



# MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW HANDBOOK

DECEMBER 2024



# FOREWORD

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Ministerial Development Review (MDR) in the Diocese of Truro is an expression of the Bishop's oversight of, and care for, ministers in the diocese. It is intended to support and nurture all who are called to licensed, ordained ministry, whether it be parish-based, in a pioneering context, as a chaplain or in secular employment.

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Christians are called to be disciples, or apprentices, of Jesus. We are all invited into a lifelong journey of learning and growth, seeking to become more like Jesus tomorrow than we are today, so we can be the best we can for ourselves, the church and the world God calls us to serve.

The process of review described in this handbook is part of the specific journey of growth that ministers of the gospel are called into. It is designed to help you reflect upon your particular vocation and how, in the midst of all the opportunities and demands it brings, you can continue to grow and develop, both as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a minister of His Good News.

In conversation with an independent MDR Facilitator, the process should affirm aspects of your ministry and discipleship as well as providing the opportunity to:

- Consider your wellbeing, and that of your family
- Reflect, before God, on your vocation and ministry
- Celebrate areas of gifting, excellence and expertise
- Explore areas of challenge and identify appropriate support and development.

As a bishop, I undertake a regular process of review, and my hope and prayer is that the process described in this handbook will encourage the ongoing development of your journey with Jesus in ministry.



**THE RT REVD HUGH NELSON**  
**BISHOP OF ST GERMAN'S**

# INTRODUCTION

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Ministry, whether parish-based, in a pioneering or chaplaincy context, 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.

The purpose of Ministerial Development Review (MDR) is to support and encourage clergy in developing their ministry. The provisions described in this handbook apply to all clergy who hold a Bishop's Licence; clergy on historic freehold are invited to participate.

“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*

## REASONS FOR HAVING A MDR

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**Firstly**, because structured opportunity for reflection and review is good for all of us and for our ministerial development. We understand that some clergy experience a sense of anxiety at the prospect of their MDR, but MDR is intended to be a support and encouragement for you in your ministry. It is not a test or an appraisal!

**Secondly**, because whatever your specific context, your ministry will almost certainly have changed significantly in recent years, and it is vital for you to have opportunities to reflect, 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, by enabling clergy to be more focused in their ministry and encouraging them to share that focus with others within their context.

“It was helpful to be encouraged to take a long view of my ministry - the good and the not so good - and from there to plan ahead.”

# THE MDR SCHEME IN THE DIOCESE OF TRURO

Episcopal conversations have been part of the Church's life since the beginning, and MDR has been part of clergy life 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 Truro's MDR scheme follows the **MDR guidance** approved by the Archbishops' Council in January 2010.

People in many walks of life find that there is great value in periodically reflecting on the way they do their work. This is even more relevant for clergy whose job, while being a vocation in a joyful response to God, comes with a wide range of expectations and sometimes seemingly impossibly high demands.

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I was a reluctant participant, but was glad that at last someone was prepared to listen to me. I felt valued.

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MDR is a biannual (i.e. every two years) process of reflection to support those who are called to ordained ministry. Although the key principles of review, support and development are the same/similar to an "appraisal", it is not conceived in the same way. Rather, it is a demonstration of the pastoral and professional care of clergy by the Bishop. MDR is intended to be an empowering process to support and encourage clergy in their vital ministry through a guided discussion.

The review will look back on what has happened over the past two years of ministry, and informed by that, develop a clearer vision for what lies ahead, to anticipate the changing demands of the role, and to identify future objectives for the minister's personal development.

The confidential conversation with an appointed MDR Facilitator is intended to be wide ranging, frank and searching, and will be followed by a conversation with your Archdeacon, the Bishop of Truro or the Bishop of St Germans.

The MDR Administrator will send the relevant forms to you throughout the process, but the documentation can be found on the diocesan website [here](#).

