



Ministerial Development Review

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & GOOD PRACTICE

Diocese of Chelmsford
Short handbook for reviewers
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What is Review?

Is review the same as appraisal?

Review is not appraisal. It is an expression of our mutual accountability as members together of the body of Christ in the church in Chelmsford Diocese. If you have carried out appraisal in your working life as a manager or supervisor for someone else then you may have some unlearning to do.

However review and appraisal will have some strong similarities – firstly that respectful careful listening is key; secondly, that the review needs to be carefully prepared for by the reviewer and reviewee; lastly, that a reviewee might feel quite ‘keyed-up’ or nervous as they approach the review.

What is the place of the MDR process in overall wellbeing scheme?

- MDR is formational in that it encourages reflection on calling.
- MDR is a way of exercising pastoral care; that might lead to other forms of support – for example coaching, mediation, counselling or action learning sets. See the [Wellbeing and Support for Ministers](#) page on the website.
- The gifts of a reviewer are as listener, and facilitator, offering empathy, challenge and encouragement.

General principles of review

Confidentiality: The whole process is confidential, except in situations when there is risk and this needs to be reported via the correct channels

Comfort: Make the reviewee comfortable – have a positive attitude

Place: Choose a neutral space for the meeting, in whatever surroundings the reviewee is happiest

Time: Allow one and a half hours for a review, set clear parameters from outset and work in screen breaks if online.

Agreement: Everything that is entered on the form is agreed between reviewer and reviewee. If the wording cannot be agreed, please refer issues to the MDR Lead.

Process of Review

Beforehand

How will the reviewee prepare?

The reviewee will be sent the paperwork by the MDR Administrator before-hand. They will set aside some time to prayerfully think about and answer the questions and send the preparation form to the reviewer by email. If the reviewee wishes to they may send a note of actions from the previous review; but they also may not as things may have moved on. A useful review will be forward-facing, not backward-looking.

360° feedback for the reviewee

While a simplified process is being encouraged by +Guli, an MDR External Perspectives Form is available in the appendices to the MDR with DR Handbook. If desired, the reviewee may seek feedback from the following people, before they have a conversation with their reviewer:

- A churchwarden
- A leader in the community
- A head-teacher at a local school
- A lay or ordained colleague

Check if the reviewer wishes to undertake this sort of preparation and allow time for it when setting the review date.

How will the reviewer prepare?

The reviewer needs to be as prepared as the reviewee.

- You will not have access to any previous review documentation, other than the details that the reviewee chooses to share with you (see above).
- When the reviewee sends their review form to you, set aside time to read with an open mind
- You may want to look up the parish website to give some context, but be aware of forming bias
- Approach preparation prayerfully – practicing the art of self-emptying, review is about the reviewee not the reviewer. Actively pray for the reviewee beforehand and after the meeting

During

The three Ps: Prayer, Power, Presence

Prayer

- Approach the meeting prayerfully
- Surround the meeting with prayer
- Ask for God's presence in the process

Power

- Remember this is about the reviewee not the reviewer
- Be respectful, reasonable, humble in your approach
- Exercise the power to listen

Presence

- Be more than a physical presence in a meeting
- Make the reviewee comfortable and bring a positive attitude
- Listening well to another person talk about important things in a relaxed way is one of the most powerful things we can do for one another

What should a reviewer do if they sense that someone is unable to engage in review or is too upset to continue?

If the reviewee clearly can't continue then it will be important to express empathy appropriately and re-schedule. However, be watchful not to under-estimate someone's resourcefulness; the presence of tears /or anger can be a sign of substantial growth as well as struggle, and strong emotions when talking about deep and important issues are not to be taken as a sign that someone is not coping. Be careful that your response does not undermine their dignity.

Should there be quantifiable action points arising from an MDR? Who is responsible for any actions?

This is not a Performance Development process; more a reflective process that the reviewer is facilitating. The reviewee needs to be heard and what has gone before needs to be celebrated/put into perspective.

If there are action points, they only need to be bullet points, no great details are needed – these are pointers only. This is a conversation and an enablement process.

The responsibility for any action lies with the reviewee.

After

Writing the report

The form should already be mostly filled in (sections 1-4) by the reviewee. Wording for sections 5 and 6 should be agreed at the meeting or shortly thereafter.

If agreement cannot be reached, please refer any issues to the MDR Lead.

Once the form is typed up, please send to the MDR Administrator.

Should reviewers keep notes from the review session?

All that has been spoken about in the review is confidential, and reviewers **should not** keep notes, either written or in electronic form once the review is completed and sent to the MDR Administrator.

Can reviewers claim expenses?

On the whole it is expected that reviewees will travel to reviewers, so reviewers should not need to claim expenses. Ordained clergy can claim any expenses from their parish. Any lay reviewers who find it necessary to travel to their reviewee (for example if the reviewee cannot travel) can submit an expenses claim to the MDR Administrator, stating the specific reason that travel was necessary. These will be processed on a case-by-case basis and may not always be able to be paid. Please apply to the MDR Administrator for a form.

Do reviewees look at their aims between reviews? And how can reviewers encourage them to do so?

There may be useful follow-up questions that you can ask as the review draws to a close that can encourage the reviewee to think about how they 'hold space' in their lives for revisiting review aims and actions at intervals.

The way people do this is very varied, but many ministers will aim at a monthly 'reflection day' when they journal and plan; some will use the Ignatian *examen* at the day's end to notice what felt good and in line with hopes and desires, and what felt difficult.

Some ministers will set aside time for meeting with a local peer group – see above, or a mentor, or take some areas of the review into sessions with their spiritual director.

Do not offer interim reviews – the review summary goes to CMD / training advisers who have a role in facilitating the reviewee with their 'next steps'. The summary is also seen by senior staff. They should pick up issues if necessary.

Does everyone covered by MDR have supervision?

Paid-for supervision for every single person in leadership would be a gold standard and wonderful, but the resources are not there. In practice there are a number of ways that ministers can learn and receive support – and many do use one of these.

- Communities of practice – action learning sets.
- A peer support group (often formed during their training)
- A series of 1:1 coaching sessions – there is provision for 6 sessions in 12 months.
- Transition mentors, through the first 12 months, for those newly in post.
- Action learning sets for pioneer ministers, and pioneer learning hubs.

For details of these visit the [Diocesan website](#).