



Women and the Church
Affirming ✦ Challenging ✦ Transforming

A Report on the Developments in Women's Ministry in 2021

WATCH Women and the Church

A Report on the Developments in Women's Ministry 2021

Introduction

This year, WATCH's annual analysis of data published by the Church of England Research and Statistics Department, and dioceses, also looks at the results of the delayed elections to General Synod in September 2021. Other than in the House of Bishops, there is no significant difference in the proportions of women and men who are members of Synod. Other than elected suffragans, only diocesan bishops are members of the House of Bishops, so women remain only 20% of the membership of the House.

For nearly two years, we have been living with the Covid 19 pandemic which has created many challenges for clergy, laity and their churches and communities. The financial challenges faced by parishes and dioceses have been magnified by the effects of the pandemic, which is leading to anxiety about the possible need to reduce the number of stipendiary clergy more rapidly than had been planned. WATCH is particularly concerned to ensure that any such reductions do not affect women more than men, and that women curates and ordinands are not treated differently from male colleagues.

As we go to press, we are pleased to note the appointment of Rev'd Canon Dr Flora Winfield as Third Church Estates Commissioner.

Table 1 The proportion of stipendiary parish clergy who are women in each diocese (page 3)

WATCH has published the percentage of women in each diocese holding incumbent and incumbent status posts since 2012. This is the group which forms the majority of parish clergy, although House for Duty posts are increasing at the moment. Table 1 shows what the percentage of this group was in each diocese in December 2020, and also shows this proportion in recent years.

- In 2020, in 25 dioceses 30% or more of stipendiary parish clergy were women. In 2015, only 10 dioceses had this proportion.
- Chichester remains the diocese with the lowest proportion of stipendiary women clergy (16%), and Ely remains the diocese with the highest proportion (43%).
- The two dioceses where the proportion of women clergy is consistently decreasing are Sheffield, from 30% in 2014 to 22% in 2020; and Hereford from 34% in 2015 to 30% in 2020.

TABLE 1

	2015		2017		2019		2020	
40% and over	Ely	43	Ely	41	Ely	42	Ely	43
35%-39%			Truro Liverpool	37 37	Southwell and Notts Salisbury Peterborough Truro	38 37 35 35	Peterborough Southwell and Notts Gloucester Liverpool Salisbury Truro	39 39 37 37 36 36
30%-34%	Hereford Truro Manchester Salisbury Southwell St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Peterborough Portsmouth Gloucester	34 33 32 32 32 32 31 31 30	Hereford Portsmouth St Eds and Ipswich Durham Gloucester Peterborough Lincoln Manchester Salisbury Southwell &Notts St Albans Worcester	33 32 32 31 31 31 30 30 30 30 30 30	Liverpool Gloucester Portsmouth Manchester Norwich Worcester Leicester Leeds Coventry Hereford Lincoln St Albans Bath and Wells St Eds and Ips	34 34 34 33 33 33 32 32 31 31 31 31 30 30 30	Portsmouth Worcester Coventry Oxford Birmingham Leicester Norwich St Albans Lincoln Manchester Newcastle Leeds Bath & Wells Chelmsford Chester Derby Durham Hereford	34 34 33 33 32 32 32 32 31 31 31 31 31 30 30 30 30 30 30 30
25%-29%	Bath and Wells Liverpool Sheffield St Albans Durham Leeds Leicester Lincoln Worcester Derby Chester Chelmsford Norwich Oxford	29 29 29 29 27 28 28 28 27 27 26 25 25 25	Bristol Derby Leeds Leicester Guildford Sheffield Bath and Wells Norwich Chelmsford Chester Coventry Newcastle Oxford Southwark Birmingham	28 28 28 28 28 28 27 27 26 26 26 26 26 26 25	Guildford Newcastle Sodor and Man Birmingham Bristol Chelmsford Chester Oxford Derby Durham Sheffield York Lichfield Southwark	29 29 29 28 28 28 28 28 26 26 26 26 26 25 25	Guildford Bristol Lichfield St Eds and Ips Sodor and Man Canterbury Rochester Southwark Carlisle	29 29 29 29 29 26 26 26 25
20%-24%	Guildford Southwark Newcastle York Birmingham Canterbury Coventry Rochester	24 24 23 23 22 21 20 20	York Sodor and Man Canterbury Lichfield Winchester	24 24 22 22 20	Canterbury Winchester Rochester Blackburn	24 24 23 21	Blackburn York Winchester Sheffield	24 24 23 22
15%-20%	Bristol Carlisle Exeter Lichfield Sodor and Man* Europe Blackburn Winchester	19 19 19 19 18 16 15 15	Exeter Rochester Carlisle	19 19 18	Carlisle London Chichester Exeter (Channel Islands)	19 19 16 16 15	London Exeter Europe Chichester (Channel Islands)	19 17 16 16 19
14% and under	London Chichester	12 10	Blackburn London Chichester Channel islands Europe	14 14 12 12 9	Europe	14	none	

