

IME 4-6 for Lay Readers



A Handbook
Scottish Episcopal Church
2016-17

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The contents of this Handbook are offered to all newly licensed Lay Readers and their Supervising Incumbents to ensure that Lay Readers in their first three years of public ministry are equipped, resourced and supported in ways which will enable them to grow in competence and to work collegially and effectively wherever they are called to serve.

Role and public duties

Lay Readers are theologically-trained lay people who are called to proclaim the Gospel and lead worship, serving alongside clergy to support and develop the life of a congregation. Their role is governed by Canon Law and they are episcopally-licensed.

Whilst there are certain core responsibilities and expectations of Lay Readers (below)

Leading the Ministry of the Word or non-Eucharistic public services

Administering Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament when requested

Conducting funerals

Teaching and preaching on Sundays and during the week

Encouraging faith development, for example in study groups

Preparing candidates for baptism

Pastoral work, e.g. visiting and distributing the Reserved Sacrament to the sick

the shape of their ministry depends on the gifts they bring and the context in which they serve. Lay Readers constitute a diocesan resource, and are deployed according to the needs identified by their bishop. In congregations, they serve under the authority and leadership of the Rector (see Canon 20, Appendix 1), often as part of a ministry team.

Lay Readers are ‘theological resource people working within a pastoral context’¹, always ministering within a collaborative setting. They differ from those lay people designated as having ‘recognised ministries’ – Pastoral Assistants, Eucharistic Assistants and Worship Leaders – who are not canonically recognized and who are simply authorized to one charge.

As theologically resourced lay ministers, they serve as bridges, offering a lay hermeneutic of the Gospel to the church and interpreting the church to the world. Preaching, teaching and catechesis thus play a major part in their service. Lay Readers may lead and preach at Morning and Evening Prayer, and at Services of the Word. They may preach and assist at the Eucharist, but not preside; they may administer Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament. With the approval of the Incumbent they may conduct funerals. They may not baptise (except, like any lay person, in emergency) or conduct weddings.

Lay Readers may be placed for a time by their Bishop in settings other than their home charge during IME 4-6, thus developing and extending their skills in leading worship and preaching, in leading small groups and supporting discipleship. Lay Readers may also minister in other charges by invitation, with the permission of their own Incumbent.

¹ [http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/governance/diocesan-policies-procedures-regulations/ministry/licensed-lay-ministers-\(readers\)](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/governance/diocesan-policies-procedures-regulations/ministry/licensed-lay-ministers-(readers))

A Lay Reader has no special status during a vacancy, but is expected to work with the Interim Priest and other ministers in the local context/team to maintain the pattern of services.

Lay Readers are licensed to do the following

- Lead Morning and Evening Prayer.
- Lead the Service of the Word.
- Lead other informal services of worship including All-age worship
- Preach at the Eucharist, Morning or Evening Prayer and any other authorised services.
- Read the Word of God, and lead intercessions.
- Administer the elements at the Holy Communion. This includes taking the sacrament of Holy Communion to the sick and housebound at the request of the Incumbent.
- Officiate at Services of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament.
- Visit the sick to read and pray with them.
- Conduct funeral services
- Teach, train and nurture adults in Christian education.
- Teach in Sunday School and elsewhere.
- Undertake such pastoral and educational work and to give such assistance to any minister as the bishop may direct.

Robes

The normal dress of Lay Readers for their liturgical duties is black cassock, surplice and blue scarf (tippet).

Expenses

Lay Readers receive no stipend, but should be offered travelling and out-of-pocket expenses, especially if asked to take services outside their own charge. The Working Agreement should state from the outset of a Lay Reader's ministry which expenses will be paid by the home charge.

Oversight

Within each Diocese the Warden of Lay Readers is the co-ordinator of the Lay Reader's ministry, working with the Bishop. Within the charge to which the Lay Reader is assigned by the Bishop after Licensing, the Incumbent of the charge acts as the training supervisor.

Working collaboratively

All ministry should be collegial, with lay and ordained working together. Lay Readers and their Incumbents have a responsibility to model this well.

Lay Readers hold a responsible leadership position and exercise a special role in the life of their charge. They often occupy a middle place in a church community, working in collaboration with the incumbent and other clergy team members as well as being themselves a part of the laity. Likewise they combine their daytime occupation, be that in the home or workplace, with their lay ministry duties such as preaching and leading worship, pastoral care or taking funerals.

