

Christian Youth Leadership Academy Consultant

Introduction

The Diocese of Blackburn has identified a clear need for a cultural shift to see, equip and empower young people as Christian leaders in their own right. This is important for them, the wider church and also future vocational pipelines. We are actively pursuing this, including through the recent establishment of a new Youth Forum that is regularly consulted on matters of importance to the diocese.

We are keen to explore the feasibility of a new Young Leaders' Academy. This would likely be for those aged 13-18 years old (though the exact age range will be determined by this Feasibility Study) and seek to enable young people to grow in their faith and Christian leadership such that they can more confidently pursue God's call on their lives, whatever that vocation may be.

The CofE's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board has awarded us funding to make a parttime short-term appointment to undertake a detailed feasibility study. Should the feasibility work conclude positively, and a clear and robust plan emerge, the consultant will then be asked to write an application for further Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment in order to fund the launch and implementation of the new Young Leaders' Academy.

This project is an important development within our diocesan vision – Vision 2026 – for further details please click [here](#). It is also aligned with the stated aim of becoming a Younger Church supported through the significant SMMI award to Blackburn Diocese in 2024 – for further details please click [here](#).

This project will support the Diocese in continuing to grow the church across Lancashire, in both depth and number, while simultaneously shaping a younger, more socio-economically and culturally diverse church to further enhance our declared aim to have 'healthy churches transforming communities' across the County.

Feasibility Study

Part 1- Identify the vision

Consult with the senior leadership team to ascertain the vision for the project including:

- Articulates a clear overall vision for the Young Leaders Academy
- Identifies clear goals and objectives for the new Academy
- Specifies activities, milestones and timelines for the feasibility study
- Highlights who is to be involved in the work and indicates key providers who are to be consulted e.g. Emmanuel Theological College.

Consult with leaders in other Dioceses, Christian organisations and Church school headteachers to:

- Ascertain what similar schemes are run in other locations eg diocese, parachurch organisations, other denominations, secular settings
- To explore the scope of other projects and learn from similar successful schemes
- To learn from best practice in youth leadership training across the country and understand possible applications for Blackburn Diocese.
- Examples of organisations to consult with are Youth for Christ, (YFC), Church Pastoral Aid Society, (CPAS), The Independent Schools Christian Alliance, (TISCA), Youthscape, and The Archbishops' Youth Leader Award

Create a vision document with specific outcomes for the feasibility study and clear objectives for the academy. This could include:

- Considering how the young people would be trained to grow and understand their faith so that they become articulate and confident to share their faith in a future workplace or situation.
- Exploring Christian leadership training which would enable them to grow and understand their faith.
- Exploring the pipeline of young Christian leaders and how that can be stimulated to produce confident members of society.

Receive sign-off from the Bishop's Vision and Strategy Team.

Part 2 - Undertake a detailed feasibility study, to create and run a Young Leaders Academy in Blackburn Diocese

Consult with key stakeholders to explore what needs to be considered in forming a Young Leaders Academy that will train and support young people to become robust and confident in their ability to lead in a range of contexts. Examples of key stakeholders include the following (note, this is not an exclusive list and others can be added):

- The Diocesan Youth Forum
- Director of Ministry and the Growing Leaders Team
- Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops
- Archdeacons
- Diocesan safeguarding Team
- Diocesan Secretary
- HR team
- Blackburn Diocese Board of Education
- Growing Children and Young People Team
- Bishop's Appointment Team
- Bishop's Vision and Strategy Team
- Director of Vision Delivery
- Head of Finance
- Youth workers and Church School Headteachers
- Ignite team
- Incumbents and Parishes.
- Leaders in Industry who have a Christian faith

- Youthscape
- Cathedral

Investigate other organisation's best practice, lessons learnt and successful models, both within and outside of the Church of England. e.g.:

- Other Diocese
- Other Christian denominations
- Secular organisations – e.g. NHS, government bodies and industry bodies
- Christian organisations running similar things, e.g. Youthscape and CPAS
- Educational organisations, i.e. secondary schools, sixth form, universities.

Explore potential links with Emmanuel Theological College, or similar, to consider the logistics and requirements for accreditation, including costs and the feasibility.

Create specifications for the personnel required to run the scheme. This will include staffing numbers, qualifications, salaries, or alternative outsourcing options.

Consider the yearly cohort size to balance viability with adequate teacher student ratios.

Create a marketing plan identifying sources from which the cohort will be recruited.

Consider how the project will work alongside the Ignite project and other activities being carried out within the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE).

Identify the entry requirements including:

- How students will apply
- What the entry requirements should be
- Who would decide which students are appointed

Establish provision for outstanding care for students including:

- Pastoral care
- Personal development alongside academic
- Spiritual development
- High retention rates

Work together with the Growing leaders team, Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) and DBE to identify how the proposal fits within existing Diocesan workstreams.

Ensure different churchmanship and theologies are catered for to ensure mutual flourishing.

Devise a programme that is fully compliant with Diocesan Safeguarding policies which recognises each participant and staff member as a precious child of God.

It is recognised that there are different ways of achieving the vision, and the proposal assumes that multiple options will be presented. Each option must include:

- Full costings, including long term sustainability

- Potential risks
- Implementation timeline
- locations
- Ownership and oversight

In addition, if the study discovers other solutions that are working well in a different context to achieve the same goal these should also be presented. The study is encouraged to dream big, think radically and not be frightened of the unusual.

Timing

It is envisaged that this project will be a comprehensive document to meet all the needs as set out above, therefore it is anticipated it will take a maximum of 10 months to complete in total. The Vision Document taking 2-3 months and the feasibility study taking 7-8 months.

The final feasibility study is to be presented to the Diocesan Vision and Strategy Team, and the Programme Board no later than September 2026.

Funding Application

Subject to direction from the Vision and Strategy team following their deliberations based on the feasibility study, in conjunction with the Director of Vision Delivery, develop a funding application to be submitted to the national Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI) Board. It is intended that the documents prepared in the feasibility study will form the basis of the application. The application should include:

- The overarching vision for the Young Leaders Academy, including the approach to delivery
- Detailed budget requirements
- Measures of Success
- A Risk Register
- Details of the resources required and people plan
- A timeline for implementation

Timing

It is envisaged the application will take one month to write and should be ready for submission by no later than October 2026.

Oversight

The work will sit in the Diocese Growing Leaders department under the leadership of the Bishop of Lancaster. Day to day communication will be with the Director of Ministry for the feasibility study and the Director of Vision Delivery for the funding application.

The consultant will be required to provide monthly updates on progress to the Strategic Programme Board, some of these updates will be written and some in person.

Application Process

Proposal applications should be made in writing for the attention of the Director of Ministry by 18th July 2025. Please include the following:

- Personal background and reason for application
- Relevant skills and experience, including recent projects worked on and values you would bring
- Vision for the project
- Explanation of how the research would be completed. This should include:
 - a plan of action
 - targets
 - expected timeline
 - actions required from the Diocese
 - a budget proposal, ensuring this takes into account travel, stationary and all other project related costs.
- Relevant past project experience and how this will help with the work that is required
- Examples of previous written proposals submitted
- Contact details of two professional references and a faith referee, (only contacted after prior permission)

Following the review of proposals submitted, candidates may be invited to present their applications to the Diocese.

Please submit your application to Hrapapplications@blackburn.anglican.org by the 18th July 2025*.

Please note the following:

- In line with the Diocesan Carbon Net Zero policy, the majority of meetings can be undertaken virtually, however there will be a requirement for some face-to-face meetings, especially when presenting to the Vision and Strategy team and Strategic Programme Board.
- Successful consultant(s) will be required to undertake Diocesan safeguarding training before work commences on the project.
- There is a genuine occupational requirement for the consultant to be a practicing Christian in line with section 9 of the equality act. As a faith-based organisation our beliefs are foundational to everything we do. The consultant will be expected to be sympathetic to these beliefs and work actively to support the ministry and vision of the Church of England in Lancashire.
- The successful consultant(s) should provide confirmation of having complied with all relevant legalities, including employment law, taxation, health and safety at work and data management.

To support your proposal application, an informal conversation with Revd Canon Anne Beverley, the Director of Ministry can be arranged, please contact Sarah McAlister:
sarah.mcalister@blackburn.anglican.org

****We reserve the right to close the application date sooner, if we receive sufficient applications. We therefore advise you to submit your proposal as soon as possible.***