



Diocese of Guildford Participant Information Pack 2026/2027



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The Ministry Experience Scheme

Hey! Are you someone who is ...

- aged 18-29 years old
- looking to explore your calling in discipleship with others
- wanting to gain some ministry experience within the Church of England
- interested in theological and practical ministry skills training?

Here at the Diocese of Guildford we are excited to offer the **Ministry Experience Scheme (MES)** and the **Future Youth (FY)** stream – gap year opportunities supported by National Church to help those aged 18-29 gain valuable vocational and leadership experience as you serve in a voluntary capacity for a year in a church placement.

The aim of the scheme is to help you test a sense of calling and gifting as you receive some theological training and insights into your sense of vocation.

Churches who have applied to host a participant would love to meet you and see how if they can support you with what you'd like to explore during your year. Read on to see what the year entails and how you can apply to be a participant starting in September 2026 and finishing July 2027.



What will I be doing?

MES is very flexible in that no two schemes need to look the same; in fact, you will work with your supervisor to create and structure a year that helps you to gain the most out of the scheme. You can explore any number of ministry areas, so long as the church is able to support this and offer it is an opportunity – this should be discussed in your conversations with them before applying. For example, previous MES participants have explored areas such as: preaching & leading, worship, production, children & families work, women's or men's ministry, seniors' ministry, outreach & evangelism, etc.

As part of the year, you will also attend a leadership conference held by National Church, who fund your year. This is likely to take place at the start of January 2027.

Future Youth

If you would like to explore **youth ministry**, the specialised **Future Youth** stream is dedicated to raising up new youth leaders. In practice, you will receive some additional support alongside the January MES conference from National Church throughout the year, including **2 residentials in November and March** at the Hayes Centre, Derbyshire.

Participants on both schemes also have the chance to meet with our Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Diocesan Young Vocations Advisor, alongside other members of staff, 3x during the year.



Foundations in Ministry - Mondays

All MES and Future Youth participants will join our Foundations in Ministry – Mondays programme which takes place weekly from 9:30–14:30 at Emmanuel Church, Stoughton, in Guildford.



Formerly known as ‘First Timers’, this programme invites local children’s and youth leaders in their first post of ministry to receive theological and practical ministry skills training. You will therefore be joining a cohort of other students who could be newly employed in their role, volunteers, or interns in their churches.

The day is structured into 3 parts:

1. **Discipleship**

- The first hour is dedicated to growing community with the rest of the cohort and is run by the curate at Emmanuel; it will typically feature a time for sung worship and for exploring how to be a disciple of Jesus.

2. **Practical ministry skills**

- The morning teaching slot focus on introducing different frameworks and guides for you to apply to your ministry, including subjects such as: strategic planning, writing risk assessments, how to build a small group, how to get volunteers, etc.

3. **Theological training**

- The afternoon teaching slot focuses on different theological topics to help enhance your ministry, featuring subjects such as: creation and fall, apocalypse, prophets, the Body of Christ, communion & baptism, etc.

New Wine Discipleship Year

All of our MES and Future Youth participants are **automatically enrolled onto the New Wine Discipleship Year with us.** This means that you will be completing their programme too, including attending their conferences and residentials.

The New Wine Discipleship Year focuses on growing you as a disciple of Jesus and in your spiritual giftings. We have chosen to pair MES and Future Youth with the New Wine Discipleship Year (NWDY) as we believe that participants will greatly benefit from the opportunities they provide for spiritual growth and exploring your church calling. Participants usually have to pay for their own course and residential fees to undertake NWDY, but because we offer it in conjunction with MES and Future Youth that come with a grant to give to churches, the costs are paid for and it is free to participants.

The dates for these New Wine Discipleship Year residentials are as follows:

- UK Residential: Monday 2nd November – Wednesday 4th November 2026
- New Wine Leadership Conference: February 2027
- Overseas Mission Trip Residential: Monday 26th April – Friday 30th April 2027
- New Wine Summer Festival: August 2028 (in which you will serve on team)

If you would just like to do the New Wine Discipleship Year, we cannot give your church any grant money for this; it is only available paired with the MES and FY scheme, and you will need to fund your year independently. Costs can be found on New Wine's website.



How much does it cost to take part?

You will **not need to pay anything** as the National Church provides a grant to your church placement in order to fund your year, including travel expenses, IT costs, and training.

Do I get paid?

MES and Future Youth are **non-salaried** opportunities, however, you will receive a **living allowance of £74pw** from your church.

Some participants also complete a part-time job alongside their year. Speak to any potential church placements if may be the case for you, so that your working hours are reasonable.

Where do I live?

Some participants are able to live at home while completing their placement, especially if it is local. If you would need to relocate, make sure you mention this to the church so they can explore if this is an option for you. Churches can allocate some of their grant money towards supporting you in **host accommodation** with an individual/family within the congregation, if available.

Do I have to do the New Wine Discipleship Year?

Participants are **automatically enrolled** onto the New Wine Discipleship Year once they join as we believe that both schemes together greatly enhance the opportunities you receive during the year. **However, if you have concerns or would not like to take part, please speak to your supervisor.**

What are the working hours?

You'll need to work that out between you and your supervisor. But you should receive 2 rest days a week and working hours should not exceed more than 35 hours.

What support should I be receiving from my church throughout the year?

Your church needs to provide you with: a role description, volunteer agreement, a supervisor who can meet with you weekly, access to safeguarding training, a work email address, any necessary work equipment, time on Monday to attend FiM training, conferences, and residentials, at least 2 rest days a week, and funding to cover your key expenses.

Can I stay with my current church?

This may be possible. We will need your church to be officially accepted as a MES and Future Youth placement with us first. If they aren't already, speak to them about applying to become one.

Can I take part in a church that is outside of the Diocese of Guildford?

Unfortunately, we cannot allocate grant money funding for MES and Future Youth to a placement outside of the diocese. Instead, see if your diocese is running them; they may be running it differently to us, so you should check how they're organising their version first before committing to anything.

Sign me up!

Excited? We are too! If you'd like to apply for September 2026 – July 2027, we will need your application at the very latest by August 2026.

There are a couple of ways to apply or let us know you are interested.

1. If you're already with a church who we have accepted as a MES or Future Youth placement, send an email to sophie.blake@cofeguildford.org.uk with some info about you and which church you're from. In most cases, this is an ideal way of 'matching' a participant to a church placement. We'll ask you also to complete a New Wine Discipleship Year application form – this lets the team there know you have formally applied, and gives us some further info too.
2. If you don't have a placement lined up, please complete the New Wine Discipleship Year application form – we are using this as a central way of collating the info we need, as well as registering your interest formally with that the New Wine team. We then have a look at your application and forward it on to the placement churches who we have accepted to host participants. The placements will then review your application and get in touch if they are interested.

Got questions?

We're happy to chat anytime. Pop an email over to our MES Coordinator, Sophie Blake, at sophie.blake@cofeguildford.org.uk.