*Information derived from C of E statistics published annually

Table 2: The percentage of male and female Stipendiary and SSM clergy in each diocese

This table shows the proportion of each of four groups of clergy in each diocese:

Women SSM clergy, women stipendiary clergy, male SSM clergy, male stipendiary clergy

- In every diocese, women are less than half of all licensed clergy. 45% is the highest proportion of female clergy in any diocese.
- Generally, the dioceses with the highest and lowest total percentage of women clergy correlate with the dioceses with the highest and lowest percentages of stipendiary female parish clergy.
- A higher proportion of all women clergy are SSM, compared to the male clergy
- Sheffield has nearly as many SSM women clergy as stipendiary women clergy but five times as many male stipendiary clergy as male SSM clergy. Winchester and Canterbury show a similar pattern.
- There is no way of knowing how many SSM clergy are House for Duty or give several days a week to ministry in the parish, and how many have other jobs and are also ordained.
- It is important to remember the different contexts of dioceses in the Church of England. A woman serving in a diocese where 44% or 45% of licensed clergy are women is likely to have a very different experience from a woman in a diocese where only 26% licensed clergy are women.
- These figures are based on December 2020. There is concern that in the past year fewer stipendiary posts are being advertised, and there is a growing reliance on SSM clergy.

TABLE 2

Dioceses		Total number	Percentage of female clergy			Percentage of male clergy		
			SSM	Stipendary	Total	SSM	Stipendary	Total
Dioceses with 40-50% total clergy female								
9	Chester	315	14	26	40	10	50	60
11	Coventry	171	14	29	43	11	47	58
14	Ely	211	15	29	44	20	36	56
16	Gloucester	180	16	26	42	16	42	58
22	Liverpool	242	10	30	40	14	46	60
25	Newcastle	154	17	25	42	11	47	58
28	Peterborough	178	11	33	44	8	48	56
29	Portsmouth	136	15	29	44	12	44	56
33	St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich	198	19	21	40	16	44	60
34	Salisbury	272	17	28	45	10	45	55
38	Southwell & Nottingham	151	8	32	40	9	51	60
39	Truro	116	16	28	44	10	46	56
Diocese 30-39% total clergy female								
5	Bristol	193	12	21	33	20	48	68
6	Canterbury	168	9	27	36	7	57	64
7	Carlisle	135	15	19	34	15	51	66
8	Chelmsford	470	17	20	37	17	46	63
12	Derby	193	9	27	36	19	45	64
13	Durham	185	15	24	39	11	50	61
17	Guildford	262	12	23	35	18	48	66
18	Hereford	119	14	24	38	10	52	62
19	Leicester	166	8	28	36	11	52	63
20	Lichfield	335	10	26	36	13	51	64
21	Lincoln	231	13	23	36	20	44	64
24	Manchester	295	11	23	34	21	46	67
26	Norwich	230	6	27	33	11	57	68
27	Oxford	576	14	24	38	18	44	62
31	Rochester	245	12	24	36	7	57	64
32	St. Albans	309	9	28	37	11	52	63
35	Sheffield	170	16	18	34	11	55	66
*36	Sodor & Man	22	9	23	32	23	45	68
37	Southwark	449	10	22	32	14	53	67
41	Winchester	210	18	18	36	11	53	64
42	Worcester	143	11	27	38	10	52	62
46	Leeds	440	11	25	36	16	48	64
43	York	280	19	19	38	15	47	62
Diocese 20-29% clergy women								
3	Blackburn	218	7	22	29	7	63	70
10	Chichester	373	11	15	26	13	62	75
15	Exeter	287	13	15	28	14	58	72
23	London	747	9	18	27	15	58	73
**44	Europe	145	8	16	24	23	54	77
	Channel Islands	38	11	13	24	5	71	76

Table 3: Women in Senior Leadership roles

The numbers of women in senior roles (bishop, archdeacon and cathedral Dean) have not changed significantly since Dec 2019. The figures used in this report are those given on diocesan websites at the start of January 2022. They include bishops appointed but not yet consecrated and/or installed.

Suffragans who are PEVs are not included in this table. Currently there is only one (Richborough) because the bishop of Ebbsfleet resigned in Sep 2021 when he converted to Roman Catholicism, and the Bishop of Beverley retired at Epiphany 2022.

		December 2019	December 2020	December 2021
Diocesan bishops	Female	5	5	5
	Male	36	36	32
Suffragan bishops	Female	19	20	21
	Male	48	46	45
Archdeacons	Female	32.5	38	40
	Male	89	82	80
Cathedral deans	Female	6	7	10
	Male	37.8	35	33

- The number of cathedral Deans who are women has increased in the last year, but this is still a low proportion of Deans, particularly considering that the first woman was appointed to this role in 2000.
- The number of women who are suffragan bishops is increasing very slightly, but the number of women appointed as Diocesan bishops has not increased, and so the number of bishops in the Lords has not increased either. (The Bishop of Chelmsford was consecrated and installed in 2021, but the Bishop of Newcastle retired at the end of November)
- Only two mainland dioceses (Carlisle and Rochester) have no women in senior roles, although 10 dioceses only have one woman on their ex-officio senior staff. Two of the largest dioceses, Leeds and London only have ratios of 2:14 and 3:13 of women to men among their senior staff. It is worth noting again that for a group to make good decisions that take account of groups excluded from decision making processes, a third of members need to be from this group.
- The Deans of Jersey and Guernsey, the senior clergy on each island, are both men, but are not included in the table as their roles are not the same as cathedral Deans.
- The table includes 3 bishops and two deans who are known to be retiring or moving early in 2022. There are currently 5 dioceses without a diocesan bishop and so this means that 7 diocesan bishops are due to be appointed in 2022.
- The Very Rev Stephen Lake has been announced as the new Bishop of Salisbury since compiling these tables.

TABLE 3

Senior roles in diocese		Diocesan Bishop		Suffragan Bishop		Cathedral Dean		Archdeacon	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1	Bath & Wells	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
2	Birmingham	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
3	Blackburn	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2
5	Bristol	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
6	Canterbury	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
7	Carlisle	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
8	Chelmsford	1	0	1	2	0	1	3	4
9	Chester	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2
10	Chichester	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	3
11	Coventry	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
12	Derby	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
13	Durham	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	2
14	Ely	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
15	Exeter	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	3
16	Gloucester	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
17	Guildford	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2
18	Hereford	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
19	Leicester	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
20	Lichfield	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	2
21	Lincoln	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1
22	Liverpool	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	3
23	London	1	0	1	5	0	1	1	4
24	Manchester	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	2
25	Newcastle	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0
26	Norwich	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2
27	Oxford	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	3
28	Peterborough	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
29	Portsmouth	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
31	Rochester	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
32	St. Albans	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	1
33	St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	1
34	Salisbury	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	2
35	Sheffield	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2
*36	Sodor & Man	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
37	Southwark	0	1	0	3	0	1	2	3
38	Southwell & Nottingham	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
39	Truro	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2
41	Winchester	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
42	Worcester	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
43	York	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1
46	Leeds	0	1	1	4	0	3	1	4
**44	Europe	0	1	0	1			1	4
	Total	5	32	21	45	10	33	41	80

