

What is Ministry with Oversight Responsibility?

The service of ordination for priests begins like this: *‘God calls his people to follow Christ and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’* It goes on, *‘The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God’s love and to work for the coming of his kingdom.’*

The service then says, *‘Priests share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being.’*

Everyone who is baptised has a part to play in the work of pointing to, building up and working for the Kingdom, and the church is the community of people engaged together in that shared endeavour. As an overseer, the priest’s role is to enable everyone who makes up this beautiful thing that we call ‘church’ to play their part in that work, spotting gifts, equipping and training people and sending them out into their God-given kingdom shaped calling.

With deep roots in Scripture and tradition, Ministry with Oversight Responsibility is in continuity with other ways of exercising priestly ministry. It is however substantially different from a traditional parish priest role in its focus on enabling the whole people of God to participate in the whole mission of God, rather than on leading individual church congregations.

To that end Ministers with Oversight Responsibility lead a ‘community of communities’ that includes traditional church congregations, pioneers, new worshipping communities, schools, fresh expressions and other groups and communities. Wherever possible these groups will take responsibility for their mission and ministry and will have an identifiable local leader.

While Ministry with Oversight Responsibility will look different in every place, as ministry is never ‘one size fits all’, there are four core elements around which every Ministry with Oversight Responsibility role will be built.

1. Faithful in prayerful service

The Minister with Oversight Responsibility will

- Pray, worship, and study Scripture, and lead others in doing so
- Act as a Minister of Word and Sacrament
- Pray with, and for, the people and communities they oversee, and with colleagues
- Support, teach and pastor the local leaders to enable them to lead others
- Look for the signs of the kingdom in the communities they serve

2. Equipping the saints

The Minister with Oversight Responsibility will

- Spot and support the gifts of the whole people of God
- Build up the Body of Christ through the ministry of prophets, evangelists and others
- Nurture, train and release people for the mission of God
- Clarify responsibilities and support people to meet them
- Enable people to take risks, learn lessons and try again
- Supervise effectively, and hold team members accountable

3. Leaders of a community of communities

The Minister with Oversight Responsibility will

- Be apostolic/entrepreneurial and prophetic in leading change
- Build a collaborative culture
- Grow teams of teams
- Embody a 'we' rather than 'I' way of working.
- Work to implement relevant parts of the deanery plan locally
- Collaborate with colleagues across the deanery.

4. Leaders of mission

The Minister with Oversight Responsibility will

- Enable those within and without the church to see life differently through listening to the Spirit
- Set a vision for mission and service, and enable others to do so too
- Lead change, guided by the Holy Spirit
- Develop and lead plans that turn vision into reality

Underpinning the specific role requirements given for particular roles, all Ministers with Oversight Responsibility will therefore need to be:

1. Committed to safeguarding
2. Committed to their own discipleship, learning and life of prayer
3. Committed to a model of leadership that releases gifts, encourages others and takes risks for the kingdom
4. Committed to mutual accountability
5. Committed to collaboration, partnership and team working
6. Committed to building relationships with organisations outside the church