In addition to the formal MDR process described in this guide, clergy may request a meeting with their Archdeacon or one of the Bishops at any time, and should normally do so prior to considering a move, applying for Extended Ministerial Development Leave (EMDL) or considering any major commitment beyond their benefice.

# THE MDR SCHEME IN THE DIOCESE OF TRURO

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## **The following clergy participate in the MDR scheme:**

- Stipendiary clergy in parochial ministry
- Self-supporting clergy in parochial ministry, including those who are House-for-Duty (HfD)
- Stipendiary and Self-supporting Cathedral clergy
- Rural Deans, Archdeacons and Bishops
- Clergy working as chaplains, pioneers and in secular employment who also hold a Bishop's licence. MDR Facilitators will be mindful of their special contexts and the Review will focus in the main on the parish aspects of their work, while acknowledging that with two defined roles to fulfil, each role will inevitably impact on the other.

## **The following clergy do not participate in the MDR scheme:**

- Clergy in Initial Ministerial Education (IME) have their ministerial development reviewed as part of their curacy.
- Retired clergy with Permission to Officiate (PtO) do not automatically participate in MDR unless they carry specific responsibility such as a House-for-Duty (HfD) post.

However, clergy in either of these categories should feel free to request a meeting to discuss their priestly ministry and vocation with their Archdeacon or a Bishop at any time.

# WHO ARE THE FACILITATORS?

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## HOW ARE THEY CHOSEN?

The facilitators are appointed because of their skills and gifts in listening to others, assisting clergy to reflect personally as well as helping them to set realistic work and personal goals.

The MDR Facilitators are all church members. Some are lay, others ordained, but all are required to participate in training.

There is a requirement that MDR Facilitators will keep confidences (apart from any Safeguarding disclosures which cannot be kept confidential), and can be relied upon for their discretion. They will not pass on anything from their MDR conversations without the prior knowledge of the reviewee.



# WHAT HAPPENS IN THE REVIEW?

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Following an opportunity for self-reflection and gathering of feedback, your MDR culminates in a one-to-one discussion of your experience of ministry during the past two years which seeks to help you learn from those experiences and on the basis of that learning set your own priorities and development goals for the coming two years.

This process should identify any training needs which are linked to these development goals. Outcomes are agreed between you and the Facilitator, and they are briefly recorded in a MDR Review Summary.

# HOW DOES THE MDR PROCESS WORK?

## STEP 1: INVITATION FROM THE MDR ADMINISTRATOR

The invitation to participate in your MDR will be sent by the MDR Administrator on behalf of the Bishop, inviting you to begin preparations for the review. A facilitator will be assigned to you.

If for any reason you don't think that person would be suitable for you, please let the MDR Administrator know. Our aim is to find someone in whom you can have confidence. The MDR Administrator will also book a date (in 3 - 4 months' time) for the meeting with your Archdeacon or a Bishop, which marks the end of your MDR process.

The invitation will include a **Review Preparation Form** offering questions for reflection. This is to help you prepare for the MDR conversation with your facilitator. We recommend that you allow yourself plenty of time to reflect and complete the preparatory form.

You will also be asked to provide the names and contact details of at least five people with whom you minister or work, to offer their own perspective. It is likely to be most helpful to you to choose people who know you well, but it

would also be worth asking for feedback from someone who doesn't always agree with you, or who has challenged you in the past.

The MDR Administrator will write to them inviting them to provide feedback, which will be shared with you and your MDR Facilitator.

The Roles and Responsibilities (R&R) document is a requirement of Common Tenure and describes the context within which your ministry is exercised. You will have agreed this with your Archdeacon following your appointment. The MDR Administrator will send you a copy of your R&R, if this is your first MDR since your appointment.

Alternatively the MDR Administrator will send you a copy of the MDR Summary Form from your most recent MDR. You will need this to review progress against the objectives you set last time.