Lay Readers work solely with the consent of the Rector of the charge in which they are appointed to serve (see Canon 20, Appendix 1). Within the structures of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the incumbent has the pastoral charge of a congregation and is thus responsible for the life and well-being of the congregation; Lay Readers minister under his or her authority. The Rector will negotiate with the Lay Reader appropriate areas of ministry, taking into consideration the gifts they both bring and the needs of the congregation. To this end a collaborative approach to leadership is to be expected by both the incumbent and the Lay Reader and for this to work well, an up-to-date Working Agreement, agreed with the incumbent, is required of all Lay Readers (see Appendix 4).

While styles of ministry will differ according to temperament, size of congregation, location, the number of people on the ministry staff and the commitments of the Lay Reader, the following practices are recommended:

- **regular staff meetings** at which planning of worship services and pastoral issues are discussed
- **scheduled supervision meetings** in which feedback on ministry, preaching and leading of worship, prayer and theological reflection are the focus of the agenda (see Appendix 9).
- **intentional practices to build trust**, confidentiality and mutual support between the incumbent and the Lay Reader and a sense of them ministering together (see Appendix 10).

Within this collaborative approach it is expected that differences of role, personality and approach will be managed carefully. However there may be times when there is a deterioration in the relationship between the incumbent and Lay Reader for whatever reason, or when pastoral issues such as stress or illness arise. In these circumstances it is appropriate to contact the Warden of Lay Readers in order to discuss a way forward.

Where unresolvable breakdown occurs and transfer seems the only viable option, the Incumbent informs the Warden of Lay Readers and the Bishop, setting out the reasons for the breakdown in relationship; the Bishop then examines the issue. In rare cases, where a serious disciplinary issue arises, the Bishop has the right to revoke the Lay Reader's Licence. This will, of course, only be done in extreme circumstances and after considerable discussion.

Working agreements

Lay Readers and their Supervising Incumbent are obliged to make an agreed written statement about the shape of the Lay Reader's ministry. This should be drawn up before Licensing in the first year (and reviewed annually thereafter) in the light of the section on collaborative ministry above, and taking into account:

- **mutual expectations of role**
 - allocation of time; the extent to which the Lay Reader is expected to be involved in regular ministerial activities such as preaching and leading worship, teaching, or pastoral work, and any other activities which are a particular expression of the Lay Reader's ministry.
 - an indication of which formational outcomes these activities will address annually
 - pastoral responsibilities
 - the role of the Lay Reader in the charge's ministry team, and in relation to the Vestry.
- **supervisory arrangements**
 - the arrangements for regular 'team meetings' between Lay Reader, clergy and other ministers
 - the arrangements for regular supervision meetings between Lay Reader and Supervising Incumbent
- **spirituality and personal development**
 - the arrangements for ongoing development of the Lay Reader's gifts, including time and funding allocations
 - expectations of attendance at Quiet Days, retreats, spiritual direction
- **structured learning and professional development**
 - expectations of ongoing academic development
 - the arrangements for attendance at diocesan/provincial events and groups for Lay Readers.
- **sabbath time**
 - the maintenance of a balance between commitments as a Lay Reader and the requirements of family, work and leisure.
 - expectations about time off
- **support**
 - the arrangements for reimbursement of expenses incurred through the performance of the Lay Reader's duties
 - handling of disagreement

This agreement should be reviewed annually as part of the Annual Review (Appendix 3) as there may be changes to be made in the light of the review conversation. For a sample Working Agreement, see Appendix 4.

Expectations of IME 4-6

Lay Readers, in common with the ordained, are expected to grow in their understanding of their faith and spirituality and in how it relates to the world around them. To this end they are expected to attend appropriate courses, retreats, study programmes or quiet days during the year. Should funding be needed for these, the charge should be approached for payment, as detailed in the Working Agreement.

During the first three years after licensing, Lay Readers are required to

- **have an Annual Review with their Training Incumbent** (see Appendix 3). While the word 'review' may be heard in terms of evaluation and examination, it is in fact a process of promoting formation, learning and ministerial development. Effective review offers objective criteria for evaluation and encourages creative development. When handled well and appropriately, it is life-enhancing for the Lay Reader - and those for whom s/he cares.
- **follow a defined programme of post-licensing training**
 - (a) **with the charge.** This involves working through the experiences listed in Appendix 5 ensuring that by the time the IME 4-6 period has been completed the Lay Reader has attained the Formational Outcomes listed in Appendix 2. This may mean attendance at specialist courses (e.g. bereavement training, preaching courses and the like) or an intentional 'placement' in a particular context outwith the training charge for a period.
 - (b) **within the diocese.** Every diocese has an IME 4-6 programme; every diocese does this differently. The expectation is that every diocese will have a residential gathering once a year to which Lay Readers are invited - whether that be for Lay Readers on their own or with clergy - plus at least three 'events' through the year for Lay Readers only, for worship, study, training and fellowship. Contact diocesan offices for local details.
 - (c) **optional** - with SEI. Lay Readers may choose to continue their Common Awards studies, moving from a Diploma to a BA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission (Appendix 6.)