Table 4: Numbers, age and gender of ordinands starting training in 2021

Age	2019			2020			2021		
	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total
Under 25	17	24	41	15	16	31	10	18	28
25-29	18	41	59	21	49	70	22	28	50
30-34	24	60	84	24	50	74	27	42	69
35-39	33	29	62	30	25	55	25	26	51
40-44	34	27	61	46	36	82	41	22	63
45-49	58	24	82	54	41	95	37	27	64
50-54	43	22	65	55	26	81	39	21	60
55-59	42	17	59	37	17	54	36	13	50
60-64	20	5	25	24	5	29	20	15	35
65 and over	6	4	10	4	2	6	8	1	9
Total	295	253	548	310	267	577	265	213	478

The table shows the gender and age of ordinands who started training in September 2021, and in the previous two years. The pattern of women ordinands being significantly older than men when they are selected for training is still very clear. WATCH remains concerned that this imbalance in age of male and female ordinands is still not acknowledged by the Church of England or Ministry Division.

The total number beginning training is lower than in the two previous years. The proportion of all women starting training is slightly higher (55% in 2021 and 53% in 2020) but once again the majority of women ordinands are aged over 40. 58% women ordinands were aged between 40 and 59 while 53% of male ordinands were under 40. At the moment the Church of England is demonstrably failing in its aim of encouraging young women to train for ordained ministry.

Training Pathways

This age and gender imbalance is reflected in the training paths followed by men and women.

	%age all women	%age all men
Full time residential	17%	36%
Full time non residential	27%	24%
Part time	56%	40%

As noted in last year’s report, the Church of England gives a block grant to dioceses based on the number and ages of ordinands it sponsors. The grant is heavily weighted towards young ordinands aged 32 or younger, and from the age of 40 the grant will only cover the costs of part time training. As we can see from the table above, fewer than half of women ordinands train full time and fewer than 20% train residentially.

This also means that in many residential training institutions the majority of ordinands will be male, and so these ordinands are being formed in a context which continues to normalise clergy being male.

Normalising male leadership in the Church of England is also reflected in those who lead TEIs. Out of ten TEIs offering residential training, only one Principal is a woman (Westcott). None of the Principals of institutions offering Mixed Mode or part-time training are women. Women are part of the academic staff, but in most colleges they are a minority. Encouraging women to imagine themselves

in leadership roles needs to be taken more seriously by those responsible for training ordinands, and considered seriously when making appointments.

We note the plan to set up Ladyewell House in Preston, which will be linked to Emmanuel North West, and designed to train ordinands called to pioneer ministry from a Catholic perspective. Ladyewell House will be open to only men. We ask where women with a vocation to sacramental, catholic pioneer ministry will be supported in their training and formation if the existing colleges are not considered to be offering this formation satisfactorily.

