Pastoral Chaplain; Evangelist/Pioneer; Children's, Youth and Family Chaplain . For further information see Ministry Roles (below)

Regardless of the ministry you wish to be discerned for the criteria is the same. (see Discernment Criteria, below)

Familiarise yourself with the St Asaph and Church in Wales websites and through the diocesan website sign up for Star which is a weekly bulletin of events including training which would be open to you.

You may already be on a Theology for Life course and it is possible to enrol on TFL whilst at this early stage of discernment. Please contact the DDM about this or look on the St Padarn's website for information. <https://www.stpadarns.ac.uk/en/>

Take the opportunity to connect with the worship and activities going on in your MA to widen your experience and to see different forms of ministry in action.

Please continue your conversations with the member of clergy who has signed your Inquirer's form as well as others with whom you feel comfortable discussing your calling. At this time knowing that individuals are praying for you will help to strengthen you as you pray and discern what God is calling you to do in his church.

We also recommend that you have a Spiritual Director alongside your VA. Please see, <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/?s=Spiritual+direction>

If possible, have conversations with your family so they can encourage you even if they are not church members and they will have some idea of how family life may change in the future.

Stage 2: Discernment Panels

There is no fixed time after submitting the Inquirer's form from which you will be invited to a Diocesan Discernment day. At the right time, your VA will send a short report to the DDM who will have a further meeting with you to discuss attending the Discernment Day. These are generally held between September and December to fit in with further discernment conferences which take place in the Spring. You will be given enough notice to arrange time off work etc and when you get to this stage your Mission Area Leader (MAL) will be asked to seek support from the Mission Area Conference (MAC)

Soon after you have confirmed your attendance you will be sent a Registration form and asked for details of 3 Referees -your Priest, a lay person e.g., a work colleague and someone who can comment on your educational background. The date you are given for submission of this paperwork is a deadline because it needs to be distributed to those undertaking the discernment on behalf of the bishop.

You will be sent details and a timetable for your Diocesan Discernment Day. This will take place in St Asaph from 9.30 until 4pm or if occasions arise, by Zoom. The day will include a formal interview with 3 discerners who between them will cover the Discernment qualities, a meeting with Bishop Gregory, a written exercise and a group activity. The day begins and concludes with worship and there will be a break for lunch which is provided. Time is

also given to meet with one of the St Padarns tutors to discuss your training if you are recommended. In most cases you will be told of the outcome later the same day. At this stage you will be given dates to keep free for the next level of discernment (if applicable), Summer school etc.

If for any reason you are not recommended to go forward, the DDM will meet you soon after and go through your report with suggestions of ways forward. Your VA will also continue working with you and we suggest at least one year before returning to Diocesan Discernment.

If you have been recommended to continue the Discernment process you will be invited to attend a Provincial discernment (for ordained ministry, stipendiary or NSM). This is a 3 day residential discernment and after a few weeks you will be notified of the outcome, usually by Bishop Gregory.

Again, if you are not recommended, we follow the same pattern as not recommended at Diocesan Discernment and the period to go back to Provincial DP is generally 3 years.

Stage 3: Training

If you have reached this stage, you will be invited to train through St Padarn's for the ministry from which you have been discerned. In the May preceding training there will be a short meeting to discuss your training pathway including placement, financial support and the suggested length of your training.

Everyone in training must attend St Padarn's summer school in July, the first couple of days of which will be an induction for new candidates so you will be away for a complete week.

Most of your training will take place within the diocese. Those training for stipendiary ministry will be expected to travel to Cardiff weekly in term time for 3 days, i.e., 2 nights. Accommodation will be provided. There will also be approximately 3 residential weekends for all candidates.

Everyone in training continues with Theology for Life or, if that has already been completed, another course in Theology. There is also Ministerial training which those in full time/ ordained ministry undertake when in Cardiff.

Candidates will be allocated a placement and placement supervisor outside the home MA by St Padarn's.

Candidates will also be placed in reflective practice groups which meet approximately monthly for a couple of hours.

Ordinands will have a conversation about their curacy with Bishop Gregory in the December prior to Ordination and an opportunity to meet with potential supervisors before confirming, or otherwise that the suggested curacy is a favourable one for them and for their family circumstances. Ordinands are asked not to announce or discuss their curacy until it is announced in the January Ad Clerum and in relevant churches. If there is a change to this pattern you will be notified by the DDM.

This stage ends with licensing either in the form of Ordination or a licensing service which is a real celebration of all you have achieved alongside the people who have supported you over the years.

Stage 4: Post licensing training

After licensing or ordination, there follows a period of ICME (Initial Continuing Ministerial Education)

Ordained candidates will already have had a conversation with Bishop Gregory about their curacies. All ordination candidates are expected to complete a curacy of between one and three years. These are almost always outside the home MA and this includes those ordained for Local ministry and will include being assigned to a supervisor, to whom you will be responsible for your ministry during ICMA. For those discerned for Local Ordained the return to your home MA is likely to come approximately 18 months after Ordination. For NSMs curacies are for 3 years, as they are for distinctive Deacons and Stipendiary curates. Stipendiary ministers may be deployed wherever there is ministerial need across the diocese. During this stage supervisors will be asked to report on trainees and there is a continual liaison between St Padarn's, Bishop Gregory and the DDM or members of the diocesan ministry team.

Training through St Padarn's does not stop with licensing, but it reduces to 3-4 weekend residentials, including at least one with your supervisor. Some licensed ministers may need to complete Theology for Life or may choose to do so to receive an academic qualification. The formation groups will continue although groups may reform. This stage will differ according to ministry- ordained generally 3 years and LLMs, for 2 years

Stage 5: Deployment

When Bishop Gregory, St Padarn's and others are confident that you have achieved the criteria for your ministry you will be licensed to a specific MA.

There will be ongoing opportunities and choices for further training and support offered throughout your ministry as well as Ministerial Development Reviews and Reflective Practice Groups.