Lay Readers may find it helpful

- to keep a record of discussions, experiences and reflection, thus developing skills in reflective practice and detailing the stages of formation and training through the IME 4-6 period. These notes are especially helpful in the lead-up to the Annual Review. Appendix 8 offers a sample record page that may be used as required.
- to have a small lay support group made up of members of the congregation who accompany the Lay Reader during his/her IME 4-6 phase of formation.
- to elicit feedback on their preaching from this support group or from other selected members of the congregation. The form in Appendix 7 could be used in this way from time to time.

Annual Review

The purpose of the Review is to evaluate how the Lay Reader has grown in confidence and competence in his or her ministry through the preceding year, to affirm developments, note areas of difficulty, and set new goals for the coming year in the light of those observations.

Both Lay Reader and Supervising Incumbent should work through the reflection questions (below) in advance of the meeting - the Lay Reader from a personal standpoint, the Supervising Incumbent from an observational standpoint - making notes as they go on the form provided in Appendix (1).

When identifying goals/objectives, consider the following:

- What support, training or development is required to bring about these changes?
- How does this objective support the congregational vision?
- How will the attainment of the objective be monitored?

At the pre-arranged 90 minute Review meeting, the Supervising Incumbent is responsible for leading the conversation, working through the formational categories, listening to the Lay Reader's contributions and sharing his/her own; notes need to be made of the main points in the conversation and a detailed notes of the agreed outcomes.

Following the Review meeting the Supervising Incumbent will draft a record of the meeting from these notes (on the form provided in Appendix 2); this summary will include identified outcomes and actions, a projected timescale and any resource needs.

Reflection questions based on the vows made at Licensing

- 1. As a Lay Reader you are to study the Scriptures and model your life upon them. Will you be diligent in prayer, devoting yourself to reading the Holy Scriptures and to all studies that will increase your faith and deepen your understanding of the truth?** (Christian tradition, faith and discipleship)
 - Are my patterns of prayer, personal reflection and study sustaining and challenging me as a minister of Christ?
 - How has my understanding of biblical interpretation grown in the past year?
 - How have I grown in the skill of communicating the Gospel in way that connects Christian faith to everyday life?
 - How have I enabled others' learning?
- 2. As a Lay Reader, you are required to preach, teach and interpret the Word of God. (mission, evangelism and making disciples)**
 - Have I communicated the gospel effectively for today's world? What methods have I used?
 - How have I brought others to faith and grown new disciples?
 - Do I give enough time and effort to preparation and background reading to preach and teach?

3. As a Lay Reader you are to assist in the leading of worship. Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline and worship of Christ as the Scottish Episcopal Church has received them? (spirituality and worship)

- What aspects about worship leadership have been revealed from the feedback I have received from colleagues and members of the congregation that need to be addressed?
- Are there areas of public worship in which I need further training or experience?
- How have I nourished others' spirituality?

4. Will you, in your dealings with others, in the life of the Church, in your home and at your place of work, seek to show an example of obedience to the teachings of Christ? (personality and character)

- As I reflect on my daily life does it honour the pattern I know to be true to the Christian gospel?
- Do I give sufficient opportunity for time and space for myself and my family?
- How have I demonstrated resilience during this past year?
- What do I find hard and need to work on?

5. Will you look for Christ in all others, being ready to help and serve those in need? (relationships and community)

- How have I modelled the self-giving love of Christ as a member of his body?
- How have I seen and responded to Christ in a range of people and circumstances?
- How have I handled conflict and disagreement?
- How have I handled boundary issues?

6. As a Lay Reader you are to share with the clergy in a ministry of mutual encouragement and support. Will you respect the pastoral direction of your Bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work? (collaboration and shared leadership)

- Does my relationship with my ministry colleagues encourage mutual growth?
- Are there ways in which we could improve our working relationship and methods of working?
- How have I encouraged others in the sharing and development of their gifts?

7. Do you believe that God has called you to the office and work of a Lay Reader? (vocation and ministry within the Scottish Episcopal Church)

- Am I being true to the vocation that has brought me to this point?
- How have I grown in my understanding of the ways in which doctrine and spirituality shape the life of faith and the practices of the SEC?
- How have I articulated the role of Lay Reader as part of the ministry and mission of the SEC?