(see report 17 December 2021 Church Times)

Table 5: Age and gender of Sep 2021 cohort of ordinands following different training pathways

Age	Full-time residential		Full-time non-residential		Part-time		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
20-24	7	14	3	4	0	0	28
25-29	12	20	7	8	3	0	50
30-34	10	22	11	16	6	4	69
35-39	6	11	12	7	7	8	51
40-44	4	7	16	7	21	8	63
45-49	3	2	16	5	18	20	64
50-54	3	0	3	3	33	18	60
55-59	0	1	3	1	33	11	49
60-64	0	0	1	0	19	15	35
65-69	0	0	0	0	8	1	9
Total	45	77	72	51	148	85	478

Lay Ministry

We know that much of the local ministry in parishes happens because of lay people, some of whom are nationally licensed (eg Readers/LLMs; Church Army evangelists), some of whom are authorised by their diocese and some of whom even more locally. There is little good quality data on the numbers of those involved in local churches in this way, although the Church of England's Research and Statistics Department is looking for ways of doing this (see p 26-9 of the Ministry Statistics 2020 Report) It is worth noting:

"It was also found that nearly two thirds of individuals in lay roles were women, but that licensed posts were less likely to be held by women than authorised/commissioned or locally recognised ones." (p30)

The patterns for women in Reader/LLM ministry are very similar to women in SSM roles.

In Dec 2020:

- 54% Readers in active ministry were women
- 66% total Readers in training were women
- 1% Women Readers are under 40 (and 2% male Readers)

The newly elected General Synod: how many women were elected?

The new General Synod for the quinquennium 2021-26 was elected in September 2021 and inaugurated in November. This group of people will be responsible for legislation passed by the Church of England during this time, and, as far as they can, holding to account those who speak and act in the name of the Church of England. It is known that the more diversity there is among the members of a decision making group, the greater the likelihood of good decision making, so WATCH has looked at the gender balance among the members in Synod.

This table gives the numbers of men and women members

	Women	Men	% women	Notes
House of Laity	105	92	53%	
Laity <i>ex-officio</i>	3	9		
House of Clergy	65	131	33%	
Clergy <i>ex-officio</i>	1,	0		
House of Bishops (diocesans)	6*	32	20%	20% of the whole House of Bishops are women
Elected Suffragans	3	6		
House of Bishops <i>ex-officio</i>	1	1		The Bishop of Dover and the Bishop for the Forces are <i>ex-officio</i> members of the House of Bishops

*The number of women in the House of Bishops fell to 5 one week after the end of Synod, when the Bishop of Newcastle (the Rt Rev Christine Hardman) retired.

- Although more women have been appointed as suffragan bishops since 2015, the numbers of women in the House of Bishops remain low, because only 6 diocesan bishops (now 5) are women. This is significant because of the role of the House of Bishops in guiding policy nationally.
- The proportion of women in the other houses of clergy and laity has barely changed since 2015, when women made up 32% of the House of Clergy and 50.5% of the House of Laity.
- In four mainland dioceses (Blackburn, Ely, Portsmouth and Winchester) no ordained women have been elected. No ordained women stood for election in Blackburn and Portsmouth, and none stood in 2015 either. It is surprising that Ely has no women among its clergy representatives, because it is one of the dioceses with the highest proportion of clergy who are female. (see tables 1 and 2.
- No ordained women represent either Sodor and Man or the Channel Islands, though these are particular constituencies and do include women among their lay representatives.

The diversity of the various Synod Committees and other roles is also significant. In recent elections the Dr Jamie Harrison was elected Chair of the House of Laity and Alison Coulter as Vice chair, The Ven Luke Miller and the Rev Kate Wharton were elected as the Prolocutors of Canterbury and York. This balance is good to see, although the ordained women in the province of Canterbury may wonder how the 5 Guiding Principles enables a priest who does not think that they should exist to represent them fully.

Acknowledgements and Sources

Acknowledgements and Sources

Data in tables 1 and 2 based on the Report "Ministry Statistics 2019" and Diocesan Tables published June 2020 and produced by Church of England Research and Statistics, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ, available online www.churchofengland.org/researchandstats

Table 3 is based on information published on diocesan and cathedral websites Jan 2022

Tables 4 based on data provided in response to Question 4, asked in General Synod Nov 20 and question 107 asked in General Synod Nov 2021

Information on TEI staff taken from websites Jan 2022



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