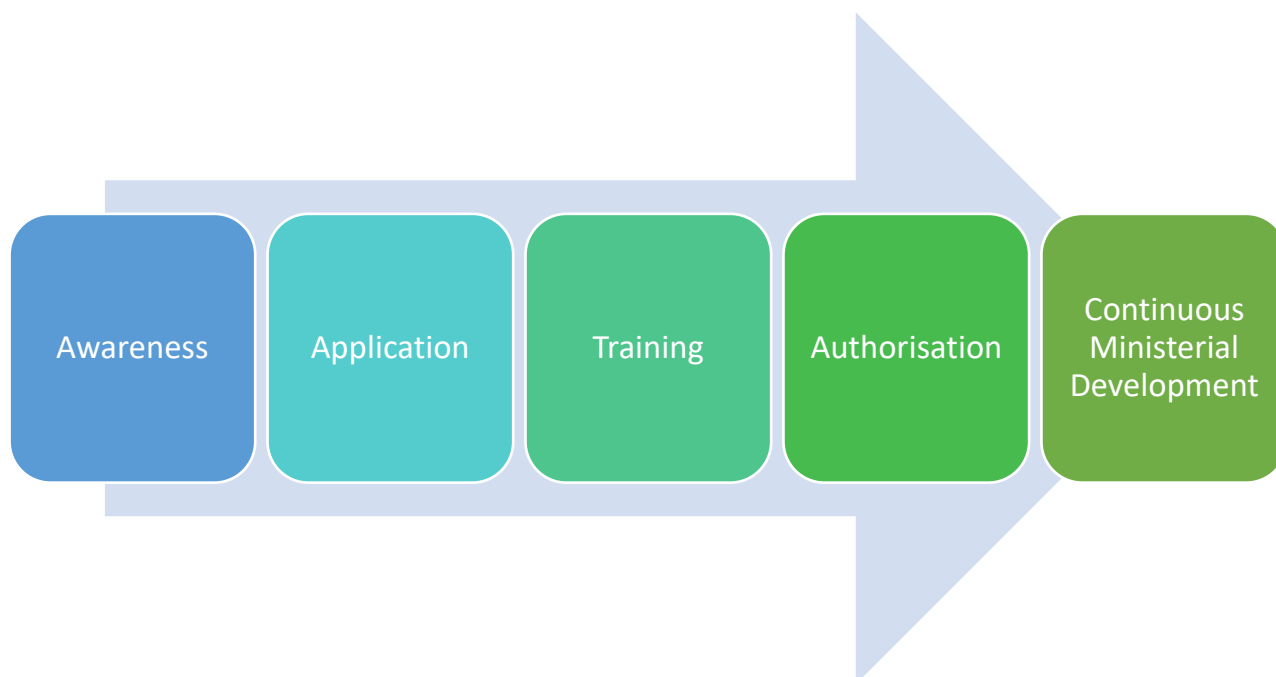




ALM AUTHORISED LAY MINISTRY

Guidance for Incumbents



1. Awareness

The ALM training programme is designed to nurture and equip people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives who bring a variety of gifts to the body of Christ. Our aim is to train people to minister and lead in their local context, who have a firm foundation of faith in Christ, expressed in daily life, and who are skilled in their specific areas of calling and gifting. This is achieved through a core module, designed to nurture a pattern of life which expresses love for God and neighbour, along with elective modules which equip people with practical skills in specific ministry areas.

Incumbents play a key role in discerning who might be a potential ALM in their parish(es). Prayerfully think about who you might invite to grow as a lay minister by applying to the ALM programme and publicising the ALM course through newsletters, online and by word of mouth. Giving space for those who have trained as ALMs to minister and to tell their story will also encourage others to follow them into training and ministry.

2. Application

Applicants can access the application form from the website:

<https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/authorised-lay-ministry>

When completed, this should be emailed to the Growing Leaders Administrator:

rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org

Questions regarding the application process should be sent to: amy.white@blackburn.anglican.org

Incumbents are integral to the application process because they discuss the application with the person concerned and help them to discern which area of ministry they feel called to serve within. Once the candidate has completed their part of the application, the incumbent completes their relevant section on the form and seeks the PCC's endorsement, which is noted and dated on the form. The application can then be submitted by the candidate.

3. Training

ALM training usually takes place over the course of an academic year (although it can be done over a longer period if necessary) and consists of two modules. The Core Module aims to help individuals to develop a personal Rule of Life, and to see how this connects with the regular worship of the local church context. This module runs three times a year over 10 evenings, and will be delivered at a variety of locations around the Diocese as well as virtually. The Elective Modules focus on training people in a specific ministry area and are led by those with expertise in that ministry. These typically are taught across 6-8 sessions, however this is flexible depending on the subject area. During the whole training period each candidate is assigned a mentor to walk with them and help them reflect on their learning. The year of training culminates in an ALM Day in July, which includes further teaching and an opportunity to meet with other ALM candidates and the Growing Leaders team.

During the period of training, incumbents play a key role as they support candidates through prayer and encouragement, checking in with them to see the ways in which they are growing and learning from the training.

Because ALM ministry is authorised by the incumbent, meeting any safeguarding requirements including DBS checks where necessary are a parish responsibility. We encourage ALM candidates to complete the Basic Awareness and Foundation courses through the Blackburn Diocese website as soon as possible during their training, as the completion of these courses is required prior to the commissioning service in September.

4. Authorisation

An ALM is authorised by an incumbent (or in the absence of an incumbent, the Area Dean or other designated representative such as a Church Warden) for 3 years. This is to be reviewed after three years and can be renewed upon agreement with both the ALM and incumbent. The ALM commissioning service will take place in Blackburn Cathedral in September (please contact rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org for the exact date each year). Incumbents are encouraged to be present at this service, as the Bishop will invite the incumbent to authorise their ALMs within the service. If an ALM candidate is unable to attend the commissioning service, authorisation can be carried out publicly in the local parish. Guidance for how this can be done can be obtained from Ruth Haldane, our Warden of Lay Ministry (ruth.haldane@blackburn.anglican.org).

After commissioning, incumbents are encouraged to meet regularly with ALMs to discuss their ministry, and to include the ALM within a team where appropriate (e.g., children, youth, pastoral, ministry). It is very good practice for a ministerial agreement to be in place with the ALM, which is reviewed and discussed annually. A ministerial agreement template is sent out to all incumbents, and can also be obtained from Ruth Haldane, Warden of Lay Ministry. The incumbent has the responsibility of reviewing and renewing (where appropriate) the ALM's authorisation on a three yearly basis. If an ALM is considered unfit or unsuitable to continue ministry within their parish, the incumbent can withdraw authorisation. If this occurs, please notify Ruth Haldane, Warden of Lay Ministry, as soon as possible.

5. Continuous Ministerial Development

All ALMs will be strongly encouraged to participate in training where offered, and lifelong 'just in time' learning.

Training and lifelong learning are very important for all who minister in the Church, and incumbents are encouraged to discuss this with their ALM(s), at least on an annual basis. ALMs are advised to attend relevant available courses, which incumbents can steer them toward. The Growing Leaders team offers termly training events which cover both personal and ministerial development. These are publicised to all ALMs through our Lay Ministry newsletter. ALMs are also welcome to attend additional ALM elective modules to expand their knowledge in other areas of ministry to which they feel called. Roots of Faith modules are also excellent additional training and ALMs are invited to attend the most relevant of these for their ministry area as part of their ongoing training.

6. Communication with the Growing Leaders Team

The Growing Leaders team keeps the database of all ALMs, so please report any changes to them in real time. It is important that the incumbent, or designated person in the parish, keeps the Growing Leaders team administrator (rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org) up to date with any changes in the status of ALMs in the parish, any changes in details, and date of authorisation renewal. If there is an incumbency vacancy, responsibility for ALMs is held jointly by the church wardens and the Area Dean. The ALM's ministry will be reviewed, and if appropriate renewed for 3 years, once a new incumbent has been in place for 6 months. The Warden of Lay Ministry (ruth.haldane@blackburn.anglican.org), or one of the Assistant Wardens, is available for meetings or discussion should there be any challenges you would like to discuss.

Finally, we want to say thank you to incumbents for their vital role in identifying, nurturing, and supporting the breadth of lay ministry within the Church. We are so grateful for the time you invest in encouraging those in your parish(es) as they seek to exercise the gifts they have been given by Christ for the building up of the Church. May God richly bless you in your ministry to his people.