APPENDICES

1. The Bishop of any diocese may appoint men or women Lay Readers to serve in that diocese as that Bishop may deem expedient, always subject to the limitations laid down in Canon 37, Section 3.
2. The Bishop shall require every Lay Reader to sign a declaration in terms of Form B, Appendix No.19, and may thereafter issue a licence in terms of Form C, Appendix No.19, or in such other form as the Bishop may deem right.
3. Every Lay Reader so appointed shall be subject to the regulations bearing on the discharge of duties of Lay Readers prescribed by the Bishop of the diocese, and the licence given may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of the Bishop.
4. No Lay Reader shall be appointed to serve in any part of the diocese in which there is a Rector without the consent of that Rector. A newly appointed Rector may apply to the Bishop within twelve months of taking up the appointment to have the licence terminated.

Resolution under Canon 20

Resolution 1

A Rector who desires to have a Lay Reader appointed, shall, with the permission of and subject to the approval of the Bishop of the diocese, make a nomination in terms of Form A, Appendix No.19, such nomination to be accompanied by the names of two adult communicants ready to testify to the character and fitness of the proposed Lay Reader, should confidential inquiry be made of them by the Bishop.

Christian Tradition, Faith and Discipleship:

- Understands and can evaluate varying approaches to Christian faith, and is able to articulate a personal position.
- Evidence of good and effective teaching, inspiring others to learn.
- Able to inspire others' interest in learning and development and committed to his/her own life-long learning.

Mission, Evangelism and Making Disciples:

- Constantly seeks to renew his/her understanding of the role of the local church in mission.
- Able to make theological sense of changing world views and the church's response
- Understands other faith traditions
- Sees, responds to and articulates the role of Lay Reader in relation to growing new disciples

Spirituality and Worship:

- Has an appreciative and respectful awareness of the breadth of spirituality.
- Has understanding and experience of the range of authorised SEC worship
- Able to construct and lead services appropriate to a range of situations

Personality and Character:

- Ministry shows evidence of capacity to sustain its demands and face change or pressure in balanced and effective ways.
- Shows self-awareness and is demonstrably at ease with him/herself.
- Able to reflect with insight on personal strength and weaknesses.

Relationships

- Exercises appropriate care for self and others.
- Able to model pastoral care in a wide range of practical situations following good practice.
- Interact with a diverse range of people and handle conflict positively

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

- Can both accept and relinquish personal responsibility.
- Can enable others to lead within a collaborative structure
- Models accountability within leadership/collaborative structures.

Vocation and Ministry within the Scottish Episcopal Church

- Can enable and inspire others to develop their vocation.
- Capacity to model Lay Reader ministry for enquirers.
- Contributes effectively as lay minister to his/her church's ministry, thinking and vision.
- Continues to reflect critically on the exercise of his/her ministry and its opportunities for development.
- Demonstrates experience and competence as preacher in a variety of contexts.
- Able to represent and respect the authority of the Scottish Episcopal Church

*FORMS A-D are available on the web site in word for download

Lay Reader and Supervising Incumbent should work through the questions below in *advance* of the Review meeting, making notes from their different standpoints. The formational headings then form the framework for the meeting.

Areas of formation	Reflections prior to the review meeting	Possible future developments
<i>Christian tradition, faith and discipleship</i>		
<i>Mission, evangelism and making disciples</i>		
<i>Spirituality and worship</i>		
<i>Personality and character</i>		
<i>Relationships</i>		
<i>Collaboration and shared leadership</i>		
<i>Vocation and ministry within the SEC</i>		

After the Review meeting the Supervising Incumbent completes the following report meeting.

Areas of formation	Observations as made at the review meeting	Objectives for the coming year and timescale
<i>Christian tradition, faith and discipleship</i>		
<i>Mission, evangelism and making disciples</i>		
<i>Spirituality and worship</i>		
<i>Personality and character</i>		
<i>Relationships</i>		
<i>Collaboration and shared leadership</i>		
<i>Vocation and ministry within the SEC</i>		

Attach an updated Working Agreement if consequential changes have been made to it, and sign and date both the new Working Agreement and this Review report.

Supervising Incumbent _____

Lay Reader _____

**DIOCESE OF
Scottish Episcopal Church
Working Agreement**

for calendar year _____ and year of IME 4-6 _____

This agreement is made between the Reverend _____

Rector/Priest-in-Charge of _____

and Lay Reader _____

in respect of the latter’s ministry attached to the above charge and responsible to the above Rector/Priest-in-Charge.

Please answer these questions fully after mutual discussion, in triplicate (one copy to be retained by the Lay Reader, one by the Rector/Priest-in-Charge, and one sent to the Bishop). Expand boxes as desired.

1. List the agreed primary components of the Lay Reader’s ministry, their frequency and locus, and the approximate number of hours of service expected per week.

