

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Diocese of Carlisle

*This paper sets out a proposed vision, strategy, policy and action plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the Diocese. Synod members will note that the section on demographics is blank to enable an interactive discussion. This paper will return for approval to the June synod once comments from Synod have been incorporated along with the demographic section into the final version.*

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Diocese of Carlisle

### Introduction

When God for All – our ecumenical vision for the county – was first launched in 2015, the Diocese spoke of every person in Cumbria of all ages and background having the opportunity to discover more of God and God’s purpose for their lives. This statement embraces the Diocese of Carlisle’s deep desire that everyone may know God and come to follow Christ. Our refreshed God for All vision continues this deep desire so that all involved in our churches, chaplaincies and Mission Communities can flourish.

In the outworking of the refreshed vision, we see the strong link (looking particularly at the words in bold) to equality, diversity and inclusion:

*Follow Daily:* “If **any** want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24)

We will help each other to follow Jesus more closely, seeking to grow as his disciples in all aspects of life, both corporately and as individuals

Outcomes

- **To encourage growing Christian faith.**
- To embed a culture of ‘whole-life discipleship’ (Monday-Saturday as well as Sunday).
- **To enable people to encounter** and study the Bible, and to explore its application for everyday life.
- To encourage a culture of prayer in different contexts.

*Care deeply:* “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” (Jeremiah 29:7)

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We will **listen** to our local communities, and **respond in loving service, seeking to transform injustice, challenge oppression and pursue peace & reconciliation**

Outcomes:

- **To help churches to listen to their local communities.**
- **To develop effective partnerships with other groups and organisations.**
- **To help Christians to be a prophetic voice, challenging unjust structures and systems.**
- **To equip Christians to be peace-makers and reconcilers in all spheres of life.**

*Speak Boldly:* “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” (Acts 4:31)

We will share our faith in Jesus Christ in everyday ways, **seeking to connect with everyone, especially those currently unrepresented in our churches.** We’ll do this in both time-honoured & pioneering ways.

Outcomes:

- To facilitate giving everyone the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news of Christ.
- To equip Christians to speak naturally about their faith.
- To help Christians speak about Christian viewpoints on the important issues of today.
- **To enable more connections with under-represented groups in our churches,** and to plant new churches and worshipping communities.

*Tread Gently:* “They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)

We will strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, seeking to sustain and renew the life of the earth

Outcomes:

- To develop a biblical understanding of the place of the natural world in God’s plans.
- To enable more sustainable ways of using our resources in our churches (including their buildings).
- To equip Christians with practical, everyday ways of living more sustainably.
- **To help Christians in expressing a Christian viewpoint on environmental issues.**

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Diocese of Carlisle

This equality, diversity, and inclusion vision, strategy, and action plan seeks to capture the work we are already doing in this area and sets out milestones for our future plans and endeavours.

## Scope

The protected characteristics that are covered by the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In addition, social class, whilst not a protected characteristic will also be in scope.

Dioceses are complex organisations, comprising of legal and ecclesiastical structures, more than 240 individual parishes (each of which is an independent charity), employees, office holders, other clergy members, and many thousands of volunteers. Our strategy needs to work with the complexity of this reality.

We therefore need to give attention both to the formal structures, policies, legal frameworks and processes and to the various cultures, motivations, histories and priorities of the diverse communities, people and groups that make up ‘the Diocese’, as well as learning about and from other communities, particularly those that are less well represented in church life.

The Diocese also belongs to the wider Church of England, which oversees elements of ecclesiastical law, finance, policy and strategy that influence, shape and direct our decisions in varying ways.

This is an overarching document that applies to the whole Diocese in all its elements and parts. It is distilled into a more practical action plan which moves the Diocese towards the hospitable and diverse communities that we seek, and over time may engage with issues as diverse as policy, finance, culture, human resources, training, communications, prayer, worship and theology. Where possible, we will work with our partner denominations to engender change across the county.

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In all of this, we want to work towards a Diocese that not only avoids being disadvantageous but works positively towards an environment in which all are able to thrive. Diversity is about having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice and belonging is having a voice that is heard.

## **Demographics**

*This section will be included after the document has been discussed at Bishop's Council and Synod and prior to its anticipated final approval at the June Synod.*

## **Monitoring and Accountability**

To understand the impact of this strategy and progress towards our vision, we need to monitor our actions, measure the data and ensure there is a structure for decision making.

Various working groups will be formed to ensure effective implementation of the different strands of the action plan. Bishop's council will receive an annual update from the various groups co-ordinated by the Head of HR and Governance in order to ensure that this strategy is delivered and that the actions set out in relevant plans are achieved.

It should be noted that the Board of Education has a separate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and action plan for implementation with schools.

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## Theological Reflection

### Healthy Church

The church is to be understood in the context of the life of Jesus as witnessed in the Gospel. Jesus is the embodiment of God's character in a human life – infinitely kind, infinitely generous, infinitely loving. Jesus gives all Christians the pattern to follow: to be faithful; to be in relationship with God; to be humble; to serve; to respect all; to encourage; and to love. A healthy church culture should embody and manifest all of these characteristics.

The unique work of the church is in prayer, this has been and is still the first and foremost the work of Christ's disciples. The church should therefore be a praying community. In our Anglican tradition this example is found primarily in the Gospel of John and in the desert teaching of the earliest Christians. In John, the relationship of Jesus to God his Father is the foundation of his relationship in prayer. For example, when he raises Lazarus, Jesus says, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me'.<sup>1</sup> Prayer is for Jesus a living relationship with God, and Antony understood this from the word 'abide'. He remembered Jesus saying, 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete'.<sup>2</sup> It is a relationship of love. This love is threefold between Jesus and his Father, between Jesus and his disciples, and lastly, between the disciples themselves. Antony of Egypt, being rooted in the faith as presented in John's Gospel, gives the modern church a pattern of key healthy principles. Antony understood that for Jesus prayer was the priority, and in following him, Antony needed to make the place of prayer of first importance. When Antony was asked to give a 'rule of life' he always refused, rather telling those who questioned him to read the scripture for themselves and to heed the commandment from Jesus to be obedient to love, letting their own life of prayer teach them.

A healthy church culture is therefore to be Christ like. Church leaders need to model these characteristics especially by being open, respectful, good at listening and welcoming new people and ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> John 11:41–42 NRSV

<sup>2</sup> John 15:9–11 NRSV

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In the desert teaching humility is the most prized virtue. The humble heart is closest to Jesus. Humility leads to service. Theodora sums this Christ like leadership as follows:

A teacher ought to be a stranger to the desire for domination, vain glory and pride. A teacher should not be fooled by flattery, nor blinded by gifts, conquered by the stomach, nor dominated by anger. A teacher should be patient, gentle and humble as far as possible; successfully tested and without partisanship, full of concern and a lover of souls.<sup>3</sup>

The New Testament Church evolved rapidly from a solely Jewish community to one that was dynamic multi culturally and multi ethnically, the command of Jesus to the first Disciples was the Gospel was for all<sup>4</sup>. This started with the care for Hebrew Widows and the appointing of the first Deacons and then the crucial council of Jerusalem where non-Jewish culture and religious practices were accepted<sup>5</sup>. This was a response to Paul, Barnabas and Phillip's mission to non-Jewish believers<sup>6</sup>. Globally the Christian Church is one of the most diverse and multi-ethnic groups on the planet and there is no doubt that heaven will be a multi-ethnic place<sup>7</sup>.

## **EDI not an 'add-on' but fundamental to creating a place for all**

EDI is fundamental to healthy churches, because it is rooted in the Gospel. Jesus says, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest

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<sup>3</sup> *The Desert Mothers* by Mary Earle, Morehouse Publishing, 2007, p.39.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 1:8

<sup>5</sup> Acts 15

<sup>6</sup> Acts 13:43-48; 14:1-6; 17:12; 18:4; 19:8-10; 20:21; 22:21; 28:23-30

<sup>7</sup> Rev 7:9

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for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’<sup>8</sup> Jesus creates a place for us all. This is the great truth of our relationship with him. We come to him as we are and he accepts us. This unconditional love is fundamental to our grounding in the Trinity, which is sometimes called the ‘divine dance’.

Most people find it is impossible to believe the fundamental Gospel truth, that God loves them just as they are; we find ‘unconditional love’ almost impossible to accept. What is the message of Jesus to us in John’s gospel? The Word made flesh is the love of God. God’s love which is so great that he lays down his life for us. It is the love that abides in us as we abide in him. It is the love that we are commanded to show in all we say, do, think or feel. It is this love by which the world will know that we are the disciples of Jesus. It is in this love that God overcomes the world. It is in this love that Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, together with the rest of the disciples, are restored at Easter. The whole gospel is about the power of unconditional love and that this love is God’s nature, character and purpose – so why do we find it so difficult to accept?

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are the embodiment of the Gospel message, and provide the foundation of right relations and the proper context for a diverse and inclusive church. EDI is not a statement but rather a gospel imperative. Yet one that Church leaders need to grasp for themselves and to know its transformational quality. As a diocese, the senior leadership team is fully committed to EDI. EDI is not about correct procedures it is rather about self-awareness and being self-critical as leaders. This self-awareness is not easy but neither is it new, Brother Roger reflecting on his journey sums this up for all Christian leaders:

Could the call to reconciliation ever invite passivity or life without struggle? No, the gospel has never led to tranquillity. Being reconciled with oneself, as with others, supposes a readiness to accept tension and struggles. By neutralizing or fleeing situations of crisis, vital energy is destroyed. Passing through crises, looking beyond is a road that takes us far.<sup>9</sup>

## **The importance of EDI for all leadership**

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 11:28-30 NRSV

<sup>9</sup> *Taize* by Rex Brico, Collins, London, 1978 p.172.

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The attributes of effective leaders are those found in Christ. This includes a refusal to be labelled as 'good' or 'wise'. These false flatteries were rejected by Jesus and all Christian leaders should also oppose the corrosion of character by their role. Jesus said, 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.'<sup>10</sup> Effective leaders will recognise that each of us is a 'gift of God' to be nurtured and treasured.

All leaders though face an endless succession of difficulties and trials in their roles. These are not to be dismissed or trivialised. Again, the desert teachers give a pattern for the modern church to follow. Never do they hide from difficult questions, the retreat Antony made from the busy urban life into the desert brings him face to face with the harsh reality of himself. In this openness and transparency though he comes to recognise that Christ abides in him and in every human heart. The modern Taize Community models these attributes for Christians:

By its very existence, the community is a 'parable of community' that wants its life to be a sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and between separated peoples. Certain brothers live in some of the most disadvantaged places in the world, to be witnesses of peace there, alongside people who are suffering. They strive to be a presence of love among the very poor, street children, prisoners, the dying, and those who are wounded by broken relationships, or who have been abandoned.<sup>11</sup>

A church leader whether ordained or lay needs always to have this desire for justice and service within them. A Christian leader is always called to 'servant leadership', and in this way the values of EDI will become rooted in our culture and ways of working. This is the vocation of Christ and these values are summed up for us in a modern hymn,

Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;

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<sup>10</sup> John 17: 6-8 NRSV. *New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition*, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>

<sup>11</sup> [www.taize.fr/en\\_articles6525.html](http://www.taize.fr/en_articles6525.html)



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pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.<sup>12</sup>

*Cameron Butland,  
Vernon Ross  
January 2023*

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<sup>12</sup> Hymn 81, 'Hymns Old & New', Kevin Mayhew, Suffolk, 2004

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Diocese of Carlisle

## Action Plan

	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
	<b>Generic – it should be noted that objectives in the generic line apply to the protected characteristics covered in the specific section</b>	
1.	Raise level of visible leadership on EDI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Three year rolling training programme for those in Leadership (BLT, Rural Deans, Mission Community Leaders (Lay Chairs optional)) to include unconscious bias (or subject to research, equivalent training), equal opportunities and diversity training</li> <li>b. Review processes for i) appointments to key roles and ii) awards in the gift of the Bishop (e.g. Rural Dean, Cathedral Canon etc) to ensure transparency and equity</li> <li>c. Roll out an online version of unconscious bias training to PCCs by the end of 2025</li> </ul>
2.	Increase awareness, engagement and understanding among: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) staff</li> <li>b) clergy</li> <li>c) lay clergy</li> <li>d) PCCs</li> <li>e) public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Publish and promote EDI strategy and this action plan</li> <li>b. Make EDI part of induction checklist for clergy and staff</li> <li>c. Produce template EDI policy for parishes</li> <li>d. Revise CDBF EDI policy</li> <li>e. Include topics relating to EDI objectives in the Church House annual away day</li> <li>f. Build EDI goals and objectives into all relevant staff appraisals and clergy MDR. Broaden people’s understanding of God for All</li> <li>g. Develop set of KPIs from this plan and report in an EDI section of the Diocese Annual report</li> </ul>

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	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h. Encourage and support PCCs to include a section on EDI in their annual reports</li> <li>i. In time, better use of social media and website to promote and support our EDI work and support of others</li> <li>j. Introduce training as part of IME2 and ministry development</li> </ul>
3.	Work to make church services, worship, and other events more inclusive and reach more diverse audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Introduce, and support PCCs, to do “Just One Thing”</li> <li>b. Create a working party to review the wording of licencing service questionnaire, template licencing service, template role descriptions, template for annual general meetings and Churchwardens promise to include EDI and inclusive language</li> </ul>
4.	Improve data collection and analysis to better understand the diversity and profile of our clergy, congregations and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review the current information available, improve and publish and implement action to improve this. This should include DBF / Bishop’s Council/Synod / DBE. This should be in the context of the make up of the county along with national benchmarks. Statistical information to be included in the Articles of Enquiry</li> </ul>

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	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
	employees to inform our decision making.	
5.	Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure flexible working is considered for all roles</li> <li>b. Review adverts (lay and ordained) to encourage diversity</li> <li>c. Ensure clarity on clergy working hours</li> <li>d. Ensure role descriptions and person specifications are realistic, and accurate and minimise risk of unconscious bias or deter candidates</li> <li>e. Ensure employees, members of BLT and Rural Deans undertaking recruitment undergo safer recruitment training and training in interview preparation and shortlisting. In the first year, this should be at least one person per panel</li> <li>f. Aim for recruitment panels being as diverse as practically possible, respecting the demography of the parishes</li> <li>g. Review all application forms and recruitment processes to improve transparency, fairness and diversity (clergy, employees, PTOs, readers)</li> <li>h. Ensure EDI is on all role and job descriptions and that related questions are asked at interview for all clergy and employees</li> <li>i. Provide all candidates (including the successful applicant) with feedback after the interview</li> <li>j. Investigate clergy secondments/job swaps and report/make proposals</li> </ul>

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	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
6.	Use external networks to raise visibility and credibility of the Diocese, and to help us in our work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Research and engage with county and national organisations and initiatives.</li> <li>b. Understand from those outside the Church, what are the perceived barriers that need removing to enable the Church to be “God for All”.</li> </ul>
7.	Ensure our governance structure and membership reflects good practice and the diversity of the people they aim to serve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure all members of BLT and Bishop’s Council have completed Unconscious Bias training within one year of joining</li> <li>b. Consider alternative ways of hearing voices which are not represented in governance, and who may not wish to/be able to participate in formal structures.</li> <li>c. Put in place a governance structure and mechanism to oversee and monitor EDI</li> </ul>
8.	Ensure employee and clergy policies and practices support EDI strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Regularly review and revise clergy and staff handbooks to ensure consistency and standardisation (where practical) and good practice (e.g. maternity, sick leave)</li> <li>b. Review salary structure and pay policy</li> </ul>
9.	Better support those for whom current church regulations or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Listen and engage as to how people can feel welcomed. Be open and welcoming and listen to concerns</li> </ul>

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	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
	traditions mean they are, or feel, excluded.	b. Provide better support for all those with protected characteristics using the pastoral principles (acknowledge prejudice, speak into silence, address ignorance, cast out fear, admit hypocrisy, pay attention to power)
	<b>Specific</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>RACE and ETHNICITY</b>	
1.	Use external specialists and support to improve our processes and practices.	a. Offer targeted training for clergy and lay ministers on working and engaging with minority groups b. Review recommendations in Lament to Action and agree which to adopt or incorporate c. Implement agreed actions from Racial Justice Commission report d. Engage and work with Anti-Racism Cumbria (and others relevant bodies)
2.	Increase the number of clergy and lay ministers from UKME/GMH backgrounds.	a. Advertise and actively encourage candidates from UKME/GMH backgrounds clergy roles (including curate) roles b. Investigate ways to ensure statement of needs do not contain language or materials that deter UKME/GMH candidates
3.	To become more confident in our awareness and	a. Introduce race and ethnicity awareness workshops for clergy, staff, and PCCs (to include the Traveller, Gypsy and Roma communities)

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	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	challenge of racism, both overt and unconscious.	b. Produce a strategy for supporting newly appointed clergy
<b>B</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	
1.	Increase women clergy in parochial and leadership roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Explore why women clergy do not necessarily feel called to Cumbria</li> <li>b. Review expectations on gender mix</li> <li>c. Devise target and recruit to implement target based on (a)</li> <li>d. Intentionally encourage female candidates to apply</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<b>DISABILITY</b>	
1.	Promote understanding by staff of disability in the workplace.	a. Hold annual awareness training on specific topics including hidden disabilities
2.	Be confident in our commitment to employing people with disabilities.	a. Gain Disability Confident Employer Leadership level
<b>D</b>	<b>AGE</b>	
1.	Improve age diversity.	a. Review Diocesan policy on clergy retirement

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	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Intentionally, encourage younger clergy to apply for posts in the Diocese</li> <li>c. Link to our growing younger agenda</li> </ul>
E	<b>LGBTQ+ Community</b>	
1.	Be more vocal and visible in supporting LGBTQ+ people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Be intentional in welcoming those from the LGBTQ+ community into church</li> <li>b. Continue to engage in relevant conversations</li> </ul>
F	<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>	<p>Covered by the work and action plans of the Clergy and Employee Wellbeing Groups</p> <p>Provide appropriate resources for clergy to equip them to understand mental health issues in parishioners</p>
G	<b>SOCIAL CLASS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DIVIDE INCLUDING DEEP RURALITY</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Undertake work to understand the barriers which prevent people attending church.</li> <li>b. Once (a) is complete, implement a strategy to break down barriers</li> </ul>

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 February 2023