## STEP 2: INVITATION FROM THE MDR FACILITATOR

The MDR Facilitator will make contact with you to fix the date/time for the review to take place. You are advised to set aside a whole morning or afternoon. The venue can be either in your local parish or benefice, or in a mutually convenient location which provides a confidential and quiet space, without interruption. "The presumption is that the MDR Facilitator will travel to you, unless you prefer to agree a mutually convenient alternative venue."

The MDR Facilitator may claim their expenses from the diocese; your parish should reimburse yours in the usual way.

In the interests of continuity and consistency, we try to enable working with the same facilitator for a couple of reviews. After that, experience suggests that it is better to change your facilitator, to bring fresh insights to the process.

I didn't expect to enjoy this - but I really have!

# HOW DOES THE MDR PROCESS WORK?

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## STEP 3: FORMS SENT TO THE FACILITATOR

At least two weeks before the review, you should send your completed Review Preparation Form and your Roles and Responsibilities document to the facilitator. It would also be helpful when working with a facilitator for the first time to provide any available background information on your context such as a parish profile.

## STEP 4: THE REVIEW CONVERSATION

The Review is expected to take at least two hours. The Review Preparation Form can provide a helpful starting point for your discussion, but you do not need to stick rigidly to the form. The facilitator is there to invite reflection, to challenge, to clarify and to encourage.

## STEP 5: COMPLETION OF THE REVIEW SUMMARY

After the review conversation, the facilitator will complete the **Review Summary Form**, noting briefly the areas of discussion, recording the outcomes and actions that have been agreed, and highlighting any potential Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) needs that have emerged.

The facilitator will send the Review Summary Report to you for you to confirm your agreement with what has been written, respond to it and complete your final sections. If you do not agree with what the facilitator has written you have an opportunity to discuss amendments

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This is time well spent!  
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In particular they will encourage you to reflect on your own wellbeing, and to respond in depth to the Safeguarding questions in Section 2 of the Review Preparation Form. They will help you find your own solutions if you identify problems or challenges and they will help you set priorities and development goals for the coming year.

with them. You and the facilitator will then sign the form, and you will send the signed Review Summary Form to the MDR Administrator.

The Review Preparation form and the Feedback forms are returned to you. The facilitator is required to destroy/delete any electronic files. The facilitator does not keep any copies, unless you specifically ask them to do so. However you are free to share information with others if you wish.



# HOW DOES THE MDR PROCESS WORK?

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## STEP 6: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

You will then send a copy of the completed Review Summary to the MDR Administrator who will forward a copy to the Bishop and your Archdeacon. A copy will be placed on your personal (i.e. blue) file.

You will then attend the meeting with your Archdeacon, or one of the Bishops. These conversations will take the Roles and Responsibilities document and the Review Summary as their starting point and will centre around four topics:

- How are you?
- What are you doing, and how is it going?
- What can we do together to move things on?
- What next?

Clergy serving in a parish which has in place a current PCC Resolution regarding alternative episcopal oversight ( <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishop> ) may request that their MDR Review Summary document be also sent to either the Bishop of Ebbsfleet or the Bishop of Oswestry.

The MDR Administrator will also send the Review Summary Form to the Head of Ministry, who will note any Learning and Development needs identified, and seek to provide ideas and opportunities for meeting those needs, either through the diocesan CMD and AMD programmes, or through an externally provided course specific to you. You will be able to use your annual CMD Grant towards the cost of any courses you decide to attend.

## STEP 7: FEEDBACK

When acknowledging receipt of your completed Review Summary, the MDR Administrator will invite you to comment on your experience of the MDR process. You are encouraged to respond, as your feedback will help us to evaluate and improve the MDR scheme.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

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Returned forms remain confidential to Bishops, Archdeacons and the MDR Administrator. You are free to share information with others if you wish.

Once you have signed the Review Summary at the end of the conversation, the Facilitator will not keep any notes about the content of the review, unless you specifically request otherwise.

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Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the MDR process, however any Safeguarding Concerns must be reported using the appropriate forms in accordance with the diocesan Safeguarding procedures.

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## GET IN CONTACT

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