

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF DURHAM

BLESSING OUR COMMUNITIES
IN JESUS' NAME



Archdeacon of Auckland

Recruitment Pack

April 2026

Welcome – A Message from the Bishop of Durham Elect

Thank you for considering the role of Archdeacon of Auckland in the Diocese of Durham. Please do think and pray about whether God is calling you to come and work with us here in mission.

This is a time of both continuity and change for us in Durham. We continue to be committed to faithful presence and proclamation of the good news of Christ. However, we also know that to proclaim the gospel afresh involves both the renewal of traditional approaches to worship and mission and the willingness – which we have – to experiment with new ways of doing this. We have an ongoing diocesan Transformation programme, supported by national grants, through which we are working prayerfully to see new life and growth both in existing churches and through new forms of mission. There are many challenges here, but we are determined – by the grace of God, and through his work among us – to seek renewal and growth. Through that growth we also aim to see healthy, sustainable local churches growing younger, challenging poverty in their communities, and engaging creatively and hopefully with environmental issues.

There is continuity and change also in the leadership of the Diocese. We have a strong team, with established, trusting relationships, as well as the need and opportunity to now appoint some new members into significant, strategic roles, including this post. The Archdeacon of Auckland will be a key member of the Bishop's Leadership Team, sharing our vision for growth. We are therefore seeking a person of prayer with the ability to handle complexity who can share in the leadership of the church in this diocese through a time of change. She or he will need to possess and demonstrate a humble confidence that God wills to renew us as the church and work through us in the world.

The Church of England is committed nationally to becoming a church of missionary disciples, and this is central to our vision in the Diocese of Durham. We are asking how our churches, schools and chaplaincies can increasingly become places where people can come to faith and grow in a journey of discipleship, and are working in a very focussed way to develop the leaders – lay and ordained – that we need to enable this. Embracing a missional understanding of ministry enthusiastically, and sharing with me, the Bishop's Leadership Team (BLT) and key diocesan staff in aligning all our work in leadership development and appointments clearly with our vision and strategy will be essential for the person called to this role.

I very much look forward to welcoming a new colleague and working together for the building of God's kingdom through the work of the church in this diocese.

With my very best wishes and my prayers for you in this discernment process,

**Ven Rick Simpson,
Bishop of Durham Elect**



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Our Geography & Heritage

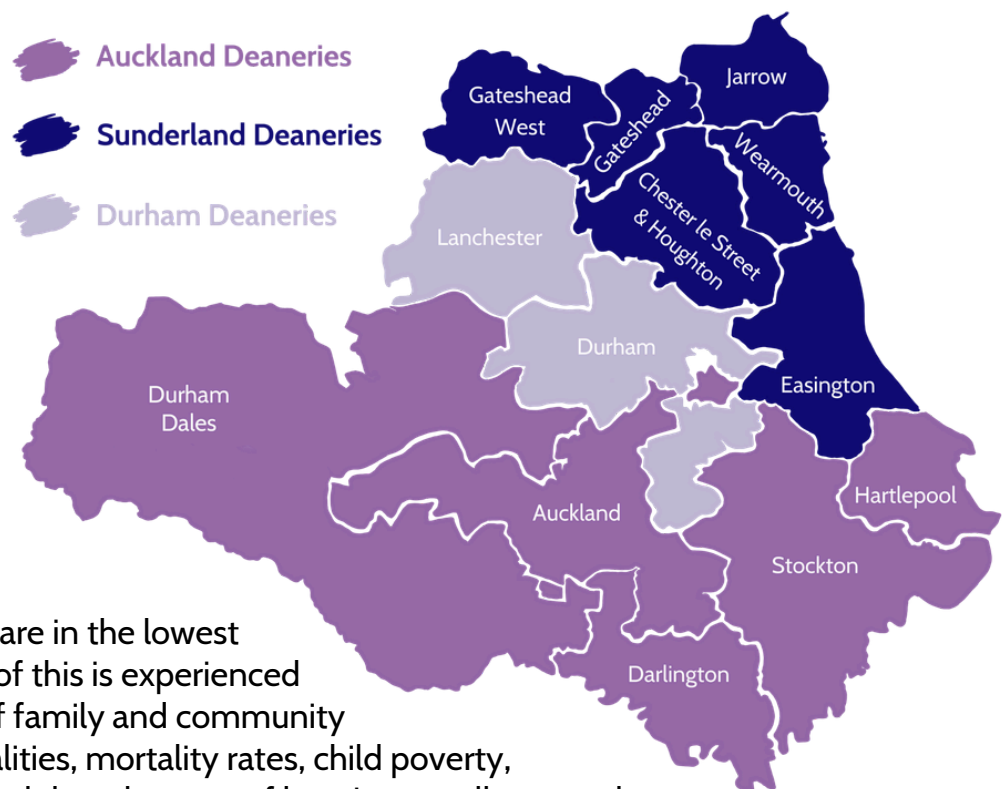
Durham Diocese is an area of varied geography, stretching from the Tyne to the Tees and from the Dales to the Sea.

The Diocese has a profound Christian heritage. The church's history here spans more than a millennium, and this is reflected in our traditions and our attitude: continuing to faithfully serve Jesus today, as we have done for many centuries, asking what it means to proclaim the good news afresh in our generation.

Our Communities

Durham Diocese has several significant population centres including Sunderland, Gateshead, Durham, Darlington, Hartlepool and Stockton. The Diocese is home to both rural and post-industrial communities, the majority of the latter being former mining towns. Many of our smaller post-industrial towns and villages tend to be close-knit.

A significant number of our communities face real issues of deprivation – in all its guises. Over half of the parishes in the Diocese serve communities within the lowest 20% of the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) nationally; a third are in the lowest 10%. The impact of this is experienced across all facets of family and community life. Health inequalities, mortality rates, child poverty, unemployment and the adequacy of housing are all very real and stark challenges for our communities. The [NE Child Poverty Commission's February 2024 report "No Time to Wait"](#) is a sombre account of the experiences facing our region's children.



In spite of these challenges, or perhaps because of them, we have incredibly strong communities in the Diocese, with people going above and beyond to serve their neighbours as they would wish to be served.

Our Region

There are two universities wholly within Durham Diocese - Durham and Sunderland - as well as Teesside University having a campus in Darlington, with 22,000, 26,000 and 1,200 students respectively. Each institution has a distinct character. Within each there are varied opportunities to help young people from across the country and wider world to grow in faith.

The Diocese is the location of four prisons (housing just under 3,000 men and over 300 women). There is a real opportunity to impact upon prisoners' lives and facilitate the flourishing of their faith through the activities of the chaplaincy teams. The Diocese also has within it an immigration removal centre.

The Diocese of Durham Today

In the recent [Diocese of Durham Statement of Needs](#) for the next Bishop of Durham, there is a description of the Diocese of Durham today. Some extracts from the Statement of Needs (compiled Spring 2024) that remain very relevant are:

Durham Diocese is home to over 1,475,000 people, with 15,300 people being members of Church of England worshipping communities. The Diocese, like all dioceses, was impacted by Covid-19, however recent data suggests that our worshipping communities are not recovering at the same rate as others when compared with the national trends. This comes on the back of many years of congregational decline prior to Covid-19.



All Saints Stockton detached youth work



The country's first Faith Museum, Bishop Auckland



Billingham's Remembrance Sunday Parade

The Diocese has 205 parishes (169 benefices) with 258 churches; of these a third have a usual Sunday attendance of less than 20. Modelling has suggested that at recent rates of congregation decline fewer than 100 churches are likely to have 20 or more gathering for Sunday worship by 2029.

Despite considerable focus on children and young people in recent years, a survey in 2022 of our parishes identified that:

- Only 5 churches have 5 or more teenagers regularly in Sunday worship.*
- Over 60 churches have no children of any age regularly in Sunday worship.*
- Over 40% of churches who responded did not provide any additional provision. (weekly or monthly) for children and young people.*

Yet there are pockets of excellent children and young people's work, and these are key to our future plans.



The Diocese also has a steady flow of licensed lay vocations. We continue to look to broaden the offer by way of lay training opportunities. Interest in Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM) and Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) has remained consistent through the pandemic. Our numbers of lay ministers have been sustained in the Diocese.

We are proactively seeking to ensure learning on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embraced across the life of the Diocese.

The Diocese is no different to many others in having some parishes that struggle to fill key parochial office roles and this challenge is growing.

Durham Diocese has a modest historic endowment, glebe and reserves and is supported significantly through Lowest Income Communities Funding (LInC) to be able to sustain ministry in the most deprived areas. [In 2026, £2.5million of LInC funding has been allocated, which, supported by parish share pledges of £4.3million, make up the key components of diocesan (non-project) income].

Financial conditions remain challenging for many parishes and the DDBF, with no overall recovery in parish share observed since the pandemic.

This description from the Statement of Needs is the challenging context in which we are being called to be God's people in the Diocese over the next few years, and within which we are seeking God's renewal of the church to serve the world. It is into this context that our next Archdeacon of Auckland will be called and minister with us.



The Archdeaconry of Auckland

The Archdeaconry of Auckland is the southern part of the Diocese of Durham. It is thus a mix of urban, market town, villages and open countryside. It has pockets of wealth and large areas of deprivation, urban and rural. It is an area of industry, services, farms and tourism. There are many former coal-mining communities.

It currently consists of the five deaneries of

- Auckland
- Darlington
- Durham Dales
- Hartlepool
- Stockton

These five deaneries contain 67 benefices, comprising 82 parishes served by 108 church buildings. Currently the Archdeaconry is served by 44 stipendiary clergy, 11 self-supporting ministers, and 39 licensed lay ministers. There are also several retired clergy and clergy with PTO, many of whom actively serve to support worship in our churches. However, there are currently significant levels of vacancy in some of our deaneries in both this archdeaconry and across the wider diocese.

At present, after taking into account parish share and Lower Income Communities Funding, there are 45 parishes which are not covering the direct cost of their own ministry, whilst 37 parishes offer a financial contribution above this level.

A recent exercise in identifying missional potential identified 23 parishes in Auckland Archdeaconry where there were healthy signs of missional focus and activity.



Our Transformation Journey

There is a huge need for transformation in every community of our Diocese, and sadly, many of our churches have experienced a steep decline in congregation numbers over the past decade. From 2014 to 2019 adult attendance fell by 18.9% and child attendance by 29.6%, and then Covid caused an even greater impact. Average attendance in 2023 was around 70% of the 2019 level. This reflects an even steeper decline than that experienced nationally within the Church of England.

These stark figures, along with the deep challenges of poverty and deprivation that are prevalent in many of our communities, set the scene for our journey of Diocesan Transformation. Across our communities, there is not just economic poverty, but often a poverty of aspiration, connection, value and hope. We believe that these needs can be met in Christ Jesus, and our churches have an opportunity and a responsibility to share His love and the life-changing good news of the gospel with all people.

Over the past eight years, we have received Strategic Development Funding from the Church Commissioners to enable targeted mission and growth projects across the Diocese, with a range of these in Auckland Archdeaconry. These include establishing resourcing churches in central Stockton and Darlington, as well as a parish revitalisation and church plant in Stockton and a community project in Hartlepool, and each is continuing on their journey of growth and planting.

Alongside these, new worshipping communities have been established across the Archdeaconry, each one unique to need and context. The stories of some of these are captured in these videos and articles: [Gather Church Teesdale](#), [The Haven Darlington](#), [Families@4 in Shildon CE Primary School](#), [Teatime Church Haughton-Le-Skerne](#).



Within the Archdeaconry there are a number of churches that are excellent examples of engaging with and serving their local community to meet practical and spiritual needs. Signs of growth are evident in every deanery, with many parishes exploring how they can reach more widely and share faith with their community as part of our journey of transformation. In 2025, we experienced modest congregational growth of 1% in our Diocese and believe this will continue.

Our Transformation vision is a vision for **fruitfulness**, as Jesus calls us to in John 15:

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit... I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.'

We recognise and affirm the breadth of fruitfulness that will be expressed throughout our diocese, across tradition and churchmanship, building on our missional heritage. We believe there is an opportunity for all parishes to engage with and take up this vision for transformation and become fruitful in their context. Our vision does not represent a fixed model or single route to see our churches grow and flourish, but we believe it will create an environment where the ground can be prepared, new missional ideas can be planted, and green shoots of growth are nurtured to become fruitful – each one unique to local vision and local context, and impacting every local community as churches grow and share the love they are receiving from God.



There are four strands to our Transformation vision:

Growing Mission aims to prepare the ground for growth, through supporting our parishes and deaneries to develop their vision and plans and identifying strategic opportunities for new missional ideas. This strand includes our Vacancy Audit Programme and Interim Change Ministry

Growing Leadership aims to create an eco-system that will enable growth, through all individuals being supported to explore their vocation and step into leadership roles, both lay and ordained. This strand includes discernment, formation and ongoing development for all leaders, lay and ordained, including clergy wellbeing and pastoral supervision.

Growing Churches aims to support each church to bear fruit in their context, through establishing cultures of discipleship and evangelism that will enable a healthy growing church to flourish. This strand includes establishing new worshipping communities and supporting parish revitalisations.

Growing Younger aims to enable churches to bear fruit in every generation, through supporting us to reach children, youth and young adults and give them opportunities to explore faith and grow as disciples. This strand includes establishing Youth Mission Hubs and Missional Chaplaincy in secondary schools and FE colleges.

Durham Diocese has been awarded funding from the Church Commissioners to resource the Transformation vision and this is available to support the development of new missional initiatives that aim to reach people not yet engaged with our churches. Where there is missional energy and a desire for growth, we hope to support and resource parishes to develop their local vision and become more fruitful.

The Archdeacon of Auckland will be an advocate for Transformation within the Archdeaconry, supporting the development of new mission and helping to raise missional aspirations. They will be closely engaged with all threads of work, giving particular support to large mission projects and strategic development, alongside encouraging all parishes on their transformation journey and supporting the establishment of new worshipping communities, Youth Mission Hubs and missional chaplaincy.



The Role

The Archdeacon of Auckland will bring courageous and creative spiritual leadership within the diocese at the time of change.

The Archdeacon of Auckland will have the task of supporting parishes and chaplaincies as they seek to develop their ministries in the context of our Diocesan Transformation programme.

The Archdeacon of Auckland will need to embrace the strategic evangelistic and missional dimension of archidiaconal work around clergy and lay deployment, pastoral reorganisation, and finance and buildings, so that the local church can be better equipped for mission and ministry.

The Archdeacon of Auckland is expected to champion one of the transformation streams, chairing the relevant Programme Delivery Board for that stream.



The Main Responsibilities

To play a full role in leadership of Diocese

- Having a key, engaged and active role as part of Diocesan Transformation
- Sharing the mission, pastoral oversight and administration of the Diocese
- Chairing one of the Transformation Programme Delivery Boards
- Regular and committed attendance at a range of meetings, including: -
 - * Bishop's Leadership Team
 - * Transformation Planning Group
 - * Relevant Diocesan boards, including Bishop's Council, Diocesan Advisory Committee and Diocesan Synod
- Take the lead on supporting a sector ministry e.g. prison chaplains within the Diocese
- Represent the Diocese on local charitable trust boards where the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF) / Diocese holds a trusteeship – to be agreed with Bishop of Durham

To carry out the legal and administrative responsibilities of an archdeacon:

- In the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure, where the archdeacon has jurisdiction (including the provision of List B permission for minor works in churches)
- Through the presentation of candidates for ordination and the induction of clergy (when asked by the Bishop)
- In the Articles of Enquiry, Inspection of Churches and annual Visitations (unless the Bishop holds their own visitations), admitting churchwardens to office and supporting them in this role
- In the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 as amended by the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure 2013 and the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 [and any successors to this legislation e.g. Clergy Conduct Measure] as a person with proper interest
- In the Clergy Terms of Service Measure 2009, including the role in Capability Proceedings and Grievance procedure
- Being fully committed to mutual flourishing, supportive of the Five Guiding Principles and able to live them and implement them with sensitivity and confidence
- Working with the DDBF trustees and staff, to support parishes to own and contribute their full parish share

To work with parishes and deaneries by:

- Supporting deaneries working alongside area deans and deanery synod lay chairs
- Visiting and sharing in the life of local churches and chaplaincies
- Enabling the Vacancy Audit Process (VAP), in collaboration with diocesan staff and Deanery leadership, when parishes become vacant
- Overseeing pastoral re-organisation and configuring posts in consultation with relevant stakeholders so that missional, exciting and sustainable ministry posts and opportunities are created to support the growth of God's church – all within the context of Diocesan Transformation
- Working with PCCs to be honest and realistic about sustainability of mission and ministry in current forms in the current buildings and settings
- Encouraging a diversity of recognised and authorised ministries

To lead in setting a culture in which excellence in safeguarding is the norm by:

- Modelling a style of leadership that is transparent, accountable and attentive to the use and abuse of power
- Keeping their own safeguarding training up to date and being well informed about new developments in safeguarding
- Encouraging good safeguarding practice in parishes in the Archdeaconry (including the use of the safeguarding dashboard and hub) and intervening promptly where there is poor practice
- Working closely with the DSO and their team
- Chairing Safeguarding Case Management Groups as required and, if not required to chair, attending them

To take responsibility for:

- Maintaining a robust and transformative discipline of prayer, worship and the study of the Scripture
- Their own professional growth, spiritual direction, self-care, Continuing Ministerial Development and Pastoral Supervision
- Ensuring, in common with all diocesan clergy and staff:
 - * That priority is given to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and that all that are vulnerable are protected to the highest standards;
 - * That all health and safety instructions are followed and that care is taken to ensure safety for self and colleagues, reporting concerns immediately;
 - * That all Diocesan policies and procedures are complied with.

Leadership Bodies and Teams

The Archdeacon of Auckland is a key member of a number of strategic bodies including:

- The Bishop's Leadership Team
- The Strategic Mission Delivery Board
- The Transformation Planning Group

The Archdeacon of Auckland is a member of Bishop's Council (The Bishop's Council membership is coterminous with Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF) and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee), and ex-officio member of the Diocesan Synod.

The Archdeacon of Auckland is an attendee and key member of various regular meetings that support the diocese including: Diocesan Advisory Committee, Area Deans and Lay Chairs, Closed Churches, Housing, and HR review meetings.

The Archdeacon of Auckland is a member of the College of Canons of Durham Cathedral.

Key Working Relationships

The Archdeacon will be accountable to the Bishop of Durham. In their day-by-day ministry they will work in close co-operation with the Bishop of Jarrow, the Archdeacon of Durham, the Archdeacon of Sunderland, the Diocesan Secretary and the Head of Programme Delivery for Transformation. The Archdeacon will be supported by a PA.

Training and Support

Transition into an archidiaconal role is not always easy for parochial clergy, chaplains or sector ministers, and care must be taken to manage this change realistically. The three archdeacons in the diocese will meet regularly to discuss diocesan matters and they provide mutual support for each other. They meet regularly and frequently with the Bishops and Diocesan Secretary. They also attend meetings with archdeacons from other dioceses and attend the bi-annual Northern and National Archdeacons Conferences. Archdeacons are expected to participate in Continuing Ministerial Development and engage fully with Ministerial Development Reviews held with the Bishop of Durham. It is important that the Archdeacon is prepared to adjust and adapt, in a flexible way, as the Diocesan Transformation journey continues in the years ahead.

Practical Arrangements

The post will be held under Common Tenure, as specified in the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009, with a stipend set in accordance with the Church of England's national scale for Archdeacons.

A resettlement grant will be paid at the current rate.

Full reasonable working expenses will be met. Archdeacons are expected to use their own car and claim expenses.

IT/phone provision as part of the office and will include a laptop computer and smart phone linked to diocesan systems.

The office for the Archdeacon and personal assistant is at the house (with separate entrance). The personal assistant works 21 hrs/week and this role works collaboratively with other support staff to ensure good cover. It is expected that the role holder will need to work from Cuthbert House on a reasonably regular basis.



Stipend

As at 1st April 2026, the stipend will be £46,000.

Housing

The Archdeacon of Auckland's house is located in a residential district on the west side of Darlington. The house is well placed for access across the Deanery and to other key locations e.g. Cuthbert House.

The house has the office of the Archdeacon of Auckland and office accommodation for a personal assistant which are served by a separate house entrance.



Eligibility and Pre-appointment Enquiries

The nominated candidates will need to have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom.

They will need to complete an Enhanced DBS check and a pre-appointment occupational health clearance.

Safer Recruitment

Experience of your competence in managing safeguarding forms a key part of the discernment process, as well as enquiries to reassure the appointing panel that you are not a safeguarding risk.

You will be asked to complete a confidential declaration and your bishop will provide a Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL), prior to interview, having examined your blue file.

Your referees are also asked to comment on your approach to managing safeguarding.

You will also be expected to be up to date with all relevant safeguarding training. The successful candidate will be required to attend senior leadership training at the earliest opportunity (if you do not already hold it), once the appointment has been announced.

How to Apply

Applications should be made on the application form with a short (less than 2 sides) covering letter. Applications are invited from clergy of all backgrounds and church traditions, especially those which are currently underrepresented on the senior team.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to arrange a telephone conversation with the *Archdeacon of Sunderland, The Ven. Katherine Bagnall* as part of their discernment. Please contact Linda Richardson to arrange a call.

Linda.Richardson@durham.anglican.org 07384 510731

Closing date: Noon Tuesday 5th May 2026

Applications to be emailed to human.resources@durham.anglican.org

The interview process is planned for Wednesday 10th June 2026 and Thursday 11th June 2026. Candidates will be required on both days

Person Specification

Leadership		Criteria assessed by:		
		App	Int	Ref
Been at least 6 years in Holy orders and is in Priest's orders at the time of appointment(Canon C 22.1)	Essential	X		
A mission-minded leader, who thinks strategically and is able and committed to encourage change and growth with the ability to see how all areas of archidiaconal ministry can hold missional potential	Essential		X	
Ability to lead, inspire and gain trust, encouraging and inspiring others to shine and flourish; A proven ability to manage and implement change	Essential		X	X
Aware of their own power and its influence on others with highly developed pastoral skills	Essential	X	X	X
A team player who works collaboratively with a range of stakeholders within and outside the church	Essential	X	X	
Experience / Knowledge				
A gifted communicator and preacher with both depth and breadth of theological understanding	Essential	X	X	
A robust understanding of safeguarding in the Church of England; Experience of implementing safeguarding policies and procedures, responding appropriately to disclosures, taking appropriate action when non-compliance is identified.	Essential	X	X	X
A proven record of growing worshipping communities in number and depth	Essential	X	X	
Skilled in managing conflict and encouraging conflict transformation and mediation	Essential	X	X	
Sufficient financial literacy to engage in discussions at the Diocesan Board of Finance and to understand and discuss the finance of parishes and deaneries	Desirable	X	X	
Experience of leadership in parochial ministry or sector ministry	Essential	X	X	
Commitment to mutual flourishing and modelling the Five Guiding Principles	Essential	X	X	X

Personal	Criteria assessed by:			
	App	Int	Ref	
Self-aware, humble, wise and at ease with their own personal style	Essential	X	X	
A proven ability to work with those of differing views & build good working relationships	Essential	X	X	X
A strong personal capacity to carry a heavy workload and maintain a healthy work / life balance	Essential	X	X	X
Pastorally sensitive and discreet	Essential	X	X	X
Resilience and good humour	Essential	X	X	X
Ability to travel around the Diocese	Essential	X	X	