2. Detail the role of the Lay Reader in the charge’s ministry team, and in relation to the Vestry

3. Detail the arrangements made for regular staff meetings with others in the ministry team

4. Detail the arrangements made for regular supervisory meetings

5. Detail the provision made for the ongoing development of the Lay Reader’s gifts, listing courses to be attended, time allocated and agreed funding sources.

6. Detail the expectations regarding attendance at Quiet Days, retreats and spiritual direction

7. Detail any ongoing academic studies

8. Detail the expectations of attendance at diocesan/provincial events and groups for Lay Readers.

9. Detail the agreed understanding regarding holidays, time off and family/job requirements and other non-church priorities

10. Detail the level of working expenses agreed by the Vestry for the Lay Reader.

11. Detail how disagreement will best be handled

Date of Annual Review

Date

Circle whichever is applicable

End of IME 4

IME 5

IME 6

Signed and dated

Rector

Lay Reader

Approved by the Bishop :

Date :

Appendix 5. Checklist of ministerial experiences

The checklist below provides a list of ministerial opportunities which the Lay Reader ought to have experienced by the end of the IME 4-6 period. The Supervising Incumbent and Lay Reader should work through these at the outset of the Lay Reader's first year in the charge, roughly allocating activities to each of the three years ahead. The priorities can always be changed at the Annual Review – but this way will ensure that proper coverage is achieved. If an experience is not possible in the 'home charge', then a temporary 'placement' elsewhere may be sought.

Christian tradition, faith and discipleship

- Home Group/Lent Group/Bible study leadership
- Teaching about prayer
- Facilitating discussion at Vestry Away-Day, congregational meeting or the like
- Public speaking which is not preaching

Mission, evangelism and making disciples

- Active part in the preparation of candidates for Baptism and Confirmation
- Preaching at
 - Main Sunday Eucharist
 - Mattins
 - Evensong
 - Service of the Word
 - All-age worship
 - Funerals
 - Baptisms
 - Services with a high proportion of non-regular churchgoers (e.g. Christingle, Back-to-Church Sunday)

Styles of preaching

- script
 - notes
 - interactive
 - with visual/audio aids
- Presenting the Gospel to those of little or no church background
 - Experience of leading a seekers' group, using courses (e.g. using Alpha, Pilgrim, Emmaus, Compass material.)

Spirituality and worship

- Officiating at funerals – in church and crematorium
- Singing Mattins
- Singing Evensong
- Choosing hymns
- Working with music and musicians
- Crafting liturgies of the word for special or informal occasions
- Leading liturgies of the word for special or informal occasions
- Creating all-age worship
- Leading all-age worship

Personality and character

- Reflecting with Supervising Incumbent on being a public minister
- Engagement in Annual Review process
- Diary and time management
- Worshipping in the pews in home congregation on Sundays when not rostered
- Involvement in the ordinary tasks of congregational life (serving teas, clearing up etc.)

Relationships

- Management of volunteers
- Involvement in charge's pastoral care scheme
- Reflection upon conflict management
- Vestry experience

Collaboration and shared leadership

- Organisation of a team away-day or similar event
- Development of lay ministry and leaders
- Working with ecumenical partners – e.g. World Day of Prayer, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Vocation and ministry within the SEC

- Magazine article about own calling
- Preaching on vocation (e.g. on Vocations Sunday)
- Speaking about vocation to Sunday School and young adult groups
- Attendance at Provincial Welcome Day and subsequent articulation of the shared vision of the SEC explicated there

Lay Readers are invited to consider the modules offered by Common Awards via SEI for their IME 4-6. Some Lay Readers may wish to work toward the BA(Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission. It requires 360 credits, that is, 120 credits on top of the 240 credits awarded with the DipHE, which each Lay Reader will earn at the end of IME 1-3, unless s/he comes with prior academic awards in theological or ministerial studies.

Other Lay Readers may elect to participate in CA modules, without completing assignments or seeking academic credit. There are several options (see below). Modules will be delivered according to availability and demand. SEI's Director of Studies will contact those in IME 4-6, both Lay Readers and ordinands, in order to adjudicate which modules are best offered in a given year.

These are the modules most likely to be offered, at Level 5, in 2016-17:

- Christian Doctrine in Context (20)
- Preaching in the Contemporary World (20)
- Modern Thought and Theology (20)
- Further New Testament Studies (20)
- Further Old Testament Studies (20)
- Mission and Apologetics in Contemporary Culture (20)

SEI hopes to expand the repertoire to include more study of Scripture, biblical languages, preaching, doctrine, missiology and apologetics in due course.

Name of Preacher:

Date and Place of sermon:

Type of service or other context:

1. What would you say was the main point of this sermon? (What was it about? What was its aim? (If unclear, please indicate this)

2. How would you rate the following (1= weak, 5= excellent):

o	Delivery	1	2	3	4	5
o	Attention	1	2	3	4	5
o	Length	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please give any further reflections on
 - o Delivery (Could you hear sufficiently? Was the pace about right? Was there enough eye contact? Any helpful or unhelpful gestures? Did they hold your attention...?)
 - o Content (sermon length; use of story, humour & illustration; level of preparation; sufficient clarity of structure?)
 - o Context (Was the sermon appropriate for the occasion, and for the make-up of congregation?)
 - o Application (What impact did the sermon have on you? How did it relate to your everyday life? Were you inspired? encouraged? challenged to act? given cause to think?)

4. What were the main strengths of this sermon?

5. What one thing would you encourage the preacher to do differently another time?

6. What is the main thing you will take away from this sermon?

7. Any other constructive comments to support the preacher's development?

Thank you

Date :
Type of event or activity: <i>e.g. theological reflection with Supervising Incumbent, sermon, pastoral encounter, conducting a funeral etc.</i>
Notes/reflections/further action

Appendix 9. Reflective practice in supervision

Supervision sessions are not administrative meetings for the purpose of setting diary dates and planning services; they are for engaging in reflective practice. The task of the Supervising Incumbent is to help the Lay Reader to ask questions arising from her/his experience of ministry in such a way that his/her deepening theological understanding is a personal process and not just a deposit received from another.

Imagine the kind of discussion that took place when Jesus gathered His disciples together after sending them out to proclaim the kingdom of God. He listens to what's happened and continues to guide them in the light of those experiences.²

Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, 'Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money

They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. **He took them with Him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida.** (Luke 9)

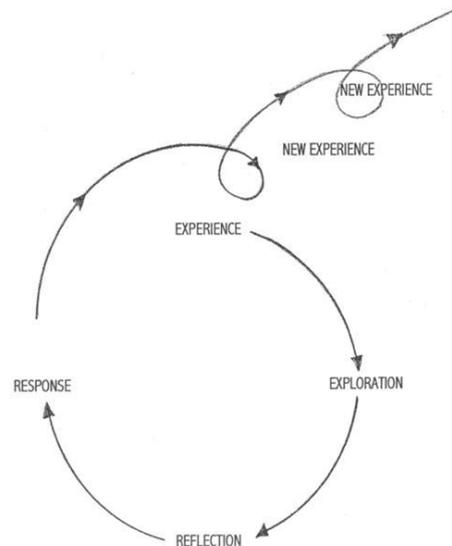
That is what you are trying to do in supervision sessions. They are meetings in which Supervisor and Lay Reader reflect together on what has been noticed and experienced, and the Lay Reader learns how to allow his/her experience to question the theological tradition and the tradition to confront his/her experience. In other words, the Lay Reader continues to develop that method of theological enquiry which undergirded IME studies, and which fosters resilience, sustains practitioners in ministry and enables them to respond creatively to change.

In their IME 1-3, Lay Reader candidates were taught to offer a non-judgemental narration of an **experience**: *recall the who, what, where, when and how of the event*;

to **explore** it so as to identify the heart of the matter: what issue, question or quandary does the experience raise for you?

to **reflect** upon it theologically by structuring a correlation: *Does the theological discourse bring new insights to the experience? Does the experience bring new insights to the theological discourse?*

and finally to **respond** by identifying new learnings and calls to action: *How will you grow from this experience? What might you do differently next time?*



² For more about being 'a provocative mentor' see 'Asking questions afterwards' Geoff Maugham *British Journal of Theological Education* 14. 2 (2004) 127-135

Supervising Incumbents need to enable the *Lay Reader* to engage in this theological work him/herself, rather than offering quick-fix answers to ministerial issues. The 'pro forma for Critical Incident journaling' below is one way of engaging in reflection upon ministerial experience. The comparative length of each section is delineated by the relative size of the boxes.

Narrate the experience
Identify the heart of the matter
Outline the resulting theological reflection
Identify new learning or avenues for further development

The behaviour of **the Supervising Incumbent** is also crucial. Pastoral supervision is a method of doing and reflecting upon ministry in which a supervisor and supervisee covenant together to reflect critically upon their ministry as a way of growing in self-awareness, professional competence, theological understanding and Christian commitment. This means that how the Supervising Incumbent models ministry is of supreme importance. Throughout all contact with the Lay Reader it is vital to show a continuing ability to learn, to be challenged and to engage effectively with the excitement of ministry; to show commitment for the task and for the congregation; and to demonstrate the enrichment and engagement that the work of ministry brings. The Lay Reader should see someone who is still learning, and who is prepared to respond, adapt to change and think theologically about practice. It will require energy, effort and enthusiasm.

This also means learning the art of **giving feedback**. Feedback too often manifests itself as either unreflective criticism or generalized praise. Praise is a blanket summary statement of how good someone is, without explaining what in particular they are good at and what is good about it. It consists of unspecified laudatory comments directed towards persons *qua* persons; that is, towards their attributes or their identity rather than their behaviour or performance. For example, 'you're a genius with languages' or 'you're such a gifted singer'.

Feedback, in contrast, consists of statements about the nature of what someone did. It is directed not towards a person's attributes but toward their actions. For instance, 'I admire the work you did to get 98% on that Greek test' or 'your singing makes me feel so serene' are examples of feedback rather than praise.

Feedback can be just as positive and approving; it simply shifts the focus away from a person's identity and onto the effort and engagement they put into the task. Feedback is an objective message about behaviour or activity, recognising and reinforcing something well done or offering suggestions about how to do something better.

- In giving feedback, we need to be accurate and specific. It is much easier to do something with specific feedback than with generalisations. For example, 'you tend to drop your voice at the end of a sentence' is better than 'I find you difficult to hear'.
- Only offer feedback on the things which the person has the power to change. 'I find your tendency to flick your hair during preaching distracting' could be helpful. 'I really don't like your accent' is not.
- Giving feedback is a sensitive issue. It is often helpful to spell things out in full using 'I' rather than you. 'I felt lost and rushed and found I was distracted during the first prayer. It might be helpful to slow down a bit', rather than 'you prayed too fast in the first prayer'.
- In giving feedback it is usually as helpful and creative for people to receive feedback about their strengths as it is to receive it about weakness, since it enables them to affirm what they have and build upon it with confidence. All feedback should include affirmation of strengths.³

In short, feedback should be focussed on behaviour not personality, evidence not assumption, description not value judgments, specifics not generalities

³ Adapted from *Becoming the Pastor You Hope to Be; four practices for improving ministry* Barbara Blodgett Alban Institute (2011) and *Church of Scotland Supervisors' Handbook* (2015)

The provincial document ‘Ministries in the Scottish Episcopal Church’ states that ‘in congregations, Lay Readers serve as part of the ministry team under the leadership of the Rector’. That definition makes clear where accountability lies – but it also speaks of *collegiality*.

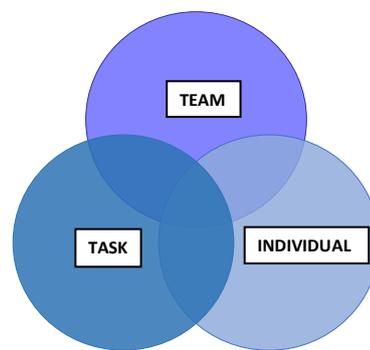
Lay Reader and Supervising Incumbent will need to work hard - from the initial discussion which leads to the drawing up of the Working Agreement right through the IME 4-6 years and beyond – to apply good practice in the area of collaborative working. The tools offered in this Handbook will help towards that; the establishment of annual goals and the use of objective criteria for evaluation and evidence-based reporting all encourage a culture of mature reflection upon gifts and shortcomings. Judgements become depersonalised, without blame or shame; ongoing appraisal of strengths and weaknesses becomes the norm.

But these frameworks notwithstanding, good team working *has to be worked at*. As is well known, all teams have three overlapping areas of need:

those of **Individuals**, that is, paying attention to physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual needs

those of the **Team**, that is the maintenance need to create and develop a cohesive group

those imposed by the **Task**, that is getting the job done



Individuals (must know their role, responsibility, authority, accountability, value and worth)
 need to belong
 need to contribute
 need for status
 need for power
 need for dependency
 need for freedom
 need for recognition of problems

A team will function better when the needs of its members are attended to and each individual is able to contribute freely, unhindered by personal distress.

Task (achieving objectives)
 need to get a job done
 need for a worthwhile goal
 need for a clear goal
 need for agreement about the goal
 need for a plan to achieve the goal
 need to be able to recognize when the goal has been achieved

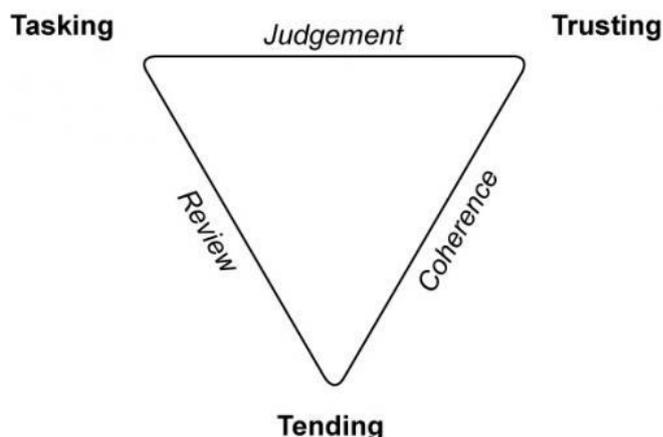
Team (holding together)
 need for group to stick together until the job is done
 need to improve understanding
 need to aid cooperation between members
 need for members to support each other
 need to obtain clarity
 need for identification of skills
 need for good communication

Building a smoothly functioning team will necessitate considering the three areas outlined in the three-circle model: the task or skills needed to accomplish the task, the needs and development of individuals and the development of the team as a corporate unit. Clarifying aims, allocating and delegating roles and responsibilities, good diary management and forward work-planning, timed implementation and intentional evaluation will all form part of the task-focused areas of team life.

Clarity about roles and responsibilities is vital; 'role creep', where an individual is seeking to perform too many different roles, must be avoided. The Working Agreement should militate against this danger. A healthy team comprises players who restrict their activities so as to avoid diminishing the role of others of others, but who play their own role with distinction. Seeing where people fit and ensuring they are working where they flourish is a key responsibility of Supervising Incumbents.

Another way in which to help teams work well together is for members to come to an **appreciation of the different kinds of personalities** which make up that team. Different personalities contribute differently to the process of working together, and for harmonious work it is necessary to understand where your fellow members 'are coming from' and why. There are many different tools on the market to aid such enquiries, from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Belbin Team Role Analysis, Honey and Mumford's Learning Styles Questionnaire, Gilmore and Fraleigh's 'Style Profile for Communication at Work' and the Enneagram. The use of such tools can contribute to the development of individual confidence and security, and of harmonious team -working.

Learning the art of delegation is vital. It is not enough to simply 'dump' tasks on people - clear instructions around expectations need to be given and where necessary, training, support and encouragement made available. The 'tripod of work' (right) is a helpful tool in this regard. It emerged from listening to people talk about the conditions in which they felt they could be most effective as individuals and working together in teams.



Tasking

- sharing intention
- agreeing objectives
- agreeing a completion time.

Trusting

- entrusting people with the purposes of the organization
- trusting them to use their judgement in carrying out work for which they are accountable
- evaluating and developing individual capabilities
- making sure that no-one is either under- or overwhelmed by the challenges of their work.

Tending

- monitoring processes and systems
- communicating the vision for the work so that Lay Reader and others in the team have a context for their work, their initiatives and their judgement
- procedures agreed beforehand that will be used if there are unresolved differences of view.

Good communication is likewise essential. Within any team it is essential to find ways of communication that are effective and that connect with every team member. Many teams use e-mail to share information, but care should be taken that all involved are on e-mail and check it regularly otherwise some may feel that they hear everything later than everyone else or not at all. It is recommended that e-mails, text messages and letters be used for information purposes only; contentious issues should be handled face-to-face.

Face-to-face team meetings are essential for a variety of reasons, but must be utilized as effectively as possible so that members feel that the investment of their time and energy is worthwhile. This can particularly be an issue when some in the team are in paid posts and others are doing demanding full-time jobs on top of their voluntary ministry. Having spent a whole day in the workplace, it can be frustrating to come to an unfocused and unproductive team meeting.

The Supervising Incumbent needs to ensure that communication is fair and democratic. If one person in the team always receives information second-hand they can feel excluded or undervalued. Similarly, situations can arise where it feels as if the team leader has an 'in-crowd' with whom they discuss important issues prior to the actual team meeting; this is especially important to manage well when there are two or more fulltime members in the team and the others are part-time or volunteer members.

Not all meetings need to be business-orientated, however; providing opportunities for team members to spend time together in other ways create a sense of **fellowship and cohesion** within the team. Spending time in corporate prayer, team worship or Bible study, in team-building activities, on Away-Days, studying a book together or watching a film can all assist in engendering a sense of cohesion and mutuality. To do this well, however, involves paying attention to people's availability and identifying meeting times and places which work for all concerned, not just the full-time/stipended members.

Never underestimate **the importance of attitude** in growing teams; simple things like not taking people for granted, treating people with respect and expressing appreciation and thanks may seem obvious but are often forgotten in the busyness of church and organizational life.

Further reading

Chadwick, C. *Growing in Ministry: using critical incident analysis* Grove Booklets Pastoral Series 84 and Tovey, P. (2000)

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Scottish Episcopal Institute 2106 Approved by the College of Bishops May 2016

General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church Scottish Charity No SC015962