



The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely

# ALM

## Parish Handbook 2025-2026

This handbook is designed to provide ALM candidates, Incumbents (and Rural Deans), and Parish Safeguarding Officers with all the information required in the discernment, training and support of Authorised Lay Ministry within the parish.



# Contents

- 3** What is an ALM?
- 4** ALM Journey overview
- 5** ALM Specialisms
- 6-7** Information for Incumbents
- 8** Parish Safeguarding Officer information
- 9** ALM Candidate information
- 10** Contact details







# What is an ALM?

Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) are lay people who are active in the life of the church and have been recognised by their parish as having a particular gifting, vocation, or calling. They are selected by their incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC), and after completing appropriate training, they are authorised and commissioned to serve in a specific area of ministry within their local parish.

ALMs work collaboratively with their incumbent and the wider ministry team, always under the incumbent's supervision. Their focus is to grow and nurture faith both within the church and in the broader parish community. In their specialist area, ALMs may run activities, lead events, and support the spiritual and practical needs of those they serve.

The Diocese seeks to equip and enable Authorised Lay Ministers, providing training and support, but the responsibility for their ministry remains with the Parish throughout.



# ALM Journey Overview

- Candidates should obtain the support and recommendation of both their Incumbent and PCC to pursue becoming an ALM.
- Contact the Lay Team Administrator to book on to the next Specialism course (or to go on the waiting list).
- Speak with the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). The following training will need to be undertaken:
  - Basic, Foundation and Leadership Safeguarding training
  - Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse training
  - DBS - the level will be decided by your PSO
- Before training, all ALM candidates are required to be safely recruited.
- Attend the specialism training. Most courses are 10 sessions held over a number of months and include a project.
- The candidate and incumbent complete the Authorisation Form together. The incumbent returns the form to the Lay Team Administrator.
- The incumbent receives a certificate to complete and commissioning liturgy to be included in a service, where the candidate is authorised.
- ALM authorisation must be renewed every three years. Before the expiry date, they will receive an automatic reminder along with an invitation to renew their authorisation. In order to be reauthorised, all safeguarding training and DBS checks must be up to date.





# ALM Specialisms

## Children & Families



Training with a specialism for working with children and families.

[elydiocese.org/children-youth](http://elydiocese.org/children-youth)

## Youth & Families



Training with a specialism for working with young people and families.

[elydiocese.org/children-youth](http://elydiocese.org/children-youth)

## Worship Leader/ Music Minister



Training for those wanting to serve their church through preparing and leading services, and/or music.

[elydiocese.org/worship-leader-alm-course](http://elydiocese.org/worship-leader-alm-course)

## Pastoral Assistant



Training to facilitate good and safe practice in general pastoral care within the church and community.

[elydiocese.org/pastoral-assistant-alm-course](http://elydiocese.org/pastoral-assistant-alm-course)

## Preacher



Training for those who an incumbent identifies as having potential to become an ALM preacher.

[elydiocese.org/preacher-alm-course](http://elydiocese.org/preacher-alm-course)

## Evangelist



Faith Empowered is designed to equip local lay leaders in evangelism, run in partnership with the Church Army.

[elydiocese.org/alm-evangelists](http://elydiocese.org/alm-evangelists)

# Information for Incumbents

## The pathway for an ALM Specialism

### Identifying a Potential ALM

You or a member of your church family may identify someone with the potential to work in a particular area of church ministry, or an individual may approach you with a sense of being called to such a ministry.

### Initial Discernment

The first stage in exploring Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) involves:

- Prayerful conversation between you (the incumbent) and the candidate.
- Consultation with the PCC (on behalf of the congregation).
- Formal agreement that the candidate can proceed to training.
- Consent of the PCC must be formally obtained and recorded.

### Starting Training

Once agreement is in place:

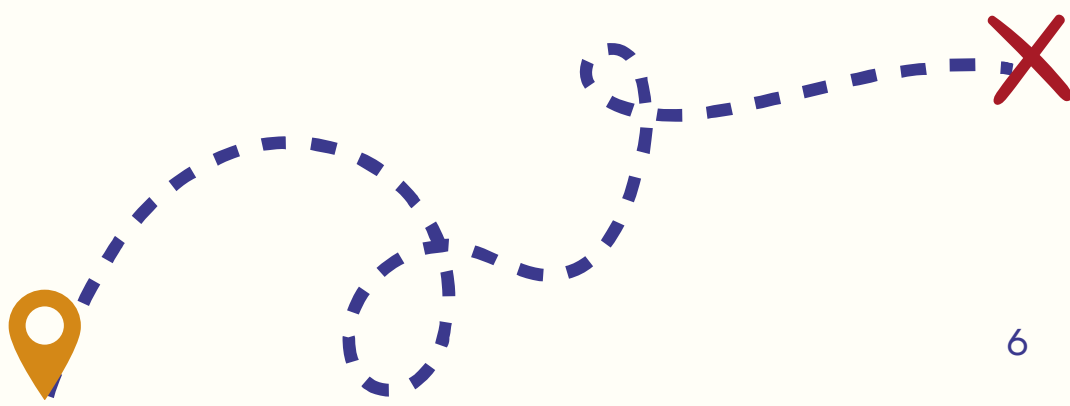
- The candidate should contact the Lay Team Administrator to express interest and register for training in their chosen specialism.
- In some cases (e.g. Children and Families or Evangelism), individuals may undertake training before formally deciding to pursue authorisation. In these instances, the support of both the incumbent and PCC must be confirmed before authorisation certificates or commissioning liturgy are sent.

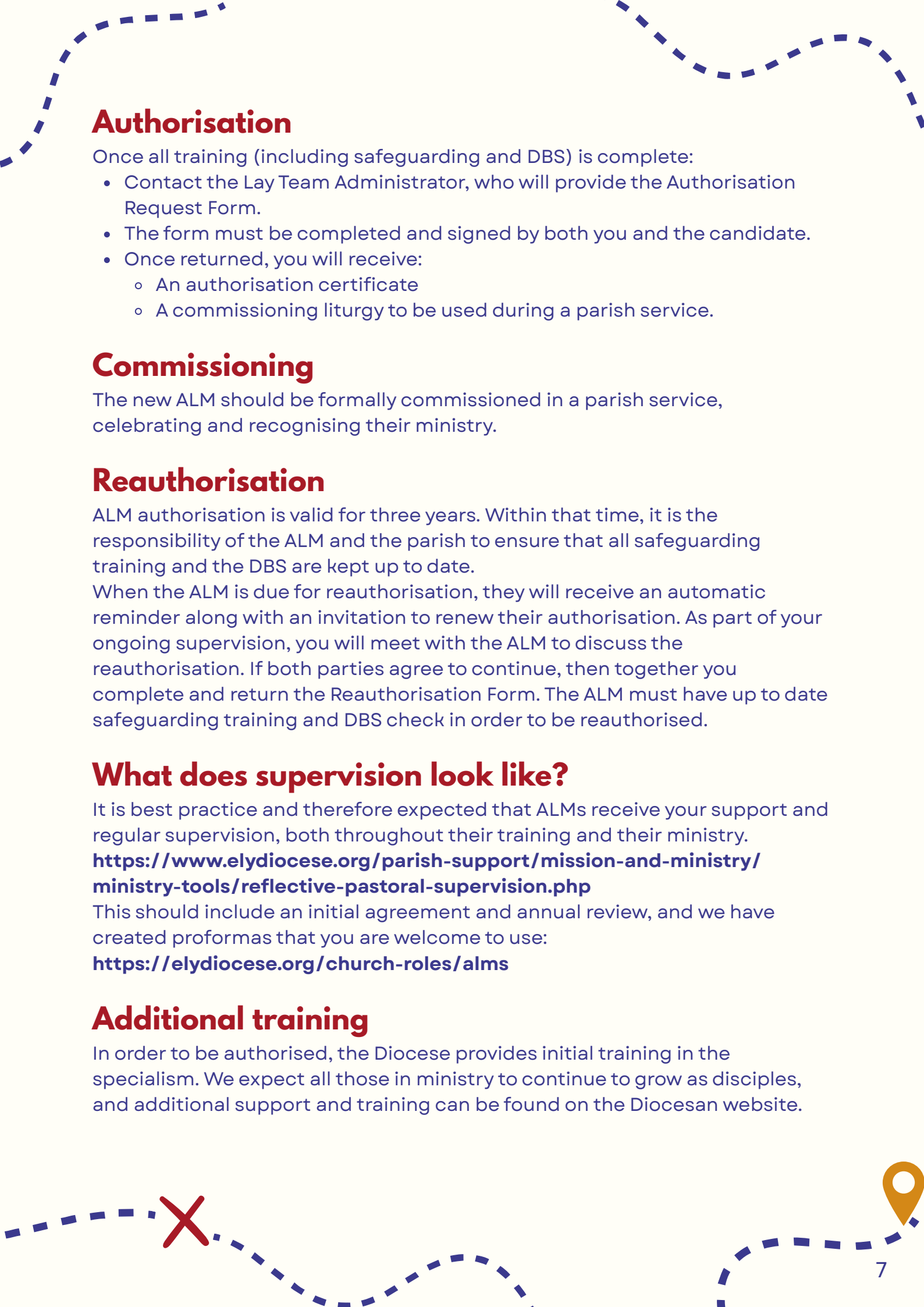
### Safeguarding Requirements

#### Before authorisation:

Before training, all ALM candidates are required to be safely recruited.

- You must ensure the candidate is connected with your Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- The candidate must complete:
  - All required safeguarding training (see page 8).
  - A DBS check at the appropriate level for their role within the parish/benefice.





## Authorisation

Once all training (including safeguarding and DBS) is complete:

- Contact the Lay Team Administrator, who will provide the Authorisation Request Form.
- The form must be completed and signed by both you and the candidate.
- Once returned, you will receive:
  - An authorisation certificate
  - A commissioning liturgy to be used during a parish service.

## Commissioning

The new ALM should be formally commissioned in a parish service, celebrating and recognising their ministry.

## Reauthorisation

ALM authorisation is valid for three years. Within that time, it is the responsibility of the ALM and the parish to ensure that all safeguarding training and the DBS are kept up to date.

When the ALM is due for reauthorisation, they will receive an automatic reminder along with an invitation to renew their authorisation. As part of your ongoing supervision, you will meet with the ALM to discuss the reauthorisation. If both parties agree to continue, then together you complete and return the Reauthorisation Form. The ALM must have up to date safeguarding training and DBS check in order to be reauthorised.

## What does supervision look like?

It is best practice and therefore expected that ALMs receive your support and regular supervision, both throughout their training and their ministry.

<https://www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/mission-and-ministry/ministry-tools/reflective-pastoral-supervision.php>

This should include an initial agreement and annual review, and we have created proformas that you are welcome to use:

<https://elydiocese.org/church-roles/alms>

## Additional training

In order to be authorised, the Diocese provides initial training in the specialism. We expect all those in ministry to continue to grow as disciples, and additional support and training can be found on the Diocesan website.



# Parish Safeguarding Officer information

Authorised Lay Ministry is a locally discerned and authorised ministry. As such, all safeguarding, including DBS checks, is the responsibility of the Incumbent, PCC and Parish Safeguarding Officer, and should be on the Dashboard and kept up to date at all times. Before training, all ALM candidates are required to be safely recruited

All ALMs require Basic, Foundation and Leadership Safeguarding training, along with Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. Safer recruitment training may be required if part of their ministry involves recruitment.

All ALMs will require an up to date DBS check. The level of the check is dependent on the individual's ministry role, and this should be discussed with the incumbent and candidate.

Authorisation lasts for three years, at which point ALMs will need to be reauthorised in order to continue with their ministry. All safeguarding and DBS checks must be up to date before reauthorisation.

For more information please see the safeguarding page of the diocesan website: [elydiocese.org/safeguarding](http://elydiocese.org/safeguarding)



# ALM Candidate Information

For details of the steps towards authorisation, please consult the 'ALM Journey Overview' on page 4.

## 1. Registering for Your Specialism Course

Once you have obtained the support of both your incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC):

- Contact the Lay Team Administrator to be registered onto your chosen specialism course.
- Courses usually consist of 10 sessions, held over several months.
- You are expected to attend all sessions and to maintain regular communication with your course tutor as required.
- A project related to your specialism will form part of your training and must be completed.

## 2. Supervision and Support

Your incumbent will support you throughout your training and ministry. This should include:

- Regular meetings and reflective supervision.
- The nature of this support can be tailored to your local context, but supervision is essential: <https://www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/mission-and-ministry/ministry-tools/reflective-pastoral-supervision.php>

## 3. Safeguarding and DBS Requirements

Speak to your Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) early in the process to:

- Arrange your DBS check (your PSO will determine the appropriate level based on your role).
- Ensure all safeguarding requirements are completed and kept up to date.

You must complete the following safeguarding training modules:

- **Basic Safeguarding** (online)
- **Foundation Safeguarding** (online)
- **Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse** (online)
- **Leadership Safeguarding Course** (book onto this course early)

**Note:** It is your responsibility, with the support of your PSO, to ensure that all safeguarding and DBS records are kept up to date. Your safeguarding records are stored on the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, which your PSO can access.

## 4. Length of Authorisation/Reauthorisation

- Your authorisation will last for three years.
- After this period, you will receive an automatic reminder inviting you to renew your authorisation, along with the Reauthorisation Form which you will need to complete in consultation with your incumbent, if you wish to continue.
- We do recommend that you also make a personal note of your authorisation expiry date.



# Further Information and Contact details



## **Lay Team Administrator**

Sophie Smith  
[sophie.smith@elydiocese.org](mailto:sophie.smith@elydiocese.org)

## **Lay Ministry Officer for ALMs**

Niki Whitby  
[niki.whitby@elydiocese.org](mailto:niki.whitby@elydiocese.org)

Course dates and information:  
**[elydatabase.org/events](https://elydatabase.org/events)**

Safeguarding requirements:  
**[elydiocese.org/safeguarding-training-and-development](https://elydiocese.org/safeguarding-training-and-development)**

