

Ministry Leadership Teams

Ministry Leadership Teams are there to:

- listen to and discern God's will for the ministry and mission of the local church;
- enable Christians in the community to identify, resource and develop their ministry;
- discover sustainable patterns of ministry to support God's mission in the world.

Why collaborative leadership?

Leadership requires different styles for different tasks and stages in a church's life that aren't found in one person alone.

Listening to God and discerning the future for a parish and community is a shared activity dependent upon a range of experience.

Solitary leadership is frequently a recipe for dryness and burnout whereas shared leadership generates energy and freshness.

The purpose of collaborative leadership is:

- to 'transform' people and organisations – to change them in mind and heart;
- to develop sustainable and relevant patterns of ministry and mission in the local church;
- To identify, nurture and support Christians in exercising their ministry.

Core principles of MLT

MLT is not a blueprint, nor even a model, but a set of principles based on good practice

1. The commitment of the whole local church to collaborative ministry.
2. A team that has been called out, not merely representative, and committed to one another.
3. Responsibility devolved to it by the PCC (DCC) for developing a strategic, mission-focussed, sustainable, collaborative pattern of ministry.
4. Commitment by the MLT to learning and training through a diocesan appointed mentor and a diocesan learning programme.
5. Commissioning by the Diocesan Bishop representing a partnership between MLT and diocese.

Responsibilities of the PCC in relation to the MLT

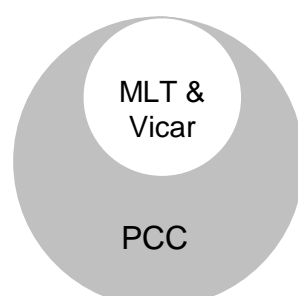
- Sets the overall parish policy and within that the area of work, task, timing and priorities it wishes to delegate to the MLT.
- Discerns suitable people for the MLT from the longer list compiled by the congregation.
- Informs the MLT as to the respective areas over which it wishes to be informed, consulted and to decide.
- Supports, encourages and meets occasionally with the MLT about its work, experience and concerns.
- Is responsible for the financial support of the work spearheaded by the MLT.

PCC	MLT
<p>Functions of the PCC includes 'co-operation with the Minister in promoting in the parish the mission of the church, pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical.'</p> <p>(PCC (Powers) Measure, 1956)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collaborative team of lay and ordained people, working together – under the authority of the PCC – to lead, envision, enable and release all God's people for mission and ministry – in the whole of life, through the local church. • The PCC is to delegate some of its responsibilities, for mission, ministry and visionary leadership, to an emerging MLT. • In some cases the PCC may become the MLT. <p>(Collaborative Leadership, Coventry Diocese MLTs, Spring 2003)</p>
Churchwardens	Incumbent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The churchwardens are officers of the Bishop. They shall discharge such duties as are by law and custom assigned to them; they shall be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent. They shall... encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion and promote unity and peace among them. They shall maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard. • In the churchwardens is vested the property in the plate, ornaments and other movable goods of the church, and they shall keep an inventory thereof... <p>(The Canons of the Church of England, 2005 edition)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the Gospel. • They share with the Bishop the oversight of the church. • With the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament. • They are to teach and admonish... to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins. They are to baptise new disciples... to bless the people in God's name, to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death... they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people. <p>(The Ordination of Priests, also called Presbyters, 2005)</p>

The MLT & the parish(es)

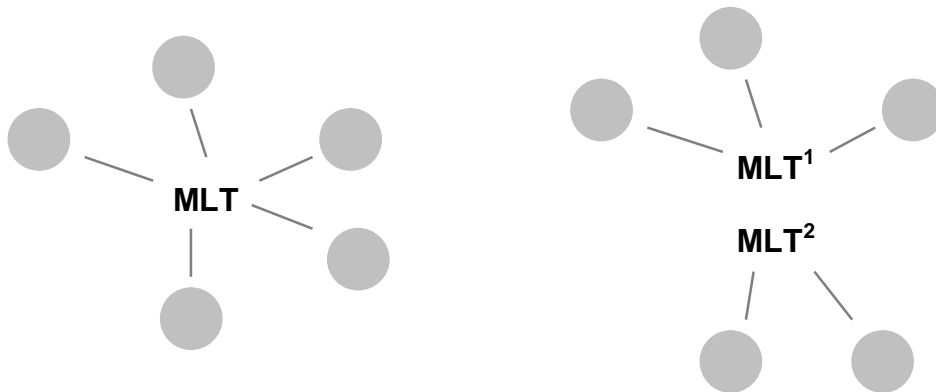
The following are indicative ways in which MLTs might function. Whatever the structures, members of MLTs should be appointed as a result of a 'calling out-discernment process and not on the basis of representing particular churches, roles or constituencies.

Single benefice parishes:

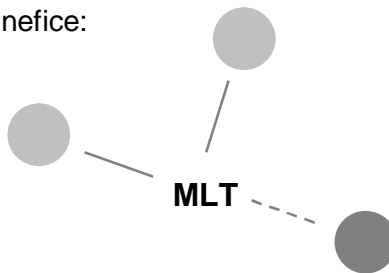


Multi-Parish benefices or parish clusters:

In some multi-Parish benefices, not all parishes will be involved in an MLT; in others all parishes may wish to be involved even though not all the parishes may have people who have been 'called out' on the MLT.

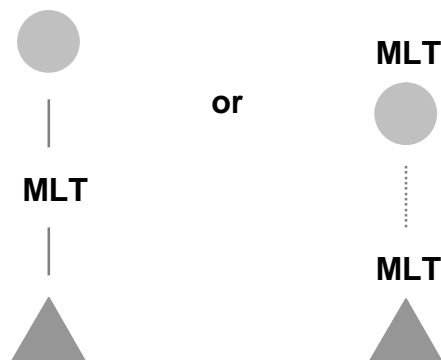


New parishes ● joining an existing benefice:



A church with a church plant or other 'new expression' of church: ▲

Where a church has multiple areas of ministry and perhaps 'fresh expressions of church' they may need an MLT for each of their semi-separate congregations. It is expected that normally the incumbent would be a member of the additional MLT.



MLT requirements

Membership:

- Proven or potential leadership, having a vision for the future shape of the local church.
- Openness to new learning, with a willingness to reflect.
- Some roots in the stories and ethos of the parish and community.
- Having the confidence of the congregation and reflecting the diversity of the local church.
- Commitment to ministry to the un-churched and to 'new expressions of church'.

Size: Influenced by the strength of support for those 'called out' but usually between 6 and 12.

Duration: An initial life of 5 years after which there will be a review. No member would serve for more than 10 years.

Frequency: Not less than once a month.

Shape: Learning, listening to God, reflecting theologically.

The Mentor

The mentor's role is to:

1. Assist the MLT to make the connection between the learning in the individual group and the learning implications of the diocesan programme;
2. Guide and support the new team in establishing good working and team building practices;
3. Hold the team to its purpose;
4. Support the ministerial development of the team members individually as well as part of the team;
5. Act as a safeguard against collusion, denial and parochialism;
6. Available to act as consultant to the group as and when required, after the commissioning of the MLT.

The mentor normally attends alternate meetings for the first two years.

MLTs and financial implications for parishes

The diocese meets the cost of recruiting and supervising MLT mentors and diocesan training. MLTs are invited to make a contribution towards the cost of room hire and refreshments for diocesan training meetings.

Stages in Exploring and Establishing an MLT

1. Enquiry

The precondition for an MLT is that the local church is committed to engage collaboratively in the ministry and mission of the church. Enquires should be made to the MLT convener.

2. Exploration

The parish may wish to invite the MLT convener to meet a small group of church officers and then to the PCC. Members of an existing MLT may be asked to tell their story, either to the PCC or, preferably, to a congregational day or open evening event. It is vitally important for the whole parish to catch the vision of the ministry of the whole people of God.

3. Decision

The PCC will usually make a decision after a lengthy period of reflection. The decision should be seen as a new and exciting development for the church as a whole.

4. Preparation

A careful programme of preparation should take place over several months, to equip the congregation to take a full part in the calling-out/discernment process. Unless the parish is clear about its own role, it may be resistant to the MLT.

5. Discernment/calling out of the MLT

Ministry, and especially ministry leadership, arises in answer to a call that comes from God which is tested and recognised by other people.

- i. The whole congregation should be involved in putting forward the names of people they think suitable in strict confidence.
- ii. The PCC evaluate the list of names.
- iii. A 'sifting group' approaches potential MLT members individually.
- iv. The final list is presented to the PCC, which is asked to accept or reject the names en bloc.

Parishes should have completed this stage by July in order for the MLT to begin its formation and learning programme in September.

6. Initial training

AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Working well together: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The development of teams and relationships• Patterns of spirituality for teams• Growing discipleship for Christian leaders	Where are we now: analysis of context and culture: Where do we discern God wanting us to go: Doing theology/theological reflection:	Making the journey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Models of transformational leadership• Leading people through change• Decision-making and strategic planning• Developing communication

After completion of the year there will be a review of the MLT to establish whether the members are all willing to serve etc.

7. Commissioning

When the MLT has satisfactorily completed the first year of its formation and learning, the Diocesan Bishop commissions the MLT and the whole parish in the local church.

8. Ongoing support

After the commissioning the MLT will be expected to attend three, termly, training sessions:

9. Review

In the fifth year of the MLT there is a review of the effect of the MLT on the parish as a whole, prior to any recommissioning.

A full paper on MLT is available from Ministry Department.