Overview of Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM)

Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM) is a recognised and authorised form of lay ministry within the Diocese of London and the wider Church of England. It reflects the Church's commitment to encouraging lay people's involvement and leadership in the Church's ministry and mission.

LLMs are laypeople who are licensed by the Bishop, entrusted with ministry responsibilities, and accountable to the Bishop through the Church's structures.

What Does "Licensed" Mean?

Being licensed means that an LLM:

- Is **publicly authorised by the Bishop**
- Exercises ministry on behalf of the Church
- Is accountable and supported within diocesan structures
- Acts as a **public representative of the Bishop and the Church**

As lay people, LLMs are particularly well placed to offer ministry **beyond the traditional boundaries of church life**, while also serving the worshipping community.

Where Does Licensed Lay Ministry Take Place?

LLMs minister in a wide range of contexts, including:

- Parishes
- Hospitals
- Schools
- Prisons
- Workplaces
- Communities and families

Each LLM is licensed to a particular place, usually a **parish**, where they minister collaboratively with the incumbent and other lay leaders.

What Does Licensed Lay Ministry Involve?

The shape of LLM ministry varies depending on context and gifts, but may include:

- Teaching and helping people of all ages to grow in faith or come to faith for the first time
- Preaching and leading worship
- Offering pastoral care
- Taking Holy Communion to those who are housebound
- Conducting funerals

- Engaging with the wider community through activities and outreach

LLM ministry is always **rooted in collaboration**, responding to local needs and opportunities for mission.

Who Might Become a Licensed Lay Minister?

People from **all walks of life** become LLMs. What matters is not background or status, but a sense of God's call and a willingness to explore it with the Church.

Discernment is a **process** and often takes time. LLM may be for someone if they can say yes to some of the following:

- God may be calling them to some form of ministry
- They are willing to step beyond the familiar in following Jesus
- Their gifts have been recognised by others in their church or community
- They are willing to work as part of a team
- They seek to connect God's word with what is happening in society
- They are willing to study now and continue learning in the future

Discernment

If someone is considering LLM, the first step is to **talk with their vicar or chaplain**, who can advise on next steps and diocesan processes.

The Church understands discernment as something done **together**, with prayer, reflection, and conversation over time.

As one LLM puts it:

"God will challenge you more than you will challenge others."

Training and Cost

Training for Licensed Lay Ministry involves theological study, formation, and preparation for ministry.

No one is prevented from training on the grounds of cost. The cost is split between the candidate, parish and the diocese.