

To all DDOs and ADDOs

22nd October 2021

In our liturgical year, the second Sunday Eucharistic reading is currently from Hebrews. Hearing last week how Jesus, our great High Priest, knows the fullness of our human experience – our joys, sorrows, temptations and, therefore, also our mixed reactions to change and uncertainty was valuable. We are all working with change regarding the new discernment processes amidst the ongoing uncertainty regarding Covid. Yet Jesus shares the day-to-day details of our daily lives and constantly intercedes for us. We hope that this DDO mailing will both clarify some things for you regarding the new processes and assure you of our ongoing commitment to journey with you though as, together, we inhabit the new processes.

This mailing gives you information regarding:

- The Stage 1 Carousel Conversations and a range of related issues
- Initial Training for new DDOs and ADDOs
- (A)DDO ‘surgeries’ re the new Shared Discernment Process
- A Reminder about DBS Enhanced Disclosures
- An Update on the MDS Web Portal
- Traffic Lights training
- An update on Psychological Assessment
- Discernment for Ordained Pioneer Ministry

Stage 1 Carousel Conversations update

As this Mailing comes to you we are in the midst of a series of 10 training sessions for the Bishops’ Advisers in the new Shared Discernment Process. If you are a Bishops’ Adviser and have been to one of the sessions, we thank you for your participation; if you are due to come to one, we look forward to seeing you there. Here is some information to bring you up to date on a range of matters relating to the Stage 1 Carousel Conversations.

Small change to *Carousel Conversation 6: Engaging with the World*

In the light of feedback received during the pilots of the Stage 1 Carousel Conversations we have made one change to the *Engaging with the World* Conversation. To simplify the number of starting points that Candidates can choose and prepare for in advance, and to clarify further the focus of this Conversation, the *Engaging with the World* Conversation no longer invites the Candidate, as a Conversation Starter to talk about an experience of mission or evangelism they have been involved in. That’s because the whole Conversation needs to be able to relate to their context anyway. In addition, all the options ask that the news story, book, film, or TV programme the candidate chooses **should be related to one (or more) of the Five Marks of Mission**. This is to make sure the Conversation Starter chosen does actually relate to mission. Accordingly, the description of the Conversation Starter now reads:

‘Conversation Starter: news story, book, film, or TV programme that is relevant to one (or more) of the Five Marks of Mission.

As a starting point for the Conversation, you are invited to **either:**

- Discuss a **news story** you have brought that is relevant to one of the Five Marks of Mission. This could be from any newspaper, magazine or website but *must be less than 6 months old*.
- **or** discuss a **film** or **TV programme** you have seen, or a book you have read, *within the last 6 months*, that is relevant to one of the Five Marks of Mission. It could be any type or style of film, TV programme or book.

or:

- Discuss a short and current (*within the last 6 months*) **news story** or **headline** from a newspaper, magazine or website that is relevant to one of the Five Marks of Mission, offered to you by the Adviser.’

It is still possible for the Candidate to ask the Bishops' Adviser to offer them a news story rather than search out their own. There are no changes to what is being assessed during this Carousel Conversation.

However, for the current season (to the end of the 2021/2022 season) if any Candidate is planning to talk about an experience of mission or evangelism as their Conversation Starter, as that is what they have prepared with their DDO that is fine – they won't be disadvantaged at all during the Conversation.

Updated Stage 1 Guidance Notes for Candidates and Additional Information for DDOs

Please find attached the latest versions of the *Guidance Notes for Candidates*, and the *Additional Information for DDOs*, both of which includes the changes mentioned above. Both guides also include new introductions, which we would encourage you to read. However, please be assured that there are no other changes to the content of the Carousel Conversations apart from the one outlined above. Do please **send the latest version of the Guidance Notes for Candidates to your Candidates**. They will also receive a copy from us when their place on a Carousel is confirmed.

Stage 1 online booking form – guidance on additional comments from (A)DDOs

As you will be aware, there is a section of the Stage 1 online booking form (included in the sample version of this form distributed earlier) where you as (A)DDOs are welcome to include any additional information (up to 200 words), about the Candidate if you think this would help the Candidate and the Bishops' Advisers to engage with each other in the Carousel Conversations. **This section is entirely optional and your your comments won't be used as part of the assessment.**

However, (A)DDOs have requested guidance about what they might include. We suggest you might want to consider the following areas:

- Information about any Specific Learning Difficulties or other matters that it would be helpful for the Bishops' Advisers to know to help them enable the candidate to give of their best;
- Anything relevant about the context in which the Candidate's vocation has arisen and developed;
- A note of about any particular expression of ordained ministry the Candidate might currently be exploring (e.g. being a Pioneer or being locally deployed), where this could help the Bishops' Advisers to understanding the Candidate better;
- Anything else you think it would be helpful for the Advisers to know before meeting the Candidate.

As you will see, the purpose is to help the Conversations with the Advisers to go as well as possible. You are not trying to evaluate or promote the candidate so much as to facilitate the Candidate's engagement with the Bishops' Advisers. Don't forget that the Candidate needs to know what you have written.

Sending Candidates what they need for their Carousel Conversations

a) Zoom links and timetable

By no later than one week before the week of their Carousel Conversations, the Panel Secretary overseeing the Carousel will email each Candidate (copied to their (A)DDO) with:

- The links Candidates will need to access the whole group meetings on the Carousel Conversations day
- The links they will need for each of their Carousel Conversations
- Details of the order in which their Conversations will take place.

b) Access to resources for the Conversation Starters

At the same time the Candidates will be sent:

- Online access information for the visual and Biblical resources they can draw on in *Conversation 1: Priesthood/Diaconate*, which would be available to them immediately
- A link to the very short pastoral video scenario for *Conversation 4: Practical and Pastoral Care* that they will discuss with the Adviser. This will be live by 3.00pm the day before their Carousel Conversations and remain live until the end of their Carousel Conversations day. Candidates are asked to watch the video (it lasts about 5 minutes) before they come to their Carousel Conversations day. They are free to watch the video as many times as they would like, but **please ask them not to share the link with anyone else.**

Sample Pastoral Video Scenario and email for DDOs

Following requests from some DDOs we are sending you an ‘in-house’ video produced by the discernment team for training purposes. You are welcome to use this as a training video for your DDO team or with candidates to help them prepare for Conversation 4: Practical and Pastoral Care.

It is available at the following Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fmkq6eais9wr8hc/AAAK9Ddzxc2pNrDW4H2X0PCra?dl=0>.

A sample follow-up email, such as would be given to a Candidate during the course of the Carousel Conversation, is also available at the same link.

Candidates who cannot access Stage 1 Carousel Conversations online

If you have any Candidates *who because of particular needs would be unable* to participate in an online Stage 1 Carousel, please be in touch with us as soon as possible. Please note this is intended only for those who actually can’t engage online without real difficulty – not simply those who would prefer to meet face to face. In many cases, adaptations to how we manage some of the conversations might make online engagement preferable – but we will need to discuss with you all the possible options to find the best way forward for the candidate. We are committed to work with you to agree an alternative provision that will enable your candidate to participate fully in Stage 1, including a face-to-face event, but it will take time to set up, so please be in touch at the earliest possible stage.

Initial Training for new DDOs and ADDOs

We are aware that some new DDOs and ADDOs have begun in post since the last Initial DDO Training that we offered earlier in the year. When the current programme of Bishops’ Adviser Training for Stage 1 of the Shared Discernment Process has been completed, later this autumn, we will run an Initial DDO Training, tailored to the new process. The date when this will take place is **Monday 29th November 2021 9.30am – 4.00pm (with appropriate breaks). It will be on Zoom.** If you wish to book a place on this, please email your **name, role and diocese** to gary.renison@churchofengland.org. We will offer a further date in the New Year.

New Lead DDOs

If you are recently in post as a lead DDO and haven’t yet been in touch with one of us, please do so at your earliest convenience – we would be very glad to meet you and to discuss any support we can offer before the Initial training takes place. You can contact any member of the team, but in the first instance it may be easiest to email joy.gilliver@churchofengland.org. FYI all our email addresses are: firstname.surname@churchofengland.org. The team members are all listed at the end of this mailing.

‘Surgeries’ for DDOs and ADDOs in the new Shared Discernment Process

The National Discernment Team is glad to offer some regular surgeries via Zoom when DDOs and ADDOs can come with any questions relating to the Shared Discernment Process. If we can’t answer your question there

and then, we will, of course, get back to you. Please note this is for general queries regarding the Shared Discernment Process. **For questions relating to a particular candidate please contact a member of the National Discernment Team listed below.**

Dates and times arranged for forthcoming surgeries are as follows:

- Weds October 27th - 9.30-10.00am (*please note that this first surgery is **only for diocesan 'lead' DDOs***)
- Weds November 3rd - 4.30-5.00pm
- Weds November 17th - 9.30-10.00am
- Thurs December 2nd - 4.30-5.00pm
- Thursday December 16th - 9.30-10.00am

The surgeries will always take place at the following Zoom link:

<https://churchofengland-org.zoom.us/j/93292405500>

Meeting ID: 932 9240 5500

Passcode: 070350

When you join the surgery you will enter a waiting room, and a member of the National Discernment Team will admit you. For enquiries about **Traffic Lights** or **Psychological Assessment** see below and contact or Carys Walsh on Carys.Walsh@churchofengland.org.

DBS checks required before the Stage 1: Carousel Conversations

Please note that an **Enhanced DBS Disclosure with barring information** for a Candidate as a **potential ordinand** (and as working within the Child and Adult workforces) is required before a Stage 1 Panel. Unfortunately, there cannot be exceptions to this. In response to a DDO query can we clarify that this DBS check must be a 'paid for' check and *cannot be one obtained free of charge* as for a volunteer. For further information, please see the attached document *Safer Recruitment Process Frequently Asked Questions (2017)* p10.

Please also remember that overseas safeguarding checks are required for any candidate who has lived abroad for six months or more at any point during the last 10 years. Further details of this were included in the February 2021 and May 2021 DDO Mailings. If there are queries about these overseas checks, and the guidance previously sent does not help, do please be in touch with one of the members of the discernment team.

Update on the MDS (Ministry Discernment System) online portal

Julie Bradshaw reports:

We began training DDOs and lead administrative staff to use the new Ministry Discernment System Online Portal on Monday 4th October, with training sessions scheduled throughout that week and the portal finally went live on 6th October. This training has continued. The delivery of training and the planned 'go live' date were later than set out in the August mailing and this was due to a number of factors, largely outside of our control and whilst the first Stage 1 Carousel Panels are only a few weeks away this delay will not impact on the running of the early panels.

Initial feedback from the training has been positive as the portal has been designed to be as easy to use as we can make it, but it is still a work in progress and we have noted all the issues raised by you during the training and will do the same as you begin to use the system in order to fix any system glitches quickly and build improvements into the next stage of development. Whilst we may not be able to incorporate all the system changes that you request we will do our best to respond to your requirements. We will also be asking for your views on the information that should be displayed on the diocesan portal dashboard to give you headline information about your candidates as they journey through the discernment process, as this functionality will be included in the next phase of development work.

We have produced a candidate guide and YouTube video to take candidates through the portal login process and the completion of the Stage 1 Booking Form and we have also enhanced the PowerPoint training presentation to include help text and additional information as we assume that you will want to provide your candidates and staff with system information before you set them up to use the portal and these will be emailed to you very shortly.

For enquiries about the new **web portal** contact Julie Bradshaw on Julie.bradshaw@churchofengland.org

Traffic Lights Training

A new and revised edition of the Traffic Lights Training Tool has been put together and issued to DDOs. Important training in effective use of the Traffic Lights Questions will take place at the end of this year and the beginning of next year. Many of you will be familiar with these questions, and many will, no doubt, have been through training to use them. However, as a new edition of the questions has been issued and there are now DDOs who are not familiar with their use, this is a good time update and refresh the training. As the new guidelines make clear, **the Traffic Lights questions should not be used without appropriate training.**

The training which will take place this and next year is interactive and reflective, and will include a blended learning approach, including preparation, two online sessions of 2 hours each, reflection between the online sessions, and follow up work.

To enable the large number of DDOs and ADDOs to access the training, we shall be using a ‘train the trainer’ approach, and we are **inviting one DDO or ADDO from each diocese (or episcopal area in London)** to attend the training; they will then be equipped to take a lead on disseminating the training among their wider DDO team. The lead DDO may be the obvious choice to attend, but it may be that another member of your team will be the preferred choice: for example, someone with particular skills in training, with interest in the aspect of the discernment process, or who is already experienced in using the Traffic Lights Questions, who can share their wisdom.

Resources will be made available for ongoing training within your team, and members of the National Discernment Team or others involved in the training will also be available to help with training which is shared within your diocesan team, for any teams which would find this helpful.

To access the training, please can you **choose one of the Part 1 dates** and **one of the Part 2 dates** below: each has a maximum of 16 places. Ideally, there should be at least three weeks between your Part 1 session and your Part 2 session (so that you have enough time to do the ongoing work between each online meeting). This means that if you select 10 January for your Part 1 training, it would be most beneficial to select 7 February for your Part 2 training, though we know this may not always be possible!

Part 1

Thursday 25 November 2021	10am – 12pm
Monday 29 November 2021	2.30pm-4.30pm
Monday 10 January 2022	2.30pm-4.30pm

Part 2 –

Wednesday 19 January 2022	2.30pm-4.30pm
Monday 24 January 2022	10am-12pm
Monday 7 February 2022	2.30-4.30pm

To book your place, please can you email Carys Walsh (carys.walsh@churchofengland.org) indicating your **name, diocese and role and your first and second choices for Part 1 and Part 2 training sessions**. Please could you register your interest **by Monday 1 November** if at all possible.

The Psychological Assessment Project

Monthly DDO Surgery for Psychological Assessment

For those of you who are hoping to begin implementing Psychological Assessment in your diocese, or want to talk through anything to do with the process, do remember that we have a regular monthly surgery on the second **Wednesday of the month at 10am-12pm**. The next surgeries are on **10 November** and **8 December**. The link (which will be the same for all these surgeries) is:

<https://zoom.us/j/97167085993?pwd=aHUyc0ovUGpML1loV2U0T3JTZFWUT09>

Meeting ID: 971 6708 5993

Passcode: 119821

Guidelines and briefing notes

In recent months, we have been developing guidelines and briefing notes to help resource you and your work in this area. The documents have been shared in draft with a few of you for comment and to help in developing the most useful resources for you. These documents are due to be shared in an **additional DDO mailing at the end of October**. In brief, they will be:

Guidelines for best practice:

- **An outline of Psychological Assessment** - describing Psychological Assessment in the context of discernment, and offering a model which covers three broad areas: a) areas which are generically explored in such assessments (generic); b) areas which are relevant for a candidate for ordained ministry (role specific); c) areas which may be relevant for a particular candidate (person specific).
- Guidelines to help with **preparing your candidates** for their psychological assessment;
- Guidelines to help you with **working with candidates after their psychological assessment** report has been received;

Briefing notes for candidates:

- A document for candidates to explain, briefly, what a psychological assessment is in the context of the discernment process;
- A document for candidates to help them prepare for their own psychological assessment.

A resource to help in identifying a suitably qualified Psychological Assessor:

- **A suggested Role/Person Specification**. This provides information about the role, training and qualifications which are to be expected in an appropriately qualified Psychological Assessor.

Discernment for Ordained Pioneer Ministry – and Grids

As you will be aware from the August 2021 DDO mailing from now on candidates who seek to discern a call to Ordained Pioneer Ministry (OPM) at the same time as discerning their calling as a Priest or a Distinctive Deacon will be able to test a calling both to be a pioneer and to ordained ministry through the new Shared Discernment Process. This is to provide greater simplicity for candidates and for you as DDOs. To help with this Ed Olsworth-Peter (who was, until the end of July 2021, the National Adviser for Pioneer Development) worked with Pioneer specialists to augment and nuance the grids to help you in your discernment work with such candidates. The augmented Grids for use with potential ordained pioneer priest candidates are attached to this mailing.

As you will see, there are **no differences at all at Stage 1** (though you may want to let the Bishops' Advisers know that the candidate is exploring ministry as an OPM).

At Stage 2, all you are used to seeing in the grids remains there, with some nuances and additions for those exploring ordained pioneer ministry. These are highlighted for you. The set of grids is accompanied by some introductory notes and an appendix written by Ed Olsworth-Peter and others in Pioneer ministry which are intended to assist DDOs who have little personal first-hand experience of pioneer ministry in developing your understanding and skills in working with potential OPM candidates.

You will see from the grids that the **skills needed for Ordained Pioneer Ministry mean that this is only available at Incumbent level.**

Ordained Pioneers and Incumbent level ministry

It's important to remember that the term 'incumbent-level ministry' does not define the place you exercise your ministry - it does not mean 'being an incumbent' - but relates to the *complexity of leadership needed and the degree of responsibility* asked of the person. It does not necessarily mean receiving a stipend, nor does it mean being the primary minister in a parish necessarily. Some of the characteristics of Incumbent level ministry include:

- Being more likely to be in a position where the buck stops with you and you need to be able to be accountable for the decisions you take without necessarily having immediate recourse to a senior;
- Having responsibility for setting and growing vision and devising strategy – to take something in a particular direction, for which you are accountable;
- As an Incumbent-level minister you are probably less likely to have others directly ordering your regular work.

With an increased focus on the variety of shapes of ordained ministry – in a context where being a parish focused minister is not likely to be the only norm – ordained pioneer ministers, working at 'incumbent-level', but who do this in a self-supporting capacity, or in conjunction with another occupational role might become more common. But their ministry as a pioneer still coheres with incumbent-level responsibility.

All decisions about whether a person is placed in a *stipendiary role* reside with the diocese and play no part whatever in the assessment of a candidate at a Stage 2 Panel. Ed Olsworth-Peter and his pioneer team were convinced that the complexity of pioneer ministry in all its forms mean that ordained pioneer ministers will need to have the potential to exercise ministry with the sorts of incumbent-level characteristics outlined above which are amplified in the Ordained Pioneer Ministry grids.

Support for DDOs with Ordained Pioneer Ministry

We are aware that some DDOs will not have taken candidates through a Pioneer Panel at all in the past. We would like, therefore, to offer support to DDOs. Should you have a query about using the Pioneer grids or about an Ordained Pioneer candidate do please contact Em Coley (em.coley@churchofengland.org). She is happy to think through any queries with you.

The Separate Pioneer Panel

This still exists but will, from September 2021, be for all **Lay Pioneers** (as is currently the case). It will also be available for candidates for ordained ministry, ordinands or clergy who discern a call to pioneer ministry **subsequent to attending Stage 1 and Stage 2 Panels**. They could be in training or already in ordained ministry. This means that their calling to pioneering can still readily be assessed long after the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Panels as is currently the case.

Contact details for the National Discernment Team

Rob Avery	robert.avery@churchofengland.org	National Discernment Adviser
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Gary Renison	gary.renison@churchofengland.org	National Discernment Adviser
Carys Walsh	carys.walsh@churchofengland.org	Psychological Assessment Project Officer and Panel Secretary

Thank you so much for your commitment to discernment and for your partnership with us as we work together to implement the new processes. As we work with Candidates who are seeking to discern whether God is calling them to be priest or deacon in God’s Church, Hebrews reminds us that all ordained ministry is but a sharing in Christ’s ministry. Holding before us the vision of Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, might this assure us that we don’t engage in this work alone.

With very best wishes,

Joy Gilliver and the Discernment Team