



## Diocese of Monmouth · Esgobaeth Mynwy

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# Pastoral Assistant

Lay Ministry Training Courses

# Running the Course

## What is a 'Learning Mentor'?

The Learning Mentor is the key person in each ministry area, who has committed to facilitate this training. In many cases, this could be either the Ministry Area Leader or another member of the Ministry Team.

## How does the course work?

The material has been intentionally written with two options — either a group of people can learn and discuss together, or a single learner can take the course on their own meeting occasionally with a mentor to help support them.

**For Groups:** For each session, the participants will read the 'Introductory Reading' in their own time, then meet together afterwards to discuss it using the 'Group Discussion' material. The Learning Mentor will arrange and facilitate the group sessions, then meet with each participant individually at the end of the course to agree whether they will progress to being a Commissioned Pastoral Assistant.

**For Solo Learners:** Solo participants will go through the training using the material at their own pace. The Learning Mentor should meet with the solo learner before they start the course, after they finish session five, and then finally after they complete the follow up session.

Each session's 'Solo Reflection Questions' invite the learner to write their thoughts and reflections directly into the course booklet or into a separate Word document as a learning journal. The reflections can then be kept and looked back on later. The Learning Mentor should also receive a copy of what the learner has written, so this can inform their conversations together.



## How are the sessions structured?

The course is made up of six 'sessions' or lessons and a period of practical experience:

- The first five sessions are designed to build an understanding of pastoral care, as the participants develop towards becoming a Pastoral Assistant.
- After this, participants will be able to begin serving in the Pastoral Team for a probationary period, usually lasting three months.
- Once this period has been completed, the final 'follow up' session will enable participants to reflect on their experience and agree the next steps.
- This should be followed by a final one-to-one conversation between each participant and the Learning Mentor, in which both will agree with whether the learner will now be commissioned to continue this new role in the ministry area.

## What is 'Commissioned Ministry' and how should our ministry area commission new lay leaders?

Commissioned Ministries are roles for lay workers who are identified, trained and commissioned locally by a ministry area in order to serve their local churches and communities. These courses are intended to provide a route for lay people to explore whether they might be called to serve in a commissioned ministry in their ministry area by:

- Learning more about the particular ministry.
- Working alongside others to 'have a go' at it.
- At the end of the course, discerning with their Learning Mentor whether they should be commissioned to continue in that role.

Alongside the process for training, the Ministry Area Leader and/or Learning Mentor should also ensure the Church in Wales' safe recruitment process is followed for each participant, including applying for a DBS check.

At the end of the process, a 'commissioning' service can be held, or the commissioning can take place within a regular service or Eucharist. An example liturgy is provided for this.



The flowchart below sets out